The Building that Disappeared

The Viipuri Library by Alvar Aalto

A! Aalto University

LAURA BERGER

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Abstract

This dissertation introduces the 'life' of one building: the Viipuri Library, designed by Alvar Aalto in 1927–1935. The theoretical perspective draws from the field of material culture studies and the agency of objects. In the case of this particular building, the research enquires what buildings 'do' as part of our material environment. In the context of architecture, the library has a role as an important early work by Aalto, while it is also internationally valued as a key building of modernist architecture. The meanings associated with this building are, however, also rooted in its geopolitical context. The library was originally opened in the Finnish city of Viipuri, but at the end of World War II the city along with the larger region referred to as 'lost Karelia' were annexed to the Soviet Union. Since 1991 the building has been located in present-day Russia. After the end of the Cold War, the Soviet/Russian, Finnish and international architectural community has advocated for the need to restore the library. The restoration was realised through Finnish-Russian cooperation, and completed in 2013. Regarding the building, this research aims to provide answers to two questions: 1) What exactly are the contexts in which the library has been presented as a building of importance? 2) What, if anything, is special about this particular library, enabling it with the 'capacity' to bring together recognisably different contexts?

The study proceeds from two notions. First, that the library has been associated with contexts where there is something larger at stake, making the building stand out as a case of 'more than just a building'. Second, that this particular building surfaces in very different types of materials ranging from professional architectural publications to war histories and opinion pieces in Finnish newspapers, which locate the building in Viipuri and lost Karelia. With use of materials from archival documents, military photographs, newspapers of the period, architectural drawings and publications, this work aims to unravel the 'life cycle' of the library to the present day. The structure of the thesis is thematic and approximately chronological. The main body consists of four thematic chapters. The first chapter titled 'The City' introduces the local context, the events behind the realisation of the library. The second chapter, 'The Architect', brings forth the context of architecture, focusing on the design process, Alvar Aalto building his career as an internationally recognised architect and the first Finnish and international reception of the library. The third chapter titled 'The Lost Library' describes the period of World War II when the borders moved back and forth between Finland and the Soviet Union. The fourth chapter, 'The Restoration' is where all the preceding events come together, as the building's architectural importance and its geopolitical history are all discussed in association with the restoration project. The contents of the four thematic chapters are analysed through the lens of a theory developed by Alfred Gell in his work *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (1998). This theory is widely known in the field of anthropology, but has remained essentially unused. I suggest that Gell's theory offers thought-provoking terminology and tools for analysing the built environment, specifically objects of architecture. Gell's main assertion is that meanings are not given, and it is instead the social-relational-matrix within which material objects gain their meanings. As situations and interpretations change, material objects, such as the library, are not about assigned meanings, and their efficacy is instead rooted in specific contexts. In this way, objects such as the library can 'abduct' meanings. This work introduces the library as an exemplary case of a Gellian 'distributed object', a building that has come to stand for notions much larger and more abstract beyond itself.

Tiivistelmä

Käsillä oleva tutkimus esittelee yhden rakennuksen, vuonna 1935 valmistuneen Viipurin kirjaston vaiherikkaan 'elämän'. Teoreettinen lähtökohtani on materiaalisen kulttuurin merkitys ja esineiden toimijuus. Tutkimuksessani kysyn, mitä rakennukset 'tekevät' käyttäen esimerkkinä yhtä rakennusta. Kiinnostukseni tutkia aihetta perustui huomioon, että Viipurin kirjastoa on käsitelty hyvin erilaisissa yhteyksissä, arkkitehtuurin alan kirjallisuudesta sota-historioihin ja yleisönosastokirjoituksiin. Väitteeni on, että Viipurin kirjasto on rakennus, jolla on 'kyky' tuottaa erilaisia tulkintoja. Arkkitehtuurin alalla Viipurin kirjasto tunnetaan sekä merkittävänä Alvar Aallon varhaisena työnä että yhtenä modernin arkkitehtuurin avainteoksena. Rakennukseen assosioituvat merkitykset perustuvat myös sen geopoliittiseen sijaintiin ja historiaan. Kirjasto on sijainnut olemassa olonsa aikana kolmessa valtiossa: itsenäisessä Suomessa, Neuvostoliitossa ja nykyisellä Venäjällä. Kylmän sodan päättymisen jälkeen venäläiset, suomalaiset ja ulkomaiset arkkitehdit huolestuivat kirjaston kunnosta ja ryhtyivät edistämään sen restaurointia. Sijaintinsa ansiosta kirjasto on kiinnostanut myös laajempaa yleisöä, erityisesti Suomessa.

Tutkimus pyrkii vastaamaan kahteen kysymykseen: 1) Millaisissa yhteyksissä kirjasto on esitelty tärkeänä rakennuksena? 2) Mikä tekee tästä rakennuksesta erityisen ja antaa sille 'kyvyn' tuottaa erilaisia tulkintoja? Vastataksena näihin kysymyksiin olen purkanut kirjaston 'elämän' tapahtumiin, joista sen merkitys rakentuu. Tutkimuksen rakenne on temaattinen ja kronologinen. Esittelen rakennuksen keskeiset vaiheet neljässä luvussa. Ensimmäinen luku 'The City' (Kaupunki) esittelee paikallisen kontekstin, kirjaston toteutuksen Viipurin kaupungissa. Toinen luku, 'The Architect' (Arkkitehti) käsittelee arkkitehtuurin kontekstia ja keskittyy rakennuksen suunnitteluprosessiin, Alvar Aallon uran muotoutumiseen sekä rakennuksen kotimaiseen ja kansainväliseen vastaanottoon. Kolmas luku, 'The Lost Library' (Kadonnut kirjasto) kuvailee toisen maailmansodan aikaisia tapahtumia: miten rajan siirtyminen Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton välillä vaikutti Viipuriin ja kirjastoon. Neljäs luku, 'The Restoration' (Restaurointi) tuo yhteen aikaisemmin esitellyt teemat, jotka nousivat esiin myös restaurointia koskevassa keskustelussa: rakennuksen arkkitehtonisen merkityksen, Viipurin ja menetetyn Karjalan sekä kirjaston luonteen julkisena rakennuksena. Analysoin temaattisissa luvuissa esiteltyjä tapahtumia Alfred Gellin kirjassaan *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (1998) esittämän teorian avulla. Teos on tunnettu antropologian alalla, mutta sitä on hyödynnetty niukasti. Tutkimuksessani sovellan Gellin teoriaa Viipurin kirjaston tapaukseen. Väitän, että teoria tarjoaa hyödyllisiä käsitteitä ja työkaluja rakennetun ympäristön ja arkkitehtuurin analysointiin. Arkkitehtuuri on monin tavoin taiteen kaltaista, mutta samalla se ylittää tavanomaisten taideteorioiden rajat. Syynä tähän on, että arkkitehtuuri on tehty käytettäväksi, ja sen merkitykset muotoutuvat ja muuttuvat ajan kuluessa. Esitän, että Viipurin kirjasto on hyvä esimerkki gelliläisestä 'jakautuneesta objektista' (distributed object'), jolla on 'kyky' kiinnittää itseensä laajoja ja abstrakteja merkityksiä.

Preface 13

Part I Introduction 18
Setting the scene 19
Research questions and the three contexts of importance 21
The structure of the study 27
The library as event and process 27
The virtual life of the library 30
The border landscape 31
The sources of the research 36
Previous publications and dissertations on Aalto and library architecture 37
The main archival materials 42
Finnish materials as dominating sources 44
The library in the Russian context 47
One building as the research case 49
The contributions of this research 51
Search for terminology 54
What do buildings 'do' as part of a material environment 54
A theory of material culture 58
Alfred Gell – art and agency 62

Part II The library in four themes 71
Theme I The City 73
The city in history 76
Early libraries, public and private – the process towards materialisation 79
A Location for the City Library 88
´City Planning Barbarism´ – The Project for a monumental square 88
The library as a monumental building 99
The library in the cityscape 104
The design competition 114
The first step towards realisation 116
The site question re-surfaces 123
The expert statements 129
Columbus's Egg 135
The new design 139
Citizens petition to halt the construction 144
The house of wonders 147
Contemporary reception of the library in Finland 149

Theme II The Architect 166
The Viipuri Library as a work by Alvar Aalto – 'Aim to be dangerous' 170
A design towards freedom 180
The first stage 1926–1927 181
The first set of drawings – The 1928 design 190
The second set of drawings – The 1929 design 192
The third set of drawings – The 1933 design 194
The completed Library – 1935 196
Work in Aalto´s office 197
Reception in the context of architecture – Aalto's account of the library and main architectural themes 204
The architectural themes – light, acoustics, space 210
Light 211
Acoustics 221
Space under one ceiling 230
The un-noted segments of the design 237
International reception 242
The archetypical Aalto library 246

Table of Contents

Theme III The Lost Library 250
Ceded and Lost Karelia 254
The 105 days of the Winter War 30.11.1939–13.3.1940 255
'The Viipuri Library under the Bolshevik rule' 13.3.1940–26.6.1941 256
The beginning of the Continuation War and the Finnish reconquest of Viipuri 25.6.1941–29.8.1941 266
The monumental plans of Finnish architects to rebuild Viipuri 29.8.1941–20.6.1944 267
The library as part of an altered landscape 272
Re-organising the city centre 280
The Karelian offensive 9.6.1944–4.9.1944 284
The last day 20.6.1944 – the library at 4 p.m. 284
Life after 1944 288
Travels to the city of the past 295
The physical and virtual life of the library 297

Theme IV The Restoration 305
Reinterpretation – The international restoration project 308
The first Soviet renovation – 'a change of course in architecture' 309
To renovate or to restore – No news from Vyborg 316
Three men start the restoration 322
Restoration after the Cold War – The right and the last moment 325
The copy and the original 336
Whose library – whose responsibility? 343
What's the time in Vyborg? – Past and present brought together 348
The restoration in between the lines 353

Part III The Library as a distributed object 358
A Gellian reading 359
Art Nexus – relations between four basic terms 363
Aalto's oeuvre as a distributed object 371
Viipuri Library as an object distributed in space and time 376
The dilemma of time 381
The Index 385
The representative index 388
Conclusion 391
Epilogue 395

Literature and other sources 396
Bibliography 397
Appendices 408

Preface

The topic of this thesis is the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and a specific building designed by him, the Viipuri Library. The library was opened to the public in the Finnish city of Viipuri in 1935, but in 1944 the surrounding area, the city and along with them the library were annexed to the Soviet Union. Since 1991, the library has been located in present-day Russia. Alvar Aalto remains an architect of international renown, and in Finland, in particular, he is well known beyond circles of architectural enthusiasts. It might therefore be asked why Aalto again. Is there not enough research about already? And if Aalto, why focus on only a specific building?

Although there are numerous publications on Aalto and his architecture, there is still relatively little academic work scrutinising his works of his architectural office in their historical, political and/or cultural contexts. Internationally, there are numerous publications on Aalto, but ones that truly build on first-hand sources are few and far-between.This research relies most of all on sources in Finnish, Swedish, and to some extent, Russian, with the specific aim of emphasis on materials that have not already been published numerous times previously.

With this in view, this work seeks to offer information concerning questions such as what were the motivations for building a new library in Viipuri in the 1930s, how the site of this building was chosen, how it was as it received at the , both in Finland and internationally, and what has happened to the building later, up to the present day. Thus, the framing of this dissertation builds on focusing on a single building and its relevant context, presenting the 'genealogy' of the Viipuri Library. The chronological presentation is divided into four thematic chapters, which have stood out as seminal points in the life of the library.

This research is written for the Department of Architecture at Aalto University. As follows, my thesis draws significantly upon historical materials, such as archival documents, newspaper articles and architectural materials of various kinds. However, my second discipline has been urban planning, the effects of which this can also be identified as being reflected in this work. In addition to the disciplines of architecture and urban planning, my own academic background includes anthropology. This is evident in the anthropological theory for art used to analyse the case of the library.

Thus, this work is multi-disciplinary. While the case study represents the history of architecture, and historical analysis more broadly, its theoretical underpinnings are an anthropological theory of art. More specifically, the events described in the four thematic chapters are ultimately analysed thorough the lens of a theory outlined by the anthropologist Alfred Gell. This is to find terms for articulating more complex notions concerning the case of the library, but also to tease out some aspects which could be recognised to be applicable more generally, beyond

the particular case of this one building. In respect to Gell's theory, my aim is thus two-fold. On the one hand, it is to contribute towards the use of this theory, which has remained known mostly within the field of anthropology, but which I find most appropriate for analysing architecture, and the built environment more widely. On the other hand, I have for a long while been fascinated by examples of research on architecture and the built environment which introduce such depth of detail that the intricacy of the researcher's knowledge almost obviates any need for a separate theoretical analysis. However, a theory can, at best, offer answers to the question of what is there beyond all the details. I suggest that Gell's theoretical framework offers one solution to tackle this broad question.

During the long process of writing the dissertation and working in different universities and archives I have received kind assistance from several persons and institutions. The main part of the work has been written under guidance of my supervisors at Aalto University, Professor of History of Architecture, Aino Niskanen and Professor of Strategic Planning, Raine Mäntysalo. The regular sessions, and their feedback were extremely important for the process of finding the structure, and for completing the work. I thank both of you for your time, kind attention and intellectual attendance. The comments during the pre-examination process helped to improve the work in its last phase. In particular Docent Renja Suominen-Kokkonen of the Department of Art History at the University of Helsinki, offered detailed expert comments concerning Aalto, his office and the exchange of ideas in the period. As an art historian, Suominen-Kokkonen also provided relevant comments on how to introduce the anthropological theory for art, used in this work. I want to thank her for her dedicated support. Also Professor of Public Health Practice at the American University of Beirut (AUB) Cynthia Myntti provided useful comments. The pre-examiners' comments have helped me to clarify numerous points in the text, and to better relate to the point of view of a non-Finnish reader.

My interest in the built environment already began during my studies in anthropology at the University of Cambridge, where the topic of my BA dissertation was the 'The Memory of Buildings – Perceptions of Heritage in Post-Socialist Russia'. At University College London (UCL) I originally became interested in both this particular library and the works of Alfred Gell, on which my MA dissertation focused. This was also the background that led me to the conclusion that there obviously remained an abundance of most interesting materials and new information concerning the library, which needed some detective work to locate. I would like to thank my supervisors at Cambridge and UCL, in particular professors Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, Victor Buchli and Daniel Miller for their support. As I was granted a 'First Class Distinction' from UCL for my MA, I was encouraged to continue to doctoral studies. Moving back to Finland, I was granted a scholarship for three years as a member of the Doctoral Programme in the Built Environment

funded by the Finnish Academy. I am grateful for having been part of this network of students and professors, which brought together researchers focusing on a variety of perspectives associated with the built environment. The director of the Programme was Professor of Real Estate Economics Kauko Viitanen at Aalto University, whom I thank for his attentive guidance.

During my ASLA-Fulbright visiting researcher year 2012-2013 at the Columbia University in New York I had the privilege to enjoy the personal supervision of two leading scholars of urban planning and architecture, professors Robert Beauregard and Kenneth Frampton. I am extremely grateful for the insightful discussions, valuable comments and support that I received from them. At Columbia, I was also able to participate in the graduate student seminars of professors Mary McLeod and Jorge Otero-Pailos, focusing on older writings on architecture, ruination and decay.

I have also spent shorter periods as a visiting researcher at Roma Tre University, and the Sorbonne in Paris. I warmly thank Professor of Urban Planning Giorgio Piccinato, Professor of Planning Marco Gremaschi and Associate Professor in Urban Design Lucia Nucci in Rome, and Professor of Urban and Regional Planning Anna Geppert of the Town and Regional Planning Institute of the University Paris-Sorbonne (University Paris IV Sorbonne). In Rome, I had the opportunity to stay at the Finnish Institute, the Villa Lante, and in Paris at the Cité des Arts residence of the Finnish Cité Internationale des Arts Foundation, which I would like to thank for making it possible to stay in these cities and feel almost like a local. I have visited the present-day city of Vyborg several times during the dissertation process. I am indebted to Taidekeskus Salmela, and its director Tuomas Hoikkala, for giving me the opportunity to stay in Vyborg at the Lallukka residence.

I would also like to thank persons involved in the restoration of the library who have been most supportive and have offered information, especially of the kind that is not available in published books or archival materials: Director, architect Mikko Mansikka and Building Counsellor Jussi Rautsi of the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and especially architects Maija Kairamo and Tapani Mustonen of the Finnish Restoration Committee of the Viipuri Library. I am indebted to Jussi Rautsi, also for kindly giving me the permission to use a number of his photographs to illustrate this work.

Several individual persons kindly offered to discuss issues of this research with me, providing me with their knowledge and information concerning numerous details and references I might have not otherwise ever come across. Therefore, I wish to thank architects Eric Adlercreutz, Severi Blomstedt, Vezio Nava, Simo Paavilainen, Kirsti Reskalenko, Rasmus Waern and, Jenni Reuter, art historian Anja Kervanto and artist Liisa Roberts for the information and kind assistance they have offered to me. Licentiate Marja Granlund has a personal library of books on Viipuri, and materials from her father, laywer Eino Österman, a native

of Viipuri. It was due to Österman's draft for a speech to Pukkiritarit, a Viipuri club, that I came to appreciate the interesting and in many ways even amusing project for a monumental square in Viipuri, an episode of history that has been largely forgotten. I am most grateful to Marja for offering these personal archives for my use. The hospitality of Marjatta and Pekka Waris in Mikkeli made it possible to carry out thorough studies in the Mikkeli Provincial archives, where Finns evacuated the city documents and architectural drawings during World War II, and where significant amount of materials concerning the pre-war situation are located today.

This offers me also the opportunity to thank the numerous archives. Without their staff, it would not have been possible for an individual researcher to get hold of the kinds of unpublished treasures that I was lucky to have access to. I would like to thank the Alvar Aalto Foundation's archives and photo archives, the Museum of Finnish Architecture (MFA), the Mikkeli Provincial Archives (MMA), the National Archives of Finland (NARC), the Päivälehti Newspaper Foundation's archives and the Military Archives of Finland. Outside of Finland, I would like to thank the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) archives in New York, the Avery Library of Columbia University, New York, the ArkDes archives in Stockholm and the Leningrad Regional State Archive in the city of Vyborg (LOGAV).

I would also like to thank the Emil Aaltonen Foundation, the Finnish Cultural Foundation (SKR) and the Foundation for the Promotion of Karelian Culture (Karjalaisen kulttuurin edistämissäätiö, KKES) foundations for additional funding which helped me complete the research work. It is extremely important to receive funding not only to be able to begin a PhD degree, but perhaps even more so, to be able to reserve time for its completion.

Two highly qualified 'assistants', my mother, Senior Researcher Mervi Ilmonen and architect Kristo Vesikansa have offered their tireless support, and served as my 'readers' during the process, providing their perspectives on issues both small and large. I want to thank you for your patience and dedicated help.

A long time ago, I read someone's dissertation, and the point which stuck to my mind was that the author concluded the preface by saying that this work is not complete, but it is done. This is something I closely relate with. It is however knowledge of these paths, potentially leading to undiscovered treasures, which make doing research so exciting.

Helsinki 25.8.2018
Laura Berger

Part I

Introduction

Setting the scene

'The painstakingly slow restoration gained new speed with the meeting of Halonen [the president of Finland] and [Russian] prime minister Vladimir Putin on the first day of the Allegro service [new express train between Helsinki and St Petersburg] in 2010. Halonen appealed to Vladimir Putin to take into consideration the restoration of the library.'[1]

After the President of Finland and the Prime Minister of Russia met in Vyborg, Russia on 12 December 2010, it took three days for Finland's largest daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* to publish news with the headline: *´Russia to pay for the restoration of the Viipuri Library´*.[2] The Russian Federation allocated 255.5 million roubles, approximately 67 million euros for the completion of the restoration.[3] The restoration that the President of Finland appealed Russia's Prime Minister to take into consideration is the Aalto Library of Vyborg. This is a building designed by Alvar Aalto between 1927 and 1935, when the library was opened in the Finnish city of Viipuri. At the end of World War II in 1944 part of the region of Karelia, and within it the city of Viipuri were annexed to the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War, the library has been located in Vyborg in modern-day Russia.

Fig. 1. *Geographical position of Viipuri. The city is located between Helsinki and St Petersburg, and has been historically part of the network of the commercial centres around the Baltic Sea.*

[1] *Helsingin Sanomat* 23.11.2013.

[2] *Helsingin Sanomat* 15.12.2010.

[3] http://www.alvaraalto.fi/viipuri/restorat.htm Accessed May 2015.

Fig. 2. *Viipuri 1937 'Sights and public buildings' tourist map listing the most important sites in the city. The library is marked with number 41. (NARC)*

The city´s historic name of medieval origin is *Wiborg.* The Russian spelling of the name is Выборг, and accordingly in English the name is spelled *Vyborg.* In Finnish, the name of the city is *Viipuri*. Nevertheless, a number of international publications about the library, use the Finnish spelling Viipuri. Furthermore, this research draws significantly on archival materials and architectural publications, and even for the last thematic chapters of this study Finnish architects and members of the public have provided a substantial amount of material concerning the library. Consequently, it is only the the Soviet period and references to Vyborg as a city in present-day Russia where it is appropriate to use the form Vyborg. For the sake of clarity, I shall otherwise follow the Finnish spelling 'Viipuri', which is used predominantly across the original sources.

Since the end of World War II, the library's deteriorated condition has aroused attention among Finnish, Soviet/Russian and international architects. However, due to the political history of the area, the library has also interested the general

public, especially in Finland. In this context, it has been presented in connection with Viipuri as the second largest city of independent Finland before World War II, but also with the wider area which after the war came to be referred to as 'ceded Karelia' or 'lost Karelia',[4] the latter, in particular, enhancing a sense of longing, even nostalgia still recognisable in present-day Finland.

Having introduced the preliminary background, it is possible to return to the above-mentioned quote. I assert that this high-level Finnish-Russian meeting epitomises the Finnish, Russian and international discussions concerning the library, and that the allocation of funds by the Russian Federation for the completion of the restoration can be analysed as the culmination of interest that the library has attracted ever since its opening. In other words, I claim that the quote is not an exception, but rather representative of how this particular building is considered as part of some much larger context, indicating that there is something larger at stake than 'just the building'.

Research questions and the three contexts of importance

This brings me to the research questions of this work. My original interest in the library arose from realising that I had come across this specific building in curiously different contexts, ranging from professional architectural publications introducing Aalto's works to Finnish newspaper articles where the main topic under discussion was 'lost Karelia'. Thus, on a very primary level, the question which arose was 'what is going on here?' However, for the purposes of framing this research, the question needs to be elaborated. Drawing from my original interest in the topic, I recognised two defining aspects characterising this 'case of the library'. On the one hand, it appeared that there is a myriad of different contexts, where the library has been brought up. On the other hand, this library stood out as single building, a physical object which seemed to possess a kind of 'capacity' to bring together multiple contexts. These framing notions are thus helpful for formulating two more precise research questions.

This research aims to provide answers to the questions: 1) What exactly are the contexts in which the library has been presented as a building of importance? and 2) What, if anything, is special about this particular library, enabling it to have the 'capacity' to bring together these recognisably different contexts? In respect to the first question, I suggest already at this point that there are three major contexts within which the library has been explicitly discussed. The motivation for using the term 'context' is the aim to underscore that it is not solely published texts, not just images or discussions, but 'spheres of interest' of various kinds in which the library has remained a topic for a long period of time. Further, as the

[4] 'Ceded' or 'lost' Karelia are post-war terms widely used in the Finnish sources, but also in other international contexts.

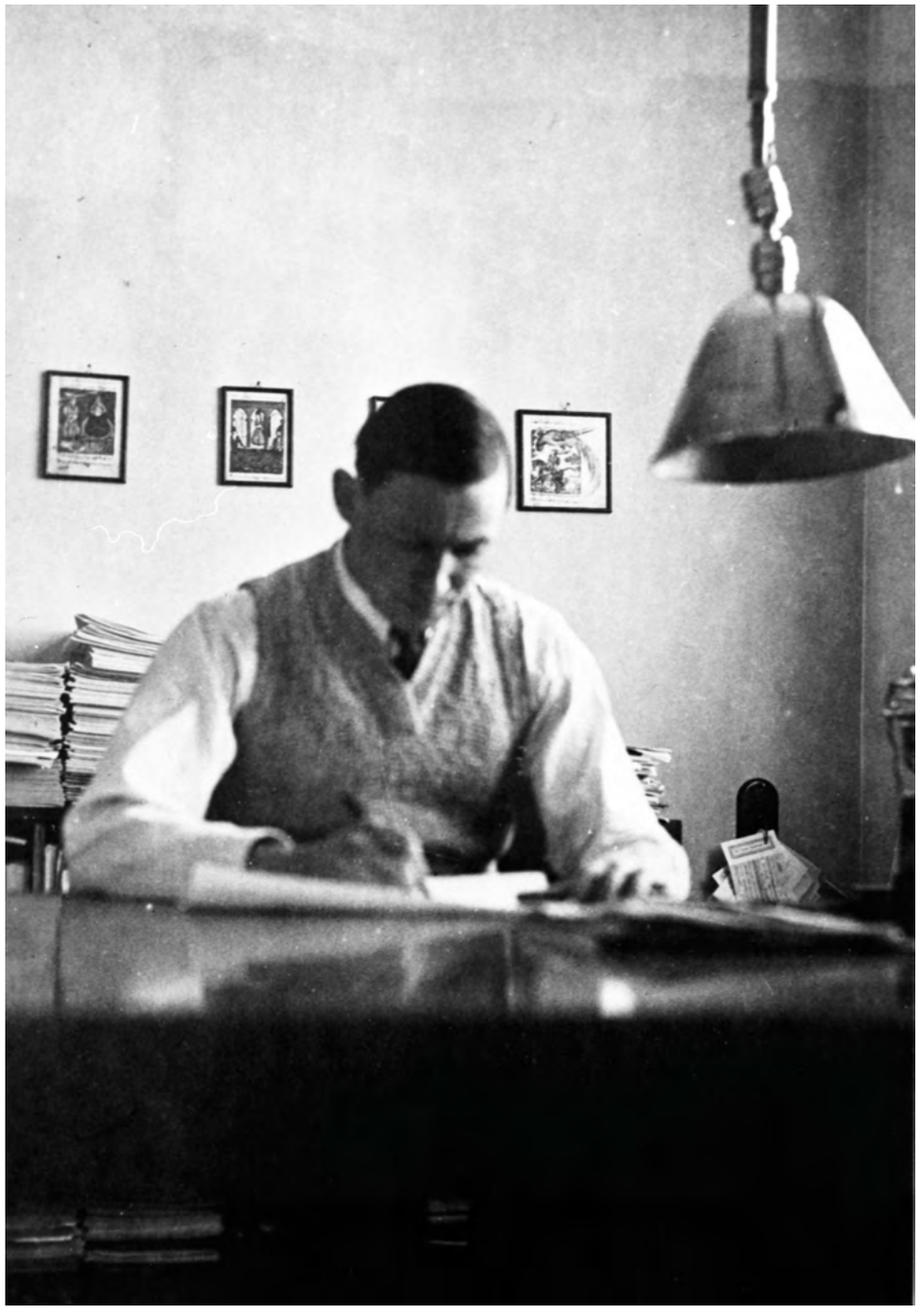


Fig. 3. *Alvar Aalto at Turku, early 1930's. (AF)*

types of materials vary from oral accounts and texts to photographs, maps, and architectural drawings, I find 'context' rather than 'interest' or 'discourse' a more appropriate term to describe what the spheres of interest quite literally are 'made of'.

The first context to be recognised is what I refer to as the *context of architecture*. In the course of this research, the second chapter focuses on this context, introducing the library's design process, the sources from where Aalto might have drawn his architectural inspirations when designing the library, followed by comparisons with preceding and later buildings designed by Aalto, as well as the library becoming immediately recognised internationally as an architectural landmark of its time. Furthermore, from the point of view of the library, the point in time where architectural authors typically begin from, is when Aalto wins the competition in 1927, and the design process begins. This context is best evidenced in a range of professional architectural publications, circulating images of the library, and for instance in the teaching of future architects. My interpretation is that the 'context of architecture' has played a seminal role in maintaining and re-establishing knowledge of the library and Alvar Aalto as part of the ´canon of architecture´. Within this context, the library's importance is presented most of all from two perspectives: the library as an example, even a key building, of modernist architecture, and/or as ´the archetypal Aalto library'. These thus enhance the building's role as part of a category (modern architecture) and the library as part of Alvar Aalto's works, part of his oeuvre.[5] Thus, it can be concluded that in the context of architecture, the library is described primarily through its relation to other modernist buildings, and compared with other buildings by the same architect.

The materials cited as evidence of the second context already begin from the first thematic chapter. This is the *context of history*, as this sphere of interest is motivated by the historical transformations that the area, the city and the building have experienced during the last century. The motivation for asserting that this context already begins from the chapter focusing on the city of Viipuri, is that in retrospect it was in the Finnish period in particular that the city grew significantly, and this has also become a time period recalled in innumerable publications. To sum up the main chronological points, after the long background concerning the need to establish not just a library but a group of public buildings, the library was finally opened in 1935 as the City Library of Viipuri in the young state of Finland, which had gained independence from Russia in 1917. However, in 1944, at the end of the Finnish-Soviet Continuation War, the city and part of the previously Finnish Karelian area were annexed to the Soviet Union. Since 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the library has been a

[5] Isohauta, T. 2003, 31.

municipal library in the Russian city of Vyborg. Thus, the context of history builds on archival materials from the city of Viipuri, but it is all the way up the present day, that in Finland, in particular, popular interest in Viipuri lives on, and in association to the city, in its library. This longstanding popular interest is evidenced in particular in Finnish public media; newspaper articles, television and radio programmes even today. As in the context of architecture, also in the context of history two perspectives emerge above all others. On the one hand there is the city of Viipuri, most of all in the period when it was Finland's second-largest city, and the capital of the larger Karelian region.[6] On the other hand, the location which is commonly referenced is the ceded or 'lost Karelia', concept which was created in Finland, when the area was annexed to the Soviet Union. In this way, the time before and after 1944 stands out as a seminal point. The context of history thus positions the library on the political-historical map of meanings associated with both the city of Viipuri as well as the 'lost Karelia'.

In addition to these most easily recognisable contexts, there is a third one, which however is in many ways less tangible. This is the *library context*, evidenced by the building's function, i.e. a public library. Upon its opening in 1935 in Finland, the Viipuri Library was among the first library buildings designed and dedicated solely for this purpose. It is noted a number of times in architectural publications that this building has kept its original purpose throughout its existence, being used as a library. Last, since its restoration, the library continues to be incredibly popular both among local people and tourists. In the city of Vyborg today, this building is likely the most important, warmest and cleanest non-commercial public space, open for everyone to use.[7] From the point of view of this research, the library context can be recognised to have been present from the very beginning, when the appropriate site for the library was being debated, and the need for an entirely new library building for Viipuri was recognised.[8] Based on

[6] Neuvonen, P. 2017, 63. The last Finnish population census was conducted in 1930.

[7] One significant source, which fills in gaps the other materials appeared to fail to answer, is the Finnish *Kirjastolehti*, a specialist library periodical. This however reveals also one reason why the library turned out to be difficult to position in the context of library buildings more generally. In the periodical, regret is expressed several times concerning the fact that there is too little research in the field of library studies/information science. Ritva Sievänen-Allen (1989,2) reflects, ´An interesting aspect about library buildings is that libraries can be regarded to be monuments, and not rarely, designing these libraries has been conceived as public monuments and only secondarily as serving a particular purpose. She further points out that '{t]his societal role which libraries have also creates a certain tension in research concerning library buildings, which by necessity affects the research.´

[8] Sven Hirn (1959) has written the most concise 'history of libraries in Viipuri', published by the *Kirjastolehti* periodical in three separate articles. As Hirn notes, there are gaps and discrepancies in histories concerning early Finnish libraries, which soon becomes evident to anyone seeking information about the matter.

all this, the 'library context' merits to be defined as a context of its own. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, I have come to the conclusion that the library context remains in many places 'weaker', in comparison with those of architecture and history.

The reason for suspecting that the library context is less evident than the other two, came from the process of locating materials in which the main object of this study, the library, is concretely presented. The reason seems to boil down to two aspects. Firstly, there has been no 'librarians movement' of persons who have actively worked for the preservation of this library. It would be misleading to claim that library experts were not concerned, but the fact remains that the ones to have actively commented on the library, appear to have been those who personally worked there. In fact, after the early documentation which was created during the process to have the library built, it was next only during World War II that individual librarians produced documents concerning the library.

The second reason is associated with the function of this building, i.e. a public library. In only so many cases, the library is discussed as a public building, for example at the beginning of the first thematic chapter, where the library is imagined as part of the cityscape of Viipuri. In other words, in most of the sources, the main focus appears to be somewhere else than creating a library building. This goes even to the extent that in the local debates concerning Aalto's design for the new building, all attention is given to the site and the appearance of the façades - almost as if the interior of the building hardly mattered at all. Indeed, it could well be argued that originally recognising Viipuri's need for a public library revolved around the question of creating a public space, a space for all regardless of their status in society, or which language group they belonged to. Here, the library's role as a public building is integral for beginning to unravel why and how so many people have been concerned about its fate, like no other building in Viipuri or 'ceded Karelia'.

This points to one path for future research. Having become acquainted with publications in the field of library/information studies to set this building in its historical context, I came across the regret that specialists of these fields have tended to prioritise other perspectives over that of library architecture or interiors. This point has been raised, for example, by Ritva Sievänen-Allen[9] in her unsurpassed work on Finnish library spaces. Simultaneously, in the field of architecture the most easily available publications seem to tend towards images, or introduce some specific design. For example, it turned out to be impossible to find an existing, trustworthy list of pre-World War II Finnish library buildings. To repair this gap to some extent, I have gone through the Finnish specialist library periodical *Kirjastolehti* from 1908 to the present day to find if and when there were relevant points of comparison, or even explicit information about this library

[9] Sievänen-Allen, R. 1989.

building. As follows, it is this periodical from which the list of other contemporary library buildings is compiled. (See appendix 1.)

Therefore, there appears to be a dilemma about the 'library context': it would be difficult to bypass it completely, but simultaneously the library's role specifically as a library tends to be embedded within discussion of something else. I suggest the library context can be recognised as a third category, but one that does not offer as much material explicitly about this particular library which is the object of study. Therefore, as a third context, it remains more implicit than the contexts of architecture and history. This in fact would offer a possibility for further discussion, to critically analyse how the relevance of a building's function has been treated in academic research on architecture.

In any research, determining the limits of relevant content is always a matter of decision. I recognised very early on in this research project that what I find to be the 'core of the story', the materials that explicitly present the library have remained hidden and scattered for the most part, and instead, I realised that 'books tend to engage in discussion with other books'. By this I mean that new books have relied on older books, and only too often has the same information been recapitulated. For this reason, I have tried to always return to the core case of the library, leaving out many other associated themes which might be informative and reveal completely new perspectives. My hope is that this research will serve as a stepping stone for developing further themes which are only alluded to here.

In sum, I propose that there are three contexts that are helpful for beginning to analyse where and how the library has been presented as a building of importance. Having said this, however, I am not proposing that these contexts should be taken as stable and mutually exclusive categories. Following through the four thematic chapters of this work, it becomes evident that passing of time is consequential. Namely, the chronological order in which the life of the library is presented consists of smaller events, and interpretations concerning the library, the city and its area have changed over time. For example, from 1944 onwards the library's location emerges as a theme as the concept of 'lost Karelia' as a geographical location becomes established in Finland. Then, for example, throughout this research it is evident that architects have prominent roles in different positions, making important decisions concerning the library, all the way from its origins to its restoration. Thus, in practice these three contexts which have been introduced do not remain neat and separate, but overlap and even become diffuse. This is something to which I shall return in the third part of this work focusing on the theoretical perspective.

The structure of the study

The library as event and process

In order to tackle the contexts within which the library has recognisably been presented, I offer two terms which are helpful for beginning to unravel the relationship between the contexts. Further, I propose that these terms are useful for articulating the structure of this study.

First is the term *event,* defined as *a thing which happens or takes place, especially one of importance*. The reason for using just this term is twofold: firstly, 'event' appears the most appropriate term for the present case where the 'contexts' evidently contain smaller aspects within them as will be illustrated in the following chapters. Secondly, 'events' introduced in this work come in different sizes and range in complexity. For example, Aalto's design process for the library has been presented in numerous architectural publications as the background describing how the library came to be: as one event. However, similarly the large and incredibly complex 'event of war' (World War II) is referred to in retrospect as one grand historical event, a point in time which changed everything.

The other term is *process.* I propose that the chapters of this work can be seen as 'leading to' the point of the library having accumulated a role that it is possible for two state leaders to discuss its restoration as a matter to be solved, as quoted above. The chapters of this research could thus be understood to consist of a long chain of *small events*, not necessarily as directly causal, but nevertheless as events having contributed to the *process* of different contexts having become associated with this individual building, and having accumulated meanings that have 'stuck' to this particular library building.

While I have introduced the idea of three different contexts, the main body of this research consists of *four thematic chapters*. The main difference between the contexts and the four thematic chapters is that the contexts represent my original hypothesis of clusters of relevant materials, where the case of the library is explicitly discussed. The thematic chapters represent a refined version of what I found to be the 'core' of the story. The goal of the four thematic chapters is to offer insight into the 'process' culminating in the restoration of the library, each chapter consisting of smaller events which offer a closer view of the library at specific points in time. Since my aim is to get to the part of the story which has remained under the surface, to a large degree remaining unpublished or available in other languages than in English, this has also led to an attempt to avoid summarising the events in a form from which it would be impossible to distinguish individual voices or other details. This is why this research contains paraphrases and quotations from the original materials.

The chapters introduce the themes of, first, the perspective of the Finnish city of Viipuri, up to the point of the library's opening in 1935. Here, the focus

is on the events of the period in a specific place, Viipuri. This is the historical background, which has not been published as part of the history of the library. The perspective of the city demonstrates how the history of architecture typically begins from the competition for a building, and the point in time when the architect enters the story. From the point of view of more general histories focusing on the city or the area, my interpretation is that this segment is too specific a layer, and hence has not been introduced in detail in any single publication. From the point of view of this research, the site question represents a seminal part of the chain of events which can be seen to have led to the creation of the library. Furthermore, I propose that the condensed history of the library institution in Viipuri, together with the issue of the site, brings to light a number of aspects useful for understanding how the library might be perceived to have a special role as a library built in Finland, and simultaneously as a public building in Viipuri. Moreover, the library institution in this place and epoch together with the specific site of this building might at first appear to be extremely abstract themes. They, however, directly affected the contents, interior and the shape of the building, as achieved in the new library in 1935.

The second thematic chapter corresponds most closely with the 'context of architecture', with strong focus on the architect. Here the perspective focuses on the library's position as an example of Aalto's works and as a modernist building. The main interest is in the time period between 1927 and 1935 when Aalto was designing the library.[10] While the time frame overlaps with that of the first chapter, here the events are described from the point of view of Aalto and his design process. The main assertion of this chapter, supported by the materials, is that Aalto essentially dominated how the library was originally described: it was Aalto's words, drawings, and photographs taken under his supervision, which were published and disseminated in Finland and internationally. Further, the effect is that also in later architectural publications it is Aalto's articulations which have remained to be repeated.

The third chapter concentrates on the period from 1939 to 1991. The history of Finland, the Soviet Union and World War II represent topics about which there is abundance of research and publications from a variety of perspectives, and therefore, my research notes these broad historical developments only so far as to frame events concerning the library. This chapter focuses on the small scale events in which the library has played a role. Here, the role of war-time

[10] This is the 'core' of the time period presented in this chapter. However, the period discussed here is not as absolute, because it is relevant to note Aalto's preceding works and influences, which can be interpreted to have affected his library design. Similarly, this chapter does not strictly end in 1935, because the most influential international, early reception took place few years after the library's completion. It could be argued that the turning point ending the 'early reception' is the beginning of World War II.

documentation plays a seminal role. In closing, this chapter introduces the Soviet restoration completed in 1961, and international, post-World War II perceptions concerning Vyborg and the library up to the present day.

Fourth and last comes the restoration project. Originally the aim was to initiate the restoration as a project between Finland and the Soviet Union, but it was after 1991, the year marking the collapse of the USSR, that the involvement of the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library became more effective, and the restoration transformed into a project between Finland and current Russia. As I had recognised at a very early stage that the library has continued to arouse interest in present-day Finland, in this chapter I aim to offer representative examples of how, and why this particular building has remained topical. This research touches very lightly on the technical side of the restoration, as this has been documented in two books by the Restoration Committee, published in English with abundant illustrations.[11]

The structure of the four chapters can be conceived of in two ways: as *chronological* as well as *thematic*. Reading chronologically, the first and second chapter tell the story of the library as a Finnish building, significantly overlapping in time. The third and fourth thematic chapters again present the time during and after the major historical event of World War II and the library, the city of Viipuri and 'lost Karelia' becoming part of the Soviet Union and later Russia.

With the division of four thematic chapters, my aim is to introduce the themes which came to be most dominant after 'sieving' through masses of materials, to find the grains speaking about the library. To add, the purpose of the four separate chapters is also to make visible how totally separate the four themes are in the existing materials: first, the history of Finnish-era Viipuri where the library project had its origins; second, the professional architectural perspectives enhancing the role of Aalto; and third, events associated with the library during World War II being such small fragments that to my knowledge before this research, no one has made an attempt to compile them. Last, the fourth thematic chapter brings forth one more new genre of sources, as the restoration has been actively followed in Finnish public media and published in two professional books by the Restoration Committee, presenting the successful restoration. By setting the four thematic chapters in chronological order, my aim is to make visible the structure of what the meanings associated with the library are 'made of'. An additional motivation for introducing the potential dynamics between the different chapters is that from the beginning of this research, a major question that stood out to me was whether the physical building truly has a role in the events, or whether this was a case of discourse where the library was appropriated as a convenient reference point

[11] Adlercreutz , E. et al. 2009 and Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2015. 'Restoration Committee' will be used as short version of the name.

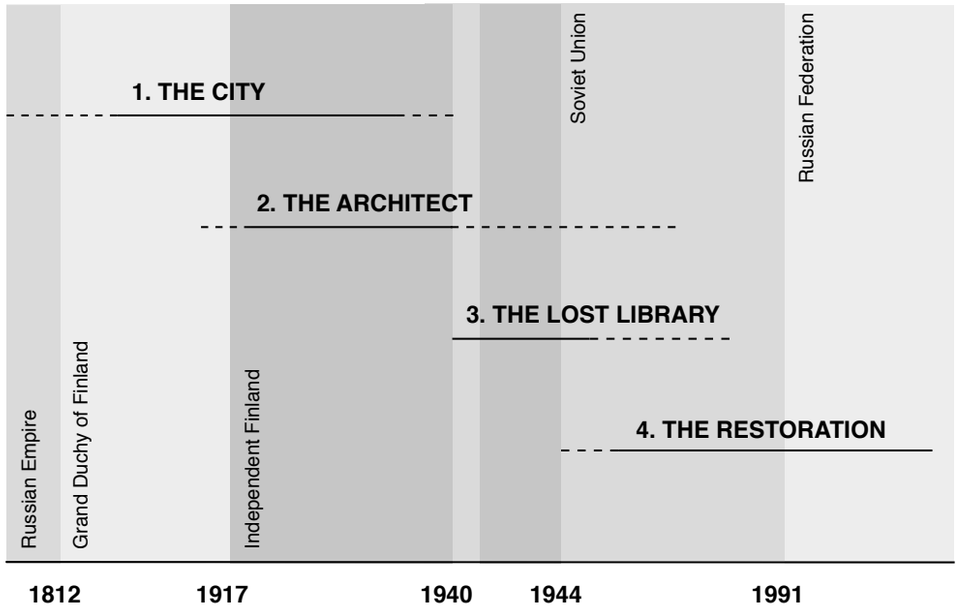


Fig. 4. *Timeline for the four thematic chapters.*

for articulating larger and more abstract issues, such as the city of Viipuri of the Finnish era or Aalto's fame.

The virtual life of the library

One reason why the role of the physical building stood out as a question which could – and should –not be neglected was that international architectural writings, in particular, often reveal that the author has *not* visited the physical building, with interpretation based on images from the time of the building's opening and earlier writings. During the Soviet era, from roughly 1944 until 1991 foreigners had limited access to Vyborg, and consequently this created two very different readings of the place and its history.

There are two most prevalent ways how the international publications evidence of cut to the physical location and the library as it was realised. Firstly, there are descriptions where other buildings by Aalto have been confused with the library.[12] For example, among the earliest publications, the *Aalto - Architecture and Furniture* exhibition booklet published by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (1938), offers a misleading description of the very complex

[12] This regrettably still takes place today. For example, Sarah Williams Goldhagen's chapter in Anderson S., Fenske G. and Fixler D. eds. (2012) makes notes of interior details and relationships between the spaces which reveal that the author has not visited the library and consequently in many places appears to be describing some completely different building by Aalto.

interior of the library, revealing that the author has had access to drawings and images, but has not been able to experience this complex building in person. Secondly, the other, most striking, misunderstanding is that the library would have been destroyed in the 1940s, and thus all that remains is documentation of the building. Hence, in addition to bringing forth more rarely quoted materials,[13] this work can hopefully fill in some gaps in information by bringing together information which has remained scattered in different archives and existing publications. In this way, the international publications reflect a reading based completely on pre-1944 materials such as images, maps and drawings. By contrast, the local Soviet people had only the physical place by which to decipher what the place was about. The effect of the library, the city of Viipuri and 'lost Karelia' becoming 'virtual' to the world outside is further substantiated by an entire body of Finnish literature where this part of Karelia is presented as the original home of Finnish culture, and the nostalgia for this lost land.

Briefly put, the library could be said to have a 'virtual life', in which images, texts and other documents play the most important role, going beyond the physical building itself. My interpretation is that the internationally circulating materials are of importance as kinds of small physical parts, in a sense extensions of the library building. However, I argue that without the specific place and the passing of time, it would not be possible for the library to have a 'virtual life'. This is a notion to which I return in the last chapter, introducing the theoretical analysis of the case.

The border landscape

It has been analysed that the most striking influences on a border landscape and its inhabitants will frequently result from changes in boundary position, which transfer areas from one state to another. Finland has been for hundreds of years a borderland between Sweden and Russia, and its eastern boundary has changed several times as a consequence of the territorial conflicts between the two states.[14] The area was also the arena for a struggle that resulted in the coexistence of two distinct religious traditions until World War II.[15] In association with this, Finland has had a role as a border country between the Eastern and Western

[13] As an example, the original materials by Aalto and his office as well as many relevant materials concerning Viipuri are available only in Finnish language. Later, public interest in the library, the city, and 'ceded Karelia' emerged in Finnish media, but typically existing publications have not referenced sources across different genres, as this work does.

[14] Paasi, A. 1996,102.

[15] Fingerroos, O. 2008, 235.

cultural realms, and the historical culmination of these relations has taken place in Karelia, its border province.[16]

Today Karelia is divided between the Russian Republic of Karelia, the Russian Leningrad Oblast, and two regions of Finland: South Karelia and North Karelia. Notably, some parts of eastern Karelia have never been a part of Finland. Therefore, Karelia should be considered a heterogeneous area, parts of which are culturally connected to either Finland or Russia.[17] After ceded Karelia became part of the Soviet Union in 1944, Viipuri was part of the Leningrad oblast, the area governed from Leningrad. Therefore, Viipuri was not part of the Finnish-Karelian Soviet Republic, later Karelian Autonomous Soviet Republic,[18] and was instead markedly cut off from contacts with Finnish-speakers, or associated minorities within the Soviet Union.

What is noteworthy is that the ceded Karelia and Viipuri as its capital are of special importance in Finnish culture, and the loss of this area represents a trauma that is still recalled in present-day Finland. I suggest that there are two aspects which are seminal for understanding why the geographical location of the library has come to have such a special role in Finland, in particular since its loss. The main reason why the Karelian area is of major importance in Finnish culture as a national symbol, is most of all rooted in the invention of a tradition, and particularly Finland's national epic, the *Kalevala* has been firmly connected with the Karelian region. At the end of the 19th century a national movement known as *Karelianism* emerged in Finland extending from the early romantic cultural enthusiasm of poets and artists to explicit political agendas in the 1920s emphasising the connections between the Finns and the Finnic tribes in Russian Karelia. Its most extreme version led to visions of a Greater Finland, which would also include areas of Russian Karelia that had never been part of Finland.[19] My proposition thus is that there are essentially two segments of annexed Karelia as it is understood in Finland: the 'ceded Karelia' referring to the geographical area and the 'lost Karelia' associated with the symbolic, imagined original land which after World War II was transformed into a nostalgised land of memories.

16 The history of the city is generally seen to begin from 1293 when the Swedes built Wiborg castle to defend the area against the Novgorod. As discussed in the first chapter, the city has a heritage that is Swedish, Russian and Finnish, and to some extent German. Though not officially included among the Hanseatic ports, Viipuri had significant commerce as a seaport also serving the Hanseatic network. Thus, it has at times been discussed in Finland that also Swedes and even Germans could with due cause regard Viipuri as part of their heritage.

17 Fingerroos, O. 2008, 236.

18 When the ceded area was annexed to the Soviet Union first in 1940, Viipuri became part of the newly established Finnish-Karelian Soviet Republic. This period however lasted for about a year until Finnish army re-conquered the area.

19 Paasi, A. 1996, 127.

Fig. 5. *Map of different Karelias.*

1. Karelian isthmus: ceded to USSR in 1944, now Russia
2. Lagoda Karelia: ceded to USSR in 1944, now Russia
3. Western-Karjala: part of Finland
4. Northern-Karjala: part of Finland
5. Aunus Karelia: part of USSR, today Russia
6. Viena Karelia: part of USSR, today Russia
7. Tver Karelia part of USSR, today Russia

(*Source: Pro-Karelia http://prokarelia.net/fi/?x=artikkeli&article_id=1899&author=10)*

The second aspect is the totality of the separation created by the World War II. Between 1939 and 1944 Finland had to evacuate its population on the Karelian isthmus, not only once, but twice.[20] While evacuating the population in its entirety is an exceptional strategy, the historian Eero Kuparinen[21] has pointed out that it is also utmost exceptional as a state level decision that those fallen in the war were not left behind but were transported for burial in their home districts. The post-war separation of the area was enhanced by the Soviet strategy to bring in new inhabitants from far away, for example from the Caucasus and Kirghizia to ensure that there were no contacts across the border. As part of the Soviet Union, a large part of ceded Karelia was categorised as a closed military area due to its proximity to the border. On top of all this, the Cold War lasted from 1947 until 1991, creating a further division between the Soviet Union and the outside world

20 Saarela, J. and Finnäs, F. 2009, 75.

21 Personal communication.

for almost fifty years. My proposition is that this event created quite an exceptional situation, almost a kind of historical laboratory. On the Finnish side (including the rest of the 'capitalist world') there were the evacuated pre-1944 materials such as maps, photographs and different types of official documents concerning the area, Viipuri and the library. The new Soviet inhabitants, many of them having lived in villages rather than cities before coming to Vyborg, found the city strange and foreign, and were even affraid of the place. The new inhabitants quite literally only had the physical city from which to decipher what the 'place was all about'. Consequently, the new local people thought that the city must be in some way Baltic, as its appearance was so different from other cities in the Soviet Russia.

To connect the issue to the present day, Finnish media still periodically take up the issue of the 'lost Karelia', exemplifying the relationship that Finns continue to have with the area. As 'lost Karelia' is in many ways an abstract concept, I offer three examples illustrating this relationship. In 2010 the largest Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* published an article with the title 'Karjala is a land, which does not exist, with the subheadings The area was as ravished as Poland, but the population had nowhere to retreat. The new owner soon milked the captured land dry.'[22] The article offered a review of the last part of an ambitious book project, published as a series of six large edited publications telling the history of the Karelian area from multiple perspectives from prehistory to the present day. In the last volume of the series, the history of the Karelian region is positioned alongside the Finnish Karelians having lost their land but not their identity, while the annexed area ruled by the Soviet Union, later Russia, where the new population lived without history for half a century, is only now beginning to form its own mental environment.

In the same year, the tabloid paper *Ilta-Sanomat* published a review entitled 'The human experiment called Viipuri' of a documentary film *True stories: Russian Vyborg* by the Finnish documentarist and Russia expert Arvo Tuominen. Interview with local people show that the third generation is becoming interested in the history of the place, while the first generation brought to Vyborg from kolkhozes and steppe landscapes had no experience of living in a city. As part of this, it is noted, the perplexed new inhabitants had planned to turn Aalto's library into a public sauna.[23]

Third is a column in *Helsingin Sanomat* from 2014 titled 'France's Karelia - Alsace was a great trauma for the French. Longing there was bottomless',[24] describing the loss of this area to Germany in 1871, after which Alsace-Lorraine

[22] *Helsingin Sanomat* 6.6.2010.

[23] *Ilta-sanomat* 17.5.2011. The documentary was made in 2009.

[24] *Helsingin Sanomat* 31.8.2014. The newspaper published a series following the events of World War I.

(Elsass-Lothringen) became a national trauma which has still not been forgotten. The column makes no other reference to Karelia except in the title, but there is nothing unclear about the analogy that what Alsace/Elsass is to the French, Karelia is to the Finns.[25]

Finnish historian Rainer Knapas has summarised the issue of Karelia particularly well: 'Where is Karelia located? Nowhere, everywhere, or east of Finland? It is a concept, an Arcadia, which only exists in thoughts and in imagination. It is also a real geographical area somewhere between Finland and Russia. If one wants to position Karelia geographically, one also needs specify what Finland and Russia are, where they are located and what historical period we are talking about. This is where two kinds of lands meet, which can be referred to as Karelia, that which is imagined and the other which exists in time and place.'[26]

Last comes the memory of World War II, in particular the final stages when Finnish troops retreated from Viipuri in five hours. Thus, one recognisable event which has been debated in numerous war histories is the loss of Viipuri, where the main question posed is why in the summer of 1944 Finland finally lost this important city without much defence, almost as if by mistake.[27] This is the geopolitical subtext of all the events described in this thesis.

Here World War II is set out as a chain of sub-events. As the framing approach is to unravel the genealogy of the library, the focus is on discussing the interim periods when Finns/Soviets have lived in Viipuri and used the library. Thus, to set the context, first will be introduced the periods of action within World War II, namely the Finnish-Soviet Winter War (30.11.1939–13.3.1940), the Finnish-Soviet Continuation War of 26.6.1941–19.9.1944, its last stages involving the Red Army's 'great offensive' in 9.6.1944–4.9.1944. The creation of the concept of 'lost Karelia' was sealed by the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty, confirming Finland's loss of the ceded areas to the Soviet Union. In this work, main attention is in the interim periods between fighting. After its opening, the library had time to function as part of the Finnish library system in the Finnish city of Viipuri from its opening on 13.10.1935 until the beginning of the Winter War on 30.11.1939.

[25] There is an entire body of literature on 'divided cities' and the historical displacement of populations. For example, Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) writes in her book about the division of Cyprus and the experience of the state having handed over homes, which still contained personal items left behind by the transferred population.

[26] Knapas, R. 2015, 9.

[27] All in all, World War II and the events which led to Finland losing Viipuri along with the 'ceded Karelia', have been researched from multiple perspectives and published several times. Notably the perspective that Viipuri was lost as if by mistake is a Finnish view of the issue. Bair Irincheev has pointed out how the Soviet/Russian histories have underlined urban warfare in the city, whereas based on the remaining documents from both sides, very little fighting took place on the streets of Vyborg. (Irincheev, B. and Larenkov, S. 2016).

Thus, the period of 'normal life' when the building was fulfilling its purpose as a Finnish city library, lasted approximately four years.[28] Consequently, the 'user experiences' from this time are scarce.[29] This further enhances the notion that for most of its existence, the library has been in a transitory stage: part of a process of being designed/built, under threat/in need of repair and finally being restored. But somewhat surprisingly and regardless of the turmoil the library has been part of, except for being derelict for some years in the Soviet Union, the building has been used for its original purpose as a public library.[30]

The sources of the research

As was already pointed out, this research draws on a variety of sources. Like in any research, however, it was relevant to establish early on what kinds of sources are most appropriate for this research project, bearing in mind the research questions, and the focus on the library as the main object of study. Internationally, there are literally thousands of publications on Aalto and his works or in some way referring to them. A search with 'Alvar Aalto' in the *Finna* database compiling results from different Finnish libraries and museum collections, gives the number of books as 2,179.[31] Using 'Viipuri' as a search term, the number of books is 7,657, while the total result offers over 70,000 documents.[32] As historians Yuri Shikalov and Tapio Hämynen have noted, there is an abundance of publications on Viipuri

[28] Yet, in retrospect the library as a 'Finnish library' is how practically all architectural publications have presented the building. In publications representing professional architecture, the library is a building by Aalto, designed for the second-largest city of Finland. As the focus is the time of the completion of the building, not events since, the location is a given fact. However, the criticism, which has at times been brought up is that this easily misguides readers not familiar with the history of this area.

[29] There are few recollections of how the library was used by Finns who lived in Viipuri in their childhood, accessing the library's children's section. All in all, this can be recognised as one strand of how Viipuri is remembered in Finland. On the one hand, it was a lively, international and commercially vibrant centre, and on the other hand, due to the city being lost there are many personal recollections in which Finns have later recalled Viipuri as the city of their childhood. Both perspectives are illustrative of perspectives 'halted in time' to the period before 1939.

[30] After World War II, the library stood empty for almost a decade. This is discussed later, in association with the Soviet restoration plans.

[31] https://www.finna.fi/Search/Results?limit=0&lookfor=alvar+aalto&type=AllFields&filter%5B%5D=%7Eformat %3A%220%2FThesis%2F%22 Accessed Jan.2018

[32] https://www.finna.fi/Search/Results?lookfor= Viipuri&type=AllFields&filter%5B0%5D=%7Eformat%3A%220%2F Thesis%2F%22&dfApplied=1&limit=20&sort=relevance%2Cid+asc&lng=fi Accessed Jan.2018

in Finland, but except for Juha Lankinen's and Petri Neuvonen's research,[33] there is an outstanding lack of research concerning the post-World War II period. It is Shikalov and Hämynen who have begun to fill this gap and analyse why this has remained so. According to them, the Soviet-period documents still remain relatively difficult to access. In the Soviet Union, or later in Russia, there has been no notable research on modern day Vyborg, or what has happened there after the war. The reason is that after the war, the local Soviet people had no previous contact with the city, and no knowledge of its history. It is only now, in the 2000s that people of present-day Vyborg are becoming more interested in the past of their home town.[34]

It would thus hardly be viable to take into account all the possible books in which Aalto or Viipuri are the main topic.[35] The strategy that I adopted at the beginning of this work was to start from materials where the library is presented at more length, and the period materials which are explicitly associated with the project for creating the library. In this way it became possible to build upon them, while still aiming to return to the core of the story, i.e. the materials where the library is explicitly presented. This is because the large contexts of Aalto, history, and libraries would make it only too easy to follow a route leading far away from this particular library building.

Previous publications and dissertations on Aalto and library architecture

To provide a sketch of the types of sources used, I introduce here the main publications where the library has been previously presented, dissertations focusing on Aalto, as well as other doctoral theses, and two professional periodicals which I have found to be the most helpful background materials for my own research. The main source providing an important cross-section of many of the events already preceding the architectural competition for the library in 1927, is a booklet titled *Viipurin Kaupungin Kirjasto*, edited by architect Aarne Ervi who at the time was

[33] Architect Juha Lankinen (13.10.1937 Viipuri-11.9.2015 Helsinki) was an expert on Viipuri through personal interest and inheritance of materials from his father, architect Jalmari Lankinen who pursued his career in Viipuri. Juha Lankinen is also known for a model of Viipuri, as it was at 10.30 a.m. on 2.9.1939. Lankinen was also seminal in creating the 'virtual Viipuri' 3D project, available online http://www.virtuaaliviipuri.tamk.fi/en/project. Petri Neuvonen is a Finnish architect, and author of several books on Viipuri introducing the city and its architecture and ranging from architecture books to a travel guide, referenced also in Russian language publications.

[34] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013,6.

[35] Consequently, there is also a number of books and articles where the library has been presented more briefly, whether in the context of Aalto and his architecture, that of the city or the wider area.

working in Aalto´s office.[36] Most important here is the description concerning the site for the library, as recalled by Otto-Iivari Meurman[37], head of city planning in Viipuri, who was involved with the library project throughout, from taking part in defining the site to writing the programme for the competition and serving as the mediator between all the parties involved. This booklet is dated 13.10.1935, the day of the opening of the library, presenting a compilation of speeches given at the opening. The speeches are that of the city mayor Arno Tuurna, the librarian Johan Vasenius, the city planner Otto-Iivari Meurman, the architect Alvar Aalto and the engineer C. Rosenqvist. In addition to them, the booklet names persons involved with the construction and design of the building,[38] accompanied by images that Aalto had carefully supervised. These are the very same images later reproduced in numerous publications introducing the library. This booklet also contains advertisements from companies that provided materials and technological solutions for the building, offering a charming glimpse of the period. As a single source, it provides invaluable accounts of several individuals telling of the background and how the library came to be realised as it was. However, this original booklet has been published only in Finnish, and has remained rarely quoted. The other relevant source which brings together several perspectives on the library is *Acanthus 1990*, a yearbook of the Museum of Finnish Architecture (MFA) where the library is presented in three separate articles under the theme 'Paper - Architecture - Ruins'. The articles are by Simo Paavilainen, Kristiina Nivari and Sergei Kravchenko, the Viipuri city architect from the last part of the Soviet period.

While one might assume based on Aalto's fame that there would be an abundance of doctoral dissertations on him and his works, this is not the case.[39] One

[36] This booklet has been published twice: first for the opening of the library on 13.10.1935, reprint in 1997. Although it is not explicated in the booklet, the texts accord with the speeches given at the opening ceremony. A number of such booklets survive from the first part of the 1900s apparently published to celebrate opening of larger building projects such as hospitals and cultural facilities. Among Aalto's works, a similar booklet was produced for the opening of the Paimio Sanatorium in 1933.

[37] Otto-I. Meurman 4.6.1890, Ilmajoki - 19.8.1994, Helsinki. http://www.mfa.fi/arkkitehtiesittely?apid=3850. Accessed Jan.2017.

[38] There are varying mentions of who were the architects working for Aalto during the long project for the library. This booklet provides one list, but it is anything but complete.

[39] A work also worth mentioning is Deborah Cernin's MA thesis on Viipuri, for which she interviewed Jussi Rautsi and Mikko Mansikka. The Finna database offers 117 results for academic theses on Aalto. This number includes also thesis made for vocational institutions. The number of PhD dissertations is all together 20. This list covers theses also written in other languages and available in Finnish libraries and museums, and thus gives some indication of the number of existing works. https://www.finna.fi/Search/Results?limit=0&filter%5B0%5D=%7Eformat%3A%221%2FThesis%2FThesis%2F%22&lookfor=alvar+aa lto&type=AllFields&lng=en-gb

explanation might be that the original materials are in Finnish and Swedish. There are three notable Finnish doctoral dissertations with focus on Aalto's architecture, and have been written for the fields of architecture, social sciences and urban planning. *Arkkitehdit, sota ja yhdyskuntasuhteiden hallinta. Alvar Aallon Kokemäenjokilaakson aluesuunnitelma tilansäätelyprojektina* by Terttu Nupponen came out in 2000. Her research tells about the relationship between land use and the interests of different types of stake-holders during the 1940s. Her case example is Aalto's Kokemäki valley regional plan from 1942, through which she describes the broader context of regulating space.

Almost a decade later came Markku Norvasuo's (2009) *Taivaskattoinen huone. Ylävalon tematiikka Alvar Aallon arkkitehtuurissa 1927-1956*, describing Aalto's use of light. Indeed, the second thematic chapter of this work has benefitted from Norvasuo's meticulous work, displaying close knowledge of Aalto's buildings. The latest Finnish doctoral dissertation on Aalto, *Architecture and Technology. Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium*, by Marianna Heikinheimo (2016), in which she enquires how Aalto was able to negotiate between international ideology and local building culture in Finland in the 1930s. In her analysis of the Paimio Sanatorium, she applies Bruno Latour's actor-network theory.

Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen's (2003) doctoral dissertation *Emphatetic Affinities. Alvar Aalto and his Millieus* for Columbia University, New York also served as basis for the subsequent book under the title *Alvar Aalto Architecture, Modernity and Geopolitics.*[40] Pelkonen examines Aalto's own writings, and positions his oeuvre in the context of geographic and geopolitical circumstances of the epoch, asserting that Aalto held what might be called a 'strategic response' to his intellectual and cultural milieu.

Three doctoral dissertations associated with my topic have also been most important to this research, both in content and for offering starting points for finding additional sources. They are Ulla Salmela´s (2004) *Urban Space and Social Welfare. Otto-Iivari Meurman as a Planner of Finnish Towns 1914-1937*. This thesis includes Meurman´s work in Viipuri, including the site question for the library. Salmela's work was important for me to be able to position the library in the planning context of Viipuri, but also more widely in the planning ideas and influences at the time when the site of the library was debated.

The second thesis is by a person known in Finland within information and library studies. Ritva Sievänen-Allen´s (1989)[41] doctoral dissertation represents a rare example in information studies by focusing on the open-plan design of

[40] Pelkonen, E.-L. 2009.

[41] Sievänen-Allen, R. 1989. The title of her work translates roughly as: 'The open plan and its use in Finnish library architecture before 1940 – A description of the development of library architecture with the Tampere and Viipuri libraries and the Åbo Academy library as examples'

Finnish library spaces with the aid of three examples, one of them being the Viipuri Library. This verifies the role of the Viipuri Library as one of the very first buildings in Finland specifically built as a public library, and makes evident how curiously neither Aalto nor later architectural critics have positioned the library in the context of other library buildings in Finland. Sievänen-Allen's research makes a convincing case for how the 'Carnegie library' as a building type had no definite meaning in Finland at the time, but for example the Viipuri's Library was referred to as such to promote the building as the latest design containing new technological innovations.

The third work is Raija-Liisa Heinonen´s (1986) study describing the breakthrough of functionalism in Finland.[42] a valuable ´source book´ for positioning in library to the context of Finnish architecture at the time. While architecture and architectural circles of the 1930s have been researched after Heinonen's work, she discusses Aalto, his colleagues and Finnish as well as international comparison points with references ranging from interviews to newspaper articles to international publications. After Heinonen's work, there have been other noteworthy dissertations introducing Finnish modern architecture. A notable one is by Juhana Lahti (2006), *Arkkitehti Aarne Ervin moderni. Kaupunkisuunnittelu pääkaupunkiseudulla*, introducing architect Aarne Ervi's architecture and urban plans. Ervi was also among the early staff employed at Aalto's office, and has described this experience as formative. However, regardless of new research since Heinonen's study was published, the reason why references to her are so numerous is that she compares the library with other Aalto's works, Aalto's own writings and international interpretations, also raising points which to my knowledge have remained less known.

A recent dissertation about Viipuri is Petri Neuvonen's (2017) *Linnoituksesta historialliseksi muistomerkiksi. Viipurin vanhakaupunki 1856-1939,* describing the time period when the city of Viipuri grew significantly, but also the transformation of the old town into a historical monument.

Finally, also two professional periodicals have provided both an essential background context and information that has remained period-specific knowledge and has not been quoted since. The first periodical is the *Finnish Architectural Review*, a professional architectural periodical having originally appeared in Swedish as *Arkitekten* from 1903, and since 1921 in Finnish as *Arkkitehti,* still published today. This periodical has published notable new buildings, articles

[42] To be precise this is not a dissertation as the author died before the final completion of the work. As an outstanding source outlining the emergence of 'functionalism' in Finland, the work was published posthumously. To add, Heinonen's work includes a wide range of published materials, Finnish and international, but also interviews and newspaper articles, At the time of my research, one outstanding problem was that the time period is too modern in the sense that a large part of the Finnish newspapers which would be of use were digitised to approximately 1900, but not later.

concerning the rebuilding plans for Viipuri during the war but also, for example, the proceedings of the meetings of the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA), in which Aalto was actively involved throughout his career.[43]

The other periodical is a professional library journal which has had three names during its existence.[44] The first issue of the periodical came out in 1908 under the name *Kansanvalistus*, being changed to *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1921-1947, and since 1948 to the present day under the name *Kirjastolehti*. This periodical has made a note of all important events in the development of Finnish libraries. As also this periodical was established before Finnish independence in 1917, its first decades contain detailed information about the project of building the Finnish nation. This project significantly relied on two important institutions: the primary schools and a network of public libraries, both to be made be accessible to all citizens free of charge. A significant part of the project were buildings designed specifically as libraries, educating individuals to treat books properly (a problem often noted in the periodical are 'dirty hands' damaging books) and even children learning to use the open shelf system. For this research, I have paged through every single issue of this periodical since it was established in 1908. The reason for researching the library context to an extent that far exceeds the purposes of this study was that I soon found that there was no other source that could offer such a multi-faceted view a libraries and all that libraries could potentially be about. The additional reason was that except for Sievänen-Allen's dissertation, which has a limited time frame, there was no source where it would have been possible to find out about Finnish library buildings, when they have been built or about their architecture and interior design. This represents a large theme which would offer several new avenues of research. In this work, library history has been condensed due to the fact that it branches off in so many directions that would be secondary to this book, where the framing object of study is the Viipuri Library. For the purposes of this research, this specialist library periodical provides a context for understanding what the library meant at the time it was opened, but also some exceptional insights regarding specific interior solutions in the library.

[43] The periodical *Arkitekten/Arkkitehti* will be referred to as *The Finnish Architectural Review*. Also the Finnish Association of Architects will be referred to with the abbreviation SAFA. *The Finnish Architectural Review's* numbers from the first years of the 1940s in particular bring forth articles by individual architects and SAFA meetings, which include information not quoted since. These are referenced in the third chapter, introducing the period of World War II.

[44] http://kirjastolehti.fi/esittely/ Accessed Jan.2017. The word 'kansanvalistus' could be translated as public education. The association behind the periodical is now called 'Association for life -long learning'. Kirjasto means library. From the point of view of this research, this periodical - in all of its three forms - represents the single source based on which it would be possible to compile a list of Finnish library spaces and buildings up to the present day.

The main archival materials

In addition to the above-mentioned sources, the most important archival materials for this research are from the following archives. The Museum of Finnish Architecture (MFA) in Helsinki has an internationally exceptional collection of individual architects' works, but also competition entries, photographs and other associated materials. The Aalto Foundation (AF) archives in Jyväskylä hold the archives of Alvar Aalto's office, including all the original drawings and correspondence. The Mikkeli Provincial Archives (MMA), in Mikkeli is the location where Finns evacuated most of the documents concerning Viipuri in 1944, when the city along with the wider area were annexed to the Soviet Union. The Finnish National Archives (NARC) have a variety of materials, for example for the present research the National Library Office's un-digitised materials, and the *Uusi Suomi* newspaper's archive represent sources which could not have been obtained elsewhere. From the Leningrad Regional State Archive in the city of Vyborg (LOGAV) I have received copies of Russian newspaper articles, which are not available in digital form.[45]

The newspaper archive Päivälehden arkisto (PA) in Helsinki was most useful for outlining the extent of the Finnish 'general public's' views concerning the restoration of the library, published in particular in the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper and introduced in the fourth thematic chapter. The Finnish Military Archives (Sota-arkisto) and the archive of military photographs (SA-kuva) are two archives which contain intriguing images of the library and its site, a significant part of which have not been published in association with the library. In Stockholm, Sweden is the Architecture and Design Museum's archive (ArkDes), which holds the correspondence of notable Swedish architects. Among these remain some letters addressed to Aalto, telling of his contacts with persons such as Sven Markelius and Gunnar Asplund. Also a noteworthy archive is the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) archive in New York, as this is where I was able to locate an original, earliest source from 1942 asserting that the library was destroyed in World War II – a misunderstanding which has since been disseminated in numerous international publications.

In association with these, it is relevant to note what is not included. The situation remains that in comparison with Finnish ones, Russian archives have less digitised materials, and use of these archives takes considerably more time and effort to search and order materials that one would like to study more closely.

[45] This information is affirmed also by Neuvonen (2017) in his dissertation. I am also indebted to the historian Yuri Shikalov and architect Kirsti Reskalenko, who have referenced un-digitised newspaper articles in their writings. The archival materials concerning the Finnish period of municipality of Viipuri are listed, available at: https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/111829/4e72ee7a-45e7-45ea-b3b9-5c4a196be94b.pdf?sequence=2 Accessed Feb.2017.

Materials which would merit to be researched further are those concerning the Soviet restoration plans for the library, and more widely, the plans to rebuild Vyborg after 1944. In this research, they represent themes in which I have relied on the accounts of Soviet/Russian architects, who have been involved with these projects in Vyborg.

A further category of materials which I have not searched through fully, is the Finnish Restoration Committee's archive kept at the Aalto Foundation, Jyväskylä. These materials contain a significant number of receipts and similar documents, but also documentation on different initiatives with the aid of which it was possible to acquire funding for the restoration project. Their interesting aspect is that in the last years of the Soviet Union, Jussi Rautsi and Mikko Mansikka, from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment were actively initiating the project. In the role of civil servants, they wrote reports of their travels, and of what had been done. However, when the Finnish Restoration Committee took on responsibility of the project, there were no longer similar reports, and the events would need to be traced back with documents such as receipts. With these, it could be possible to outline for example an economic history of the restoration, which in itself could be extremely interesting. However, in focusing on the question of how this particular library has achieved a role as something more than just a building, this research follows how the Finnish media followed the library's situation in a sustained manner since the late 1980s.

Like every researcher, also I have needed to consciously think about and make decisions concerning the relevant contents to be included in the frame of this particular study. While my educational background is in social anthropology, this doctoral thesis is written for the history and theory of architecture at Aalto University, Department of Architecture. This partly counts for 'for whom' this work is written. The other premise is that the object of study is a single building, the Viipuri Library. What follows is that out of the vast amount of materials that I have gathered in the process of this research, I have tried to get to the 'core': the parts where the library is explicitly referenced. Having accumulated materials on the library, I have only then built a context around the explicit references. For example, having gathered all possible information concerning the architectural competition for the library, I have then enquired into the background; into what would be the relevant events that led to setting up an architectural competition at a time when in Finland library buildings designed specifically for this purpose were still a rarity.

An aspect that I learned very early on was that many international publications, whether books or articles on Aalto and the library, repeated to a large extent the same information which had already been published. Reading through archival materials produced in Viipuri in the Finnish period, which are in located at the Mikkeli Provincial Archives, as well as the original drawings, letters and

other relevant documentation at the Aalto Foundation archives, it also became strikingly obvious that a large part of the 'story' of the library has remained untold. Hence, in addition to bringing forth more rarely quoted materials,[46] many of which are available only in the Finnish language, this work can hopefully fill in some gaps of information, which have either been hidden in the archives or even misinterpreted in earlier publications.

Finnish materials as dominating sources

What I had not originally anticipated is how clearly the Finnish materials emerged as the explicit, dominating sources, followed through all the four thematic chapters of this work. In the first chapter it is logical that the archival period materials from the early 1900s tell of the development of Viipuri as part of Finland. For establishing the historical background, the main materials are the Finnish specialist library periodical, and official documents by the city officials, most of all the city planner and the city architect. When Viipuri and its surrounding area were annexed to the Soviet Union, Finland evacuated the population in its entirety, as well as the official documents concerning the area. Consequently, the relevant documents concerning the development of the city and its architecture from the pre-war period are located in the Mikkeli Provincial Archives. For this particular research, the local Vyborg archive, part of the Leningrad oblast archives and the Russian national archives hold copies and secondary documents from the Finnish period.

The second thematic chapter focuses on the architect and the 'voice of Aalto'. In this case, all the original letters, documents and drawings concerning the library are the property of the Aalto Foundation, located in Helsinki and Jyväskylä. Both the domestic reception of the library, as well as its position as part of Alvar Aalto's career can be gleaned from Finnish newspapers of the period. My research is also indebted in particular to Finnish research on Aalto. For example Raija-Liisa Heinonen's work, which was already mentioned, contains this type of rare information. In the chapter introducing the context of architecture, international architectural periodicals and early publications represent essential sources. In this study, however, I have limited the scope of international reception to the very earliest publications. This is because one of my findings is that international publications, in particular, have often referenced earlier publications, thus restating to a large part the same facts. Further, there is such an abundance of publications which in some way touch upon Aalto and his works, or name the library, that it would be impossible to offer a full list.

[46] For example, the original materials by Aalto and his office as well as many relevant materials concerning Viipuri are only in Finnish. Later, the public interest towards the library, the city, and the 'ceded Karelia' have taken place in Finnish media.

The third thematic chapter focuses on World War II, and Vyborg as part of the Soviet Union. During the World War II borders moved several times, but what came to be essential from the point of view of the sources explicitly referring to the library is the interim period starting in 1941 when Finland reconquered ceded Karelia, remaining there until the summer of 1944, when the area became permanently part of the Soviet Union and later Russia. Here, the Finnish army photographs, the *Finnish Architectural Review* and the Finnish specialist library periodical stood out as sources which brought to light exciting information. In contrast with the widely disseminated architectural publications, which have as a rule published the original 1935 images from the time of the library's opening, the Finnish army images document a totally different view of the library. The *Finnish Architectural Review*, again published detailed accounts by architects who returned to Viipuri for the years of 1941-1944, recording the condition of the buildings, and making detailed plans for future Viipuri as part of Finland. Both Finnish and Soviet library experts were the individuals personally concerned with the faith of the library building, documenting what had happened in and to the building during the war. In describing the events on the Soviet side, my work has benefitted in particular from Yuri Shikalov's research, and Russian language newspapers as *Vyborg*, *Viipurski bolševik*, later *Vyborgski bolševik*[47], and *Stroitelnaja Gazeta.* In terms of general history, however, I have aimed to condense this type of description. The reason is threefold. Firstly, this work aims at focusing on sources where the library is explicitly noted, and expanding the descriptions on the historical context would add excessively to the length of this work. Secondly, Finnish, Soviet and Russian history are vast fields of study, about which any reader can easily find additional information. Third, for the part of the Soviet period in Vyborg, there is need for additional research, as historians Yuri Shikalov and Tapio Hämynen[48] have pointed out. Thus, in focusing on the library, my reading in fact can be seen to represent a kind of micro-historical reading of the different events.

Finally, the last thematic chapter is titled 'The Restoration'. The project to restore the library in the Soviet Union is described with the aid of accounts of Soviet architects who were present in Vyborg. Most importantly Sergei Kravchenko has recorded these stages. Kravchenko was the local architect responsible for the building during the last years of the Soviet Union, and he promoted and actively worked for carrying out the restoration. This is substantiated by the Finnish

[47] I follow the spelling of these newspapers used by Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. (2013). The name *Viipurski bolševik* was in use between 1940-1941. In 1945 the paper started appearing as *Vyborgski bolševik*. Still later, the paper has been published under the name Vyborskij Kommunist, also referenced in this research.

[48] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013.

reports, the first of which is dated 29.5.1989, and Jussi Rautsi's photographs. An aspect which has most often been left un-noted in the existing publications is that it was Soviet/Russian initiative to get Finns involved with the restoration. However, after this, attention turns to the Finnish media, where the restoration emerged as a topic which was followed closely. This chapter introduces the main 'clusters' of discussions concerning the restoration, published in *Helsingin Sanomat,* the largest newspaper in Finland. First is the early stage, where the aim is to inform about the condition of the building, and that it is still possible to restore it. Second, the so-called general public proposes that the building could be rebuilt somewhere in Finland, and third, also other professionals beyond architects become involved with the discussions. This chapter concludes with notes on aspects which have remained 'in-between the lines', i.e. have not been made explicit in the existing publications describing the restoration project. The practical side of the restoration has been published in two english language books. In this work, the main points are offered in the restoration timeline, appendix 10.

The focus of the fourth thematic chapter is grounded in what I found the existing materials to enhance. The first media reports telling about Soviet Vyborg, and the condition of the library were published in Finland in the early 1950s. However, it is between 1980s all the way to the completion of the restoration project in 2013, that Finnish media published news about the library. The extent of these articles is overwhelming, taking into consideration that this is a case of one building, located in another country. In the Soviet Union, the need to restore the library was raised by architects who appreciated the building, and were knowledgeable of Aalto, but the library appears to have been discussed more sporadically, whereas in Finland this topic has been followed quite consistently over several decades. Here the Finnish architects involved with the restoration project engaged in a direct discussion with the 'general public', thus bringing together the context of architecture and the context of history. Thus, the 'story of the restoration' is told through the lens of the newspaper articles that followed the process.

The library in the Russian context

While I have made numerable visits to Vyborg during this research project, staying there for different lengths of time, my work does not include a longer section about the library as it exists today. As I have now outlined the relationship between the themes of the four thematic chapters and the materials which have stood out as the ones that speak explicitly about the library, it is useful to consider the Soviet/Russian side — what kind of other perspectives could be regarded as relevant for analysing the case of the library? Not just in the case of Soviet Union/Russia, but the information which concerns the library in general appears to fall into two categories: on the one hand there is continued 'popular interest', namely attention the building has received from the so-called general public, and on the other hand professional interest maintained by architects and architecture enthusiasts promoting the importance of the library.

Both popular and professional interest are recognisably present for analysing what kind of information is available in Russia(n). 'Popular interest' is represented, for example, by the point made by local persons, that for the Soviet citizens moving to Viipuri in 1944 the city and its library seemed 'foreign',[49] but as in the years immediately after the war there was no contact across the border they did not think of the library as specifically Finnish. As for professional interest, in the context of Soviet Union/Russia, the building was thought of as an example of Constructivist architecture. Architecture, design and literature referred to as Constructivist was produced in the Soviet Union roughly between 1918 and 1930. The term, however, can be defined in several alternative ways, depending on who uses it and where. For example, Constructivism has been discussed in the wider context of the role of arts in society, while in respect to architecture, the term has been typically used to refer to the Soviet architecture of the 1920s However, not all Soviet architects associated themselves with Constructivism, while some international architects and artists did.

Among the seminal publications on the subject are Moisei Ginzburg's *Rhythm in Architecture* (1923), which was soon followed by *Style and Epoch* (1924), a publication which came to be seen as the Constructivists' manifesto. A third book *Dwelling* still came out in 1934. They have been translated into English only decades later.[50] In international research, among the early ones is a useful anthology *The Tradition of Constructivism.*[51] The British architect and Russian scholar Catherine Cook has written several seminal articles and books, for example *Russian Avant-Garde. Theories of Art, Architecture and the City* (1995). Other notable works are Christina Lodder's (1985) *Russian Constructivism*, an instructive study of Constructivism as an art form. Also Maria Gough's (2005) *The Artist as Producer. Russian Constructivism in Revolution*, and Christina Kiaer's (2005) *Imagine No Possessions. The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism*, are already becoming appreciated as classics on the topic. Even more recently, Constructivism has remained a topical theme, among the latest works being Julia

[49] Tuominen, A. 2009. Tv documentary *Venäläinen Viipuri* https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2012/01/16/pohjolan-pariisissa-puhutaan-nyt-venajaa Accessed Jan. 2018.

[50] *Rhythm in Architecture* (1923) was first translated into English 2017. *Style and Epoch* in 1983. *Dwelling* in 2018.

[51] Bann, S. (ed.) 1974.

Vaingurt's (2013) intriguing research *Wonderlands of the Avant-Garde. Technology and the Arts in Russia of the 1920s*.[52]

However, as discussed in the second thematic chapter, various architectural writers have considered Aalto's knowledge of Russian/Soviet architecture. It is known that Aalto wrote about Soviet architecture for *Granskaren* periodical and in turn, asked his friend Hans Schmidt to write about the same topic in USSR for the *Finnish Architectural Review,* both articles published in 1932.[53] Nevertheless, there is lack of any reliable writings from the period by Aalto or persons who worked in his office that might have confirmed their sources of inspiration. Similarly, the library as a potential source of inspiration for Soviet architects remains questionable, because at the time of the library's opening in 1935, Constructivism as a style was already fading in the Soviet Union. What is known is that there has been a certain interest in the building after the World War II. Architectural researcher Vadim Bass[54] has also pointed out to me that in Russia there is a long-established interest in Aalto's architecture, and that this is a theme evident as 'Aaltoesque' solutions, visible in architecture students' projects. Sergei Kravchenko's account referenced in this work further affirms that younger generation of Soviet architects were aware that in Vyborg there is a building by Aalto. Notably, it was Soviet architects as Andrei Gozak, who promoted the need to salvage the library and restore it in a manner that would preserve its original appearance.[55] Overall, the possible exchange of influences between Finnish 'functionalism' and Russian 'constructivism', and contacts between architects, designers, artists and writers would offer exciting lines of enquiry for future research. However, in the research at hand, this literature represents background research, and is not developed further, because it would lead far away from the core of the topic, i.e. the Viipuri Library.

Another topic that could have potentially been included in this work on basis of following the chronological structure, is how the library is experienced and used in the Russian city of Vyborg, to dig deeper into the meaning of the building at present, how the relationship of local people with the building has potentially changed during the restoration process, and after the restoration was completed. For this research, I have not conducted in-depth interviews, and having aimed to

[52] Khan-Magomedov has written in particular about Alexander Vesnin, a key person in Russian constructivism, and the expansive work *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture*. Other useful sources for further reading are Richard Anderson's *Russia*, which offers context for the technological developments and role of politics. Also the related Monoskop wiki page article provides detailed information, available at https://monoskop.org/Constructivism

[53] Schmidt, H. 1932; Aalto, A. 1932.

[54] Bass, V. Personal communication.

[55] Gozak, A. 1976. This book also introduces the library, but only on a few pages.

deconstruct events which can be understood to culminate to the completion of the restoration, this is also the time point at which this research ends. However, there is a project which speaks to the need to include the voice of the present-day local people, the so-called general public's view in Vyborg. This is the time and place-specific art project by the Finnish-American artist, Liisa Roberts. More specifically, her project consists of several parts, and as part of this, Roberts also moved to the city. The focal part of this project was a long enduring workshop with young locals, always meeting at the library. The aim was to make it possible for the young local generation to articulate and make visible what they think of the city of Vyborg, their home town as it is today. Roberts's interesting project is indeed referenced in this research.

One building as the research case

Having outlined the topic, it is relevant to reflect on the consequences of having one building as the case framing an entire study. The President of Finland and the Prime Minister of Russia discussing concern over the library in 2010 and the different contexts that have been introduced all point to the notion that this library has achieved a role as something more than 'just a building'. Consequently, the notion I want to introduce is that that in this research it is conceptualised as a 'phenomenon', an object that exceeds the limits of the physical building.

This perspective brings to mind cases, which have focused on ´the social life of buildings´[56], especially as the time frame of this study begins from the events preceding the realisation of the library (early 1900s), leading up to the completion of its restoration. Examples of either research or publications focusing on a single building with aim of discussing something broader are relatively rare, but seems to be a recognisable, perhaps even an emerging perspective. Relatively recent examples are Edward Hollis's (2009) *The Secret Lives of Buildings. From the Parthenon to the Vegas Strip in thirteen Stories,* collection of essays introducing exciting lives of several famous places. Here, the focus is on the historical turns and curious events these buildings have experienced during their existence. Other recent work providing a comparison is Annabel Jane Wharton's (2001) *Building the Cold War. Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture*, which makes a most poignant case between architecture and politics. Hilton Hotels are introduced as 'little Americas' offering travellers cheeseburgers and air-conditioning within the Soviet world. Meredith J. Clausen's (2005) *The Pan Am Building and the Shattering of the Modernist Dream*, describes the end of modernism's social idealism, offering a case study of how not to plan and execute

[56] Suggesting this is a recognisable perspective of my own interpretation, and my formulation recalls Arjun Appadurai's (1986) book *The Social Life of Things*.

a large-scale urban project, concluding with analysis of the building's impact and the aftermath. Phyllis Lambert's (2013) beautiful book titled *Building Seagram*, a history of one of the greatest icons of twentieth-century architecture, makes an exhilarating read through its use of a variety of materials from unpublished personal archives, company correspondence, to insider's views and much more.[57] One more case is presented by Alan Balfour (1990) in his book *Berlin. The Politics of Order 1737-1989* where he describes the Columbushaus, considered a prototypical commercial building by Erich Mendelsohn on the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, completed in 1931 and demolished in 1957.[58] Balfour's account of this building would offer an inspiring frame for writing an article-long version of the transformations and historical changes that the Viipuri Library has experienced, including the misunderstandings, and the building at war. Most of all, my interest in offering these examples as potential reference points for this research is that in each of these, the buildings are *consequential*. In other words, the buildings themselves appear to have a role in the events, suggesting that the physical environment matters.

In addition, there are two dissertations, both published as books, which resemble the approach of this research. Both focus on a single place while asserting that this place is able to represent something broader and more abstract. They are Victor Buchli's (2000) *An Archaeology of Socialism*, which presents 'socialism in microcosm', Narkomfin building in Moscow from 1928, designed as a 'habitable monument to life-transforming modernist aspirations'. Buchli makes use of a multiplicity of materials, highlighting in particular the role of the building and its interior design.

The other study is *The Acropolis. Global Frame, Local Claim* by Elena Yalouri (2001), which is about the local and global meanings associated with this monument, describing its role simultaneously as a national and world monument. In the process, Yalouri has conducted interviews, observed public debates, analysed public policies, collected advertisements, newspaper articles, photographs, art periodicals etc. where these meanings have been articulated. She thus argues that the Acropolis is the condensation point of Greek identity, its history and territory and 'stands for' Greece in a similar way as the Greek flag does. The Acropolis can thus be perceived as a kind of vessel for all these things, diluting the apparent discrepancies.

[57] I am not suggesting that these are the only references, but they are quoted here because they are works that are both relatively recent, and have stood out for relevant comparison points for my own research. I want to thank Robert Beauregard at Columbia University, New York for pointing out to me Annabel Jane Wharton's and Meredith Clausen's works as potential reference points for my framing in this research.

[58] Balfour, A. 1990, 107-152.

Finnish examples focusing on a single building are Sirpa Haila's *Paasitornin tarina* (2001) about the Paasitorni building in Helsinki, through which Haila offers wider reading of the history of Finnish labour movement's buildings and Finnish cultural life in the early 1900s. An other study that offers an evident comparison point to the work at hand is Marianna Heikinheimo's (2016) doctoral dissertation, *Architecture and Technology. Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium*, also published as a book. Heikinheimo examines what happens to architecture during the process of construction and planning, revealing how the roles of the client, engineers, contractors and the architect's professional tactics are all at play and embedded in the final building as realised.

The contribution of this research

These serve as an apt introduction to discussing the potential contribution of this particular research. In reflecting back, I was in no way immediately convinced about choosing the library as a topic of research. Being myself a Finnish native, the notion which first struck me was that there are at least the two large contexts associated with this building, which on their own stand out as 'larger than life'. Namely, Viipuri and 'lost Karelia' still carry a strong aura in present-day Finland, and internationally Alvar Aalto is undoubtedly the most famous Finnish architect of all time. As follows, there is an abundance of materials from a wide range of perspectives on the city of Viipuri, 'lost Karelia' and Aalto and his works alone. Therefore, to get acquainted with these two bodies of literature appeared to need a whole life's work, rather than the time frame of a single doctoral dissertation.

I propose there are three aspects to which this research contributes. First, having the library as the frame has permitted a 'genealogical reading' of this particular case, making it possible to include variety of types of events which the library has 'experienced'. The difference is that existing publications introducing the library are characterised by focus on a particular event at a particular time, such as the design process, the issue of the site, or the restoration. The publications on Viipuri and 'lost Karelia' largely focus on war history or aspects concerning the contested history and heritage that the city and the area represent.[59] Explicitly, regardless of the international renown of the library, it has neither been researched nor presented in such detail as in this research. Associated with this is my decision to prioritise materials which have not already been published time and time again, as discussed earlier. The main reason for some information being 'of limited access' is that a large amount of the relevant materials is available only in the Finnish or Swedish languages, in Finnish archives, and/or, if published,

[59] For example in Finnish language: Keskisarja, T. (2016); Tammi, E. and Elfvengren, E. (eds) (2007); Raevuori, A. (2013); Shikalov, Y and Hämynen, T. (2013); Knapas, R. (2015); and in Russian Miettinen, K. (2005).

have been rarely, if ever, quoted after their original publication date.[60] The present research, thus, makes rare materials available to new audiences and reveals new aspects about the object itself; the library.

Second, the publications concerning Viipuri, 'lost Karelia', and Aalto and his architecture, are so recognisably different topics that they have not been presented together. The inclusion of both these large contexts this research results from the original recognition of the fact that there are significantly different contexts in which the library appears, and that this would be crucial to unravel why the library achieved a role as something 'more than just a building'. The contribution this research aims to offer in association to this, is to make visible the alternative interpretations of what this library 'is all about'. Consequently, I suggest the case of the library offers also a way of analysing and seeing better the role buildings can have as part of the 'social-relational-matrix' of events, to use Gell's terminology.

The third contribution is related to the theory appropriated in this research. Having originally graduated in social anthropology, I draw upon a theory formulated by the anthropologist Alfred Gell. This is a theory that I already applied in my MA thesis, and my finding was that it is particularly well-suited to analysing architecture. The reason is that architecture is in so many ways like art: typically appreciated examples of architecture are designed by a respected architect, the 'author' of the artwork. Known buildings, such as the Viipuri Library, are appreciated as the work of its author – Aalto – but also as an example of being designed at a particular point in time, i.e. the library is valued as a key example of modernist architecture. Yet, architecture, such as this library, also appears to escape the limits of art, because architecture simultaneously serves practical, mundane purposes. Architecture provides shelter in the form of housing, or as a place where people gather, such as public buildings. In this way, the library's role as both as a 'work of art' and a public building needs to be addressed. It is here that I find Alfred Gell's theory is first needed, while I also assert that Gell's theory offers more than one might at first predict.

Alfred Gell's book *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* was published in 1998. In it 'Gell takes the reader on an intense, sometimes mind-bending, exploration of art, agency, personhood, objecthood, cognition, temporality

[60] These are for instance, Finnish newspaper articles from 1930s, unpublished interviews in the MFA library, Helsinki, in which Aalto's contemporaries reflect on how the library was received and the first version of the library competition call drafted by Otto-Iivari Meurman, and Uno Ullberg's alternative plans for the library from the time when Aalto was well under way with the project, all containing information which has not been made available to international readers thus far.

and creativity.'[61] Though intriguing and inspiring in many ways, Gell's work was published posthumously, and while both Gell himself as well as his works have a certain fame, the ´Gellian´ theory remains to be applied to the extent of its potential. When appropriated, in many cases only some part of Gell´s theoretical construction, or a single term has been taken up. For the purposes of this research, primacy is given to the case of the library and the materials are given a strong role in 'leading the story'. Simultaneously, since Gell's theory is so rich, it would not be possible to exhaust it in the span of any single research. Thus, in this study Gell's theory is selected as the most suitable 'tool for thinking' and I propose that Gell's approach is particularly useful for articulating and analysing a number of aspects that stand out as 'difficult' in the case of the library. The aim is to benefit from the use of theory, but also offer one reading of how 'Gellian theory' might be used.

Therefore in sum, there are four elements giving frame and structure to this research:

1. The order of the chapters is *chronological,* with some overlaps. The timeframe covered begins from the early 1900s leading to the completion of the restoration as a Finnish-Russian co-operation.

2. The order is also *thematic:* The four chapters describe the library as part of recognisably different themes. The first chapter introduces the background events in the Finnish city of Viipuri, which can be seen to have led to the realisation of the library. The second chapter takes up the context of architecture, where Aalto has the leading role and professional architectural writings represent the main materials. The third chapter begins from the outbreak of World War II, and the last and fourth chapter presents the restoration of the library culminating in the successful co-operation between Finland and Russia.

[61] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2013, 2. Liana Chua's and Mark Elliot's edited book '*Distributed Objects, Meaning and mattering after Alfred Gell*' is a collection of writings by scholars who have in various ways drawn inspiration from Gell's seminal work. Its origins lie in the symposium 'Art and Agency: Ten Years On' held in 2008 in Cambridge, UK. Chua and Elliot note that by 2008 there had never been a consciously interdisciplinary forum engaging with Gell's work, considering the evident eclecticism of Gell's approach and the cross-disciplinary reach of his book, this seemed to them a most unfortunate, omission. Other contexts where Gell's theories have been in focus was an anthropological conference held in Canberra, its contributions subsequently collected in a book titled *Beyond Aesthetics* (Pinney, C. and Tomas, N. (eds.) 2001). Outside of Gell's native anthropology, a panel at the 2000 Theoretical Archaeology Group meeting, which subsequently grew into a 2003 conference and later the volume *Art's Agency and Art History* (2007), has eloquently plotted the implications of Gell's theory for art historians. (2013, 3)

3. The *theoretical* framework: This work draws upon the theory outlined by Alfred Gell (1998) in his work *Art and Agency. An Anthropological theory*, which offers both useful terms as well as 'tools for thinking' about the problematic that this particular research case presents.

4. The *materials*: The research draws to a large extent on original materials, and the aim is to bring forth many period materials which have not been published earlier or only rarely, and are available only in Finnish or Swedish. Consequently, the materials are even given a leading role in many parts of this work.

Search for terminology

What do buildings 'do' as part of a material environment?

To recapitulate, this research aims to provide answers to: 1) What exactly are the contexts in which the library has been presented as a building of importance? and 2) What, if anything is so special about this particular library that it appears to have the 'capacity' to bring together different interests? Furthermore, while my research questions are formulated specifically for the case of the library, my aim is to also articulate ideas beyond this specific building. As such, the relevant meta-question, which arises from the second question is what this building – or buildings in general – 'do' as part of our material environment? Thus, in order to discuss the case of the library and what might be special about it, it is necessary to define the appropriate terms. Drawing upon the questions, the notions which need to be defined in a better way are the 'capacity' that library appears to have, and more widely the idea that the library has achieved a role as something 'more than just a building', representing things beyond itself. The terms already introduced are 'event' and 'process', as the case of the library so recognisably tells about change, the passing of time and the simultaneous presence of contexts which are not necessarily connected at all, such as 'Aalto's works' and 'lost Karelia'. However, while 'event' and 'process' are useful terms, they do not suffice for discussing the more complex notions that the case of the library brings forth.

Possible examples for one thing being taken as a representative of something larger, are the concepts of *plex* and *authenticity*. In addition to these, I shall introduce an example from anthropology, which in many ways resembles the way the library has been discussed. The term *plex* is used in the natural sciences. The idea is that one frames a certain area and, even literally, positions a fragment under study on the glass under the microscope, thus using this framed piece to reveal what something larger is ´made of´ to decipher its constitution, and even the system of how the larger object functions. A biological sample, for example, can be used to reveal vast amount of information about a person, or in a similar way a material sample can be used to tell about the condition and constitution of a building. Therefore, taking a *representative sample* is one strategy to tackle the problem of how to study a large object or system.

Another useful reference point, which concerns the case of the library directly, is a concept most familiar from the field of heritage: *authenticity*. To sum up the main idea, this is about a place or thing taken to qualify as a representative example of its time. Ideally, this place/building/phenomenon should bring together multiple aspects of understood to represent authenticity, such as original materials, original location, original use and so on.[62] Here places (or things) need to bring together *multiple aspects* (different representations of ´original´) in one single location to qualify as 'authentic'. Taking this idea further, it is an approach that allows such a large and abstract notion as *time* to be transformed into something tactile, say, in the form of the great pyramids of Egypt, or the Parthenon in Athens. What is of interest here is that these very different concepts of ´plex´ and 'authenticity´ suggest ways to ´locate´ and concretise something that would otherwise be too large in scale for anyone to conceive of. In other words, these approaches can be seen as strategies, deliberately creating concrete physical reference points, which are taken to stand for things which would otherwise be either too large, or too abstract, to study. However, turning from the approaches to the representative examples, the definition for the example would be that these are material things that represent something beyond their own boundaries.[63]

[62] Still seminal for internationally shared criteria for understanding the concept of authenticity is the 1994 Nara conference on authenticity. This publication is a useful source in which criteria for defining something as 'authentic' is critically discussed in a series of articles. This, however, also reveals how the idea of authenticity has changed and changes in time and place. Most recently, the 'authentic thing' can also be immaterial, such as a way or method of doing something, a tradition telling of a people. The topic of immaterial heritage and authenticity is however a theme of its own. The shorter document on authenticity is available on the UNESCO webpages at: whc.unesco.org/document/9379 Accessed March 2017.

[63] One of my original interests in the case of the library is the curious balance between time and place, how these are so inseparable, and yet, in analysing a concrete place as the library, place and time kept standing out as aspects which cause continuous friction rather than being usefully passive, abstract concepts. Here it would be possible to think of the library as a kind of ´plex´, and aspects such as the library still being in its original use and meticulously restored representing authenticity. However, the location of the library (literally) defies borders in having experienced radical historical turmoil, and as will be illustrated, its place can be seen to be as relevant in its ´virtual representations´, in photographs, maps and even memories as it is in the physical place. Therefore, these terms which are a priori 'designed for analysing' objects representing things beyond their own boundaries seem hopelessly clumsy for the purposes of the library, 'plex' prioritising location, ' authenticity' giving priority to time.

Another way of approaching the question of how it can be that the library has a role as something more than just a building, is thinking of concrete examples which might offer comparison points.[64] As already suggested, there are books and doctoral dissertations which have taken one building as the object of study, evidencing how one place or building can represent something much larger beyond the physical place itself. What intrigues me is that these places have been analysed as products of processes, which have led to the physical constructions being perceived as 'containing' the political and historical meanings associated with them. In other words, all the referenced works illustrate how the meanings associated with the structures have evolved over time. By the same token, the library is not a building of interest in the different contexts due to some assigned meaning, but because the different meanings associated with the building have accumulated in time.

While the terms *plex* and *authenticity*, and the cases where one building has been selected as the main object of study offer points of comparison, they do not resolve the need for appropriate terms for discussing the case of the library. Most of all, the notion that the library has a kind of 'capacity' to bring together the different contexts appears the most difficult one to account for. I shall, thus, introduce an example from the field of anthropology. Not unexpectedly, anthropology is excellently suited to ´real-life examples´, and there is a classic work that tells about the different and even discrepant notions associated with physical object of a very particular type. Victor Turner´s (1967) work *The Forest of Symbols*, is a detailed account of the Ndembu of Zambia, their symbols and rituals. The useful term that Turner introduces is what he calls a ´dominant symbol'. This, he explains, is 'a special class of symbols, which are regarded not merely as means to the fulfilment of the avowed purposes of a given ritual, but also, and more importantly refer to values that are regarded as ends in themselves, that is,

[64] Indeed, this problematic is shared by a number of disciplines and as such, examples could be found from numerous different fields. In addition to the terms introduced from the natural sciences and heritage, philosophy, as a matter of course would provide abundant discussion concerning this, beginning from Plato to e.g. bundle theory according to which '[a]ll concrete particulars are constructions of attributes or qualitative properties'. In psychology and sociology, an apt example would be the idea of identity as a compilation of many characteristics simultaneously present in one person, etc.

to axiomatic values.'[65] For the Ndembu, this dominant symbol is the mudyi tree, *Diplorrhyncus condylocarpon,* which Turner refers to as the ´milk tree´.[66] Not only is the milk tree the ´flag of the Ndembu´, but Turner asserts that the tree makes discriminations, i.e. it means different things in different contexts and to different people. Turner concludes: ´… considerable discrepancy exists between the interpretations of the milk tree offered by informants and the behaviour exhibited by Ndembu in situations dominated by the milk tree symbolism. Thus, we are told that the milk tree represents the close tie between mother and daughter. Yet the milk tree separates a daughter from her mother. We are also told that the milk tree stands for the unity of Ndembu society. Yet we find that in practice it separates women from men, and some categories and groups of women from others. How are these contradictions between principle and practice to be explained?´[67]

The library resembles Turner's definitions of 'dominant symbol' in that this building means different things in different contexts and to different people: the fame of Aalto and his person, 'new architecture' (modernism, referred to as 'functionalism' in Finland), Finnish-period Viipuri, library architecture, 'lost Karelia', World War II and later, relations between Finland and Russia, appropriate methods of restoring a modern building, etc. Turner's account of the ´milk tree´ connects to the case of the library also in what I have termed as the different contexts, each characterised by their specific perspective based on which the meanings associated with the library are different. In looking at the range of materials speaking of the library, the library itself stood out as the one common point uniting various interests. However, as the underlying motivations are so separate and different, 'considerable discrepancy exists between the interpretations', as Turner put it. Hence, with the case of the library one needs to tackle both things of very different scale being discussed simultaneously, but also considerable discrepancy between the interpretations. In the case of the library, the issue was best formulated by one of the persons that I interviewed who pointed out that ´When we [Finns] talk about the library, we talk about Viipuri, Karelia and the ´lost land´.[68]

[65] Turner, V. 1967, 20. Turner's definitions all in all sound anything but outdated, and are even reminiscent of Gell whose theory will be introduced next. Regarding the terms that he uses, Turner defines ´symbol´ as 'a thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought´. (ibid. 19.) He then reflects that it was not possible to ´analyse ritual symbols without studying them in a time series in relation to other ´events´, for symbols are essentially involved in social process´. (1967, 20) By ritual Turner refers to ´prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers. The symbol is the smallest unit of ritual.' (1967, 19).

[66] Ibid. 20.

[67] Ibid. 25.

[68] Kervanto Nevanlinna, A. Personal communication.

What I propose is being said here is that in speaking of the library, it is offered as *a representative of* these larger issues: it can be understood to stand for different things, because depending on the context and the persons' viewpoint, the building contains multiple alternative meanings at once.

Furthermore, Turner points out that it is not only about what people say [about the tree], but ´what they do with it in its ´meaning´.[69] This appears most fitting in the case of the library, too. Most of all, the restoration could be seen exemplary of what has been done with the library 'in its meaning'. At this point, I shall leave Turner, as it is Alfred Gell and his *Art and Agency*, which provides a 'full theory' and an enlightening way of framing the case of the library. I introduce next the context of theories to which Gell's theory contributes. Only last in this chapter will Gell's main notions be outlined. The theory will then be taken up after the four thematic chapters, which make it possible to reflect the contents against Gell's framework.

A theory of material culture

As already noted, while Alfred Gell (1945-1997) and his works have a certain fame, there was never a 'Gellian school' in his lifetime or later. It is thus relevant here to introduce the context to which Gell´s theory locates. There is no abundance of introductions to either Gell or how to situate him in the broader context of anthropology and material culture studies, but Daniel Miller (2005) does this in *Materiality: An Introduction*[70]. Here Miller, who is now an unrivalled name in material culture studies, introduces the main persons and works that inspired him at the time when this research area was only emerging, placing also Gell in the network of influences. Miller's account provides a superb brief history of the development of material culture studies, and as such, context for the Gellian theory applied here. These exact same works that Miller introduces are the ones that have influenced me, and therefore my reading of Gell.[71]

To start with, Miller confesses that when he first took up an academic post in the field of material culture studies in 1981, the ambition seemed to be limited to the question ´Can we have a theory of things where "things" stand for the most

[69] Turner, V. 1967, 23.

[70] Daniel Miller, Professor of Material Culture, University College London is one of the most productive (currently with 37 books as author/editor) and influential in material culture studies. Two edited books introducing Material Culture Studies are Daniel Miller (ed.) (2005) *Materiality* and Victor Buchli (ed.) (2002) *The Material Culture Reader*.

[71] Needless to say, introduced here is only a selection of what I regard as most relevant in the context of Gellian theory.

evident category of artifacts as both tangible and lasting?´[72] As the first source for starting to think of 'a theory of things' was the sociologist Erwing Goffman´s (1975) *Frame Analysis* where he argued that much of our behaviour is cued by expectations that are determined by the frames that constitute the context of action. As an example, we understand theatre as a special type of context where many elements proclaim the enacted as opposed to the real, and thus, as audience we don not charge up on stage to rescue an actress in apparent distress.

The second source is art historian E.H. Gombrich´s (1979) *The Sense of Order*, where Gombrich focused not on the artwork, but the frame in which the work is set. His main argument was that when a frame is appropriate, we simply do not see it, because it seamlessly conveys to us the appropriate mode by which we should encounter that which it frames. Following this logic, it is the frame, rather than any quality independently manifested by the artwork, that elicits the special response we give it as art. Miller has later called the combination of Goffman´s and Gombrich´s argument the ´humility of things´, as he came to the conclusion that ´…objects are important not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but often precisely because we do not "see" them.´[73] In other words, the idea is that much of what we are exists not through consciousness or body, but as an exterior environment that habituates and prompts us. This could also be seen at least partly to explain why many anthropologists looked down upon material culture studies as somehow trivial and missing the point.

Then, anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu´s (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice* established such ideas as foundational. Bourdieu illustrated how the same ability of objects to implicitly condition human actors becomes the primary means by which people are socialised as social beings. Most famous is Bourdieu´s idea that habitual ways of being in the world and in their underlying order, emerged as second nature, or *habitus*. This provided a theory of objects not as sole artefacts, but material culture as a network of homologous orders; foundation for more or less everything that constitutes a given society. However, an aspect that has been pervasive in anthropological theories throughout, is the issue of dualism concerning for example the division between nature and culture. This, accompanied by a critique of Bourdieu that he was building essentially a theory of order[74], thus leaving little space for the possibility of real change, is the background against which I see Arjun Appadurai´s (1986) book *The Social Life of Things* offering a refreshing contribution to the discussion. As described by Miller, Appadurai introduced a trajectory for things in their ability to move in and out of different conditions of

[72] Miller, D. 2005, 4.

[73] Ibid. 5.

[74] Mary Douglas (1981), for example, has pointed out this in her review of Bourdieu's *Distinction*.

identification and alienation, in this case softening the dualistic debate concerning gifts and commodities.

The more recent influential additions to material culture studies however come from the work of Bruno Latour and Alfred Gell, who have both developed the idea of *agency*. Latour´s primary critique has been directed to the conventional distinctions of society and its objects, with particular focus on the seemingly apparent distinction between science and society. Through investigation into practice of science, Latour has demonstrated how impossible it is to disintegrate that which is natural and unchangeable into that which is human and interpretive, thus highlighting the hybrid character of practice. As a strategy, Latour has taken the concept of agency ´once sacralised as the essential and defining property of persons´[75], and applied it to the nonhuman world, whether it be organisms such as bacteria or the transport systems of Paris. Where material forms have consequences for people that are autonomous from human agency, they may be said to possess the agency that causes these effects: ´The prime mover of an action becomes a new, distributed, and nested set of practices whose sum may be possible to add up but only if we respect the mediating role all the actants mobilised in the series´[76]

Latour is critical of science, but in order to make his argument, he is just as firm in his critique of social sciences, which he sees as giving preference to society and treating objects largely as projected representations of society. Miller asserts that by placing emphasis on objects of science, rather than on artefacts, we lose something of that quality of the artefact redolent of prior historical creativity. To myself, many of the actor-network theorists' case-analyses have appeared to leave out something critical in offering a clear-cut event taking place at a hypothetical moment in time. Most of all, the types of agents that theorists as Bruno Latour, John Law and Michel Callon[77] bring forth seem to actually fall into three categories: humans (persons as agents), human created things (agency of any human construction from it-technology to huts made of dirt) and nature (everything not directly produced by humans, for instance weather, animals, natural substances). Last, in the case of the library perhaps the main premise for a useful theoretical perspective was to find a way to tackle change, discrepancy and unevenness, while, for example, in John Law's formulations all the different kinds

[75] Miller, D. 2005, 11.

[76] Latour, B. 1999, 181 quoted in Miller, D. 2005, 11-12.

[77] Most notable examples being Latour, B. (2005); Latour, B. (1987); Callon, M. (1986) in: Law, J. (Ed.); Callon, M., and J. Law, et al. (Eds.). (1986) and Callon, M. and J. Law (1982). Most lately, Alena Yaneva, who has been a student of Latour, has written most interesting works focusing on the ethnographic research of design processes and the agency of buildings.

of agents appear to have equal influence on the course of events, referred to as flat ontology.

All in all, I am indebted to Miller's summary for revealing of how the 'Gellian theory' connects with other anthropological theories and theories of material culture. Miller defines Gell's theory as a 'theory of object agency': 'Essentially Gell's book is a refutation of an aesthetic theory of art, which is replaced by a theory of the effects that art has achieved as the distributed agency of some subjects upon other subjects. Central to this is a theory of abduction. This is not a theory of causal inference, but rather a theory of inferred intentionality. In short he argues that we naturally tend to imagine there must have been some kind of social agency whenever we encounter an effect.'[78] Thus, while Latour is looking for the nonhumans below the level of human agency, Gell is looking through objects to the embedded human agency which we infer them to contain.

To conclude the discussion on the context of theoretical background where Gell's theory can be positioned, Daniel Miller has summed up the issue which has concerned so many researchers, and for which Gell offers an answer: ´It seems as though all theorists of materiality are doomed to reinvent a particular philosophical wheel. This wheel consists of the circular process at which level we cannot differentiate either subjects per se or objects per se. There exists therefore in philosophy a "solution" to the problem of materiality, which consists of the dissolution of our "common sense" dualism in which objects and subjects are viewed as separate and in relationship to each other. ´[79]

Chua and Elliot sum up well how Gell's theory has raised mixed reactions, while being so undisputedly relevant: 'Since its … publication in 1998, Gell´s book has elicited both fervent acclaim and strident criticism, and become virtually mandatory reading in artefact-oriented disciplines across the social sciences and humanities. Today, the observation that "objects have agency (as Alfred Gell shows)" is almost axiomatic in such fields.'[80]

Thus, having tested and tried different theories and terms it was finally Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency* which contained both terms and a useful frame for articulating the more complex notions the case of the library brought to surface. This leads me to describe the main aspects of Gell's theoretical construction to the extent relevant to this research case. However, I have made a somewhat unconventional solution, and offer the theoretical analysis only at the end, in the third part of this work. The reason for doing so is that the four thematic chapters follow in chronological order, and breaking up the narrative with theoretical discussions would interrupt the chronologically introduced events too much. To add, intro-

[78] Miller, D. 2005, 12-13.

[79] Ibid. 14.

[80] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2013, 1.

ducing the detailed application of Gell's theory only at the end, makes it possible to refer back to the contents of the four thematic chapters, the events which already have been described.

Alfred Gell – art and agency

While Gell's theory is discussed in detail only after the four thematic chapters, it is useful to introduce some of Gell's main ideas here. To recapitulate, this research seeks to offer one reading - one opening towards the use of Gell's theory, which I view would merit to be known more widely. As has been pointed out, Gell develops his theory in an entire book, and here the aim is to apply the theory to one case. I consider that at best bringing together a case study and a theory can be a win-win situation: the theoretical perspective makes it possible to articulate more complex notions, and makes it possible to identify aspects which might be applicable more widely, far beyond the specific case study. In this way, the case study benefits from the theory. From the point of view of the theory, I argue it is only using a theory in practice, in the context of a more detailed case, that makes it possible to recognise also its potential strong and weak points. This research offers one attempt to bring together what I find to be an exceptionally interesting theoretical perspective, and an exciting research case.

Gell's starting point is his criticism of prevailing approaches in the anthropology of art, which he sees as reifying the 'aesthetic response' independently of the social context and its manifestations. He states that 'The aesthetic theory of art just does not resemble, in any salient respect, any anthropological theory about social processes. What it resembles is existing Western art theory - which of course is, applied no longer to 'Western' art, but to exotic or popular art. To develop a distinctively anthropological theory of art it is insufficient to 'borrow' existing art theory and apply it to a new object; one must develop a new variant of existing anthropological theory, and apply it to art.'[81] Gell thus states that what interests him is '...the possibility of formulating a 'theory of art' which fits naturally into the context of anthropology, given the premiss that anthropological theories are 'recognisable' initially, as theories about social relationships, and not anything else. The simplest way to imagine this is to suppose that there could be a species of anthropological theory in which persons or 'social agents' are, in certain contexts, substituted for by art objects.'[82]

In other words, the strategy Gell offers is to start from the premises of other anthropological theories in order to formulate an anthropological theory of art. While the proposition that the 'simplest way' to imagine this is to think of contexts where 'social agents' could be substituted by art objects might at first sound everything but simple, Gell's further explanations make clear that he is not promoting any mystical relationship between persons and art objects.

[81] Gell, A. 1998, 4. Original italics underlined.

[82] Gell, A. 1998, 5.

The first reason why I find this theory for art is appropriate for the case of the library, is that the library indeed is very 'art-like' in many ways, most evidently in being designed by a known architect with his recognisable 'style'.[83] Yet, I suggest that the 'problem' the materials bring forth is that the library is simultaneously a functional building, designed for use, and during its existence has had a role in different events which are everything else than the library being valued because of its aesthetic value or otherwise being 'art-like'. Hence, the notion worth enhancing is that while Gell's theory is titled *Art and Agency*, his project is to formulate an alternative kind of theory, one that would suit the context of theories about social relationships. Having noted this, one significant reason why I became convinced that Gell's theory is useful for articulating more complex notions the case of the library brings forth is exactly in that Gell draws upon art history and explains his theory through practical examples of art-like objects. In this way practically all the examples that Gell offers either resemble the the library, or offer a useful point of contrast. To recapitulate, architectural theories typically draw upon, or are very similar to, theories appropriated in the history of art. Still, as Gell so convincingly argues, most of the art that exists in the world is not the kind of Western art that is made to be hung on the wall. My take on Gell's theory is that architecture, like no other form of aesthetic creation, unites use and aesthetics, meaning and function. An additional reason why I found Gell's framing to apply directly to the library is that he develops a theory for objects, which stand out as more meaningful than others. In other words, for Gell's purposes the

[83] Aino Niskanen discusses in her dissertation dilemmas associated with the notion of style. (Niskanen 2005, 299.) One way of defining 'style' is to analyse it as a 'marker of time', or 'periodicity', as something characteristic of a particular period in a particular place. Alternatively, 'style' is sometimes discussed as if it were a biological process in describing an artist's works throughout his/her career from 'early' to 'mature' works. The dilemmas which, however, arise are for instance, that notions of style also go beyond individual persons, places and time, or as Niskanen points out, in the history of Finnish architecture 'pure functionalism' is to large extent an idealised label, given in retrospect. Gell also presents a detailed background discussion of the concept of style in Chapter 8, 'Style and Culture' (Gell 1998,155-220), enquiring what does the concept of 'style', a word of disparate uses contribute to the understanding of material culture? As examples, Gell discusses distinctions between 'general' (collective) and 'individual' style /'universal' style categories as periods or schools, associated with a particular time /representational (realistic) as opposed to 'geometric' (non-representative, abstract). However, while similarity, or as Gell terms it, 'least-difference' principle being essential for recognising set of objects as part of a single 'ensemble', Gell suggests that instead of taking 'style' as a taxonomic system, stylistic systems can be analysed as 'explanatory'. This leads him to discuss 'generative style' and virtuosity, and the question of what art works 'do'. In fact, I suggest Gell's entire *Art and Agency* could be viewed as a theory of relationships between entities, style being one essential concept we use to describe how individual objects can be perceived as part of the same category.

category of art objects offers a prime set of examples in contrast to, say, standardised objects such as those typically used in science or technology. The idea that I seek to illustrate in this work goes further than discussing architecture, a single art form or stylistic category.

To recapitulate, Gell builds his theoretical perspective on theories applied in the history of art - and history of architecture. Gell, however, brings forth a specific aspect that I found to apply to the case of the library directly. He introduces the notion that some objects are particularly meaningful. To put it simply, he is interested in objects which are perceived to be valuable, and in a sense accumulate value. For example, we can understand that a painting by Rembrandt becomes more valuable over time, in comparison to. say, standardised items like a fork or a street sign. In sum, the primary reason why I find the Gellian agency most fitting to the library, lies in the notion that certain material objects can achieve a role as something more important, in a sense accumulate value, and that this takes place over the course of time. As has been pointed out, it is worth remembering that neither all works by Aalto, nor all buildings in Viipuri, have attracted similar attention as the library has done or bear similar importance.

To return to Gell, he introduces a number of seminal concepts which are most fitting for analysing the case of the library. I propose that they are most useful for understanding the role of the building, beyond it being a kind of art-object which just sits on its site, like a painting hanging on the wall. There are above all four terms that I have found to be useful for articulating the more complex notions that the case of the library made necessary to try to articulate and analyse. They are *agency*, *index, abduction of agency* and *distributed object*. I suggest that they offer ways to interpret the complexities of the case of the library, beyond the independent terms tested thus far.

Gell starts from the idea of *agency*. But in comparison with many other theories speaking to this notion, all agency is inherently social when seen through the Gellian lens. According to him, it would be in vain to try and tease apart 'agency' and 'social agency', because as humans we characteristically perceive all agency as social. This, in turn has specific consequences. Most relevant to the case of the library, this starting point helps define the role that the library has as part of the events, but also that the meanings associated with it change, and therefore there is no 'given meaning' that would remain unchanged.

The potential dilemma of Gell's theory is that on the one hand he is interested in art objects which have a function in the social-relational matrix, while on the other hand, he denies the idea of art being about 'meanings'. The alternative starting point that Gell outlines is an action-centred approach. It is an alternative to many linguistic and art theories: 'This refusal to discuss art in terms of symbols and meanings may occasion some surprise, since the domain of 'art' and the symbolic are held by many to be more or less coextensive. In place of symbolic

communication, I place all emphasis on agency, intention, causation, result and transformation. I view art as a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it. The 'action'-centred approach to art is inherently more anthropological than the alternative semiotic approach because it is preoccupied with the practical mediatory role of art objects in the social process, rather than with the interpretation of objects 'as if' they were texts.'[84]

In addition to understanding agency as inherently social, Gell's goal is to formulate an 'action-centred approach', an essential part of which is the idea of causal relations, in particular that material (art) objects 'cause things to happen'.[85] Here, persons can be things and things can be persons, because the focus is not on essences (what entities 'are') but on *agency* - what they 'do in relation' to each other.[86] It should, however, be underlined that this does not mean that persons and things would all be the same: Gell's position is that neither we nor persons anywhere in the world would put persons and objects on the same line as if both were of equal value to us. Instead, Gell sees that what analysts need to understand is not what art objects represent or symbolise, but what they do within their social worlds - that is, their 'practical mediatory role… in the social process'.[87] To give an example, Gell points out that an Asmat[88] shield may be of aesthetic interest to a scholar or a Western museum visitor, but to the opposing warrior for whom it was designed to be seen, it was surely most of all 'fear-inducing'.[89] From this perspective, 'the nature of the art object is a function of the social-relational matrix in which it is embedded'[90]: the shield is not effective because of its aesthetic beauty, but because of what it causes to happen. In this capacity, then, it is a 'social agent', and it is in this sense a person or a thing is 'seen as initiating causal sequences of a particular type, that is, events caused by acts of mind or will or intention, rather than the mere concatenation of physical events'[91]

[84] Gell, A. 1998, 6. Gell's theory has been seen to be most radical exactly in doing this; that in one fell swoop, he overturns a foundational distinction on which most anthropologies and studies of art have been based. Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2013, 5.

[85] Because Gell's theory has not been summarised at length many times before, I offer direct quotations from him to retain his original formulations.

[86] This is the main reason why Gell has received sharp criticism for its overly loose take on what constitutes 'art'.

[87] Gell, A. 1998, 6.

[88] The Asmat are an ethnic group of New Guinea, Indonesia.

[89] Gell, A.1998 6.

[90] Ibid, 7.

[91] Ibid,16.

What I propose is that the library is best understood exactly this way: the meanings associated with it in the different contexts have resulted from its being part of events that are caused by will or intention, not 'physical events'. A physical event would, for example, be the deterioration of the plaster on the library's façades. This, however, represents a topic of a completely different nature than the research questions formulated before: 1) What exactly are the contexts in which the library has been presented as a building of importance? and 2) What, if anything is so special about this particular Library that it appears to have a 'capacity' to bring together different interests? I suggest that Gell's formulations in fact reveal that both my questions enquire about the library's 'practical mediatory role… in the social process', and in doing so, make it necessary to analyse the library as something more than a physical object.

A potential criticism that could be raised is that, as suggested in association with Actor Network Theories (ANT), similarly Gell's concept of agency could be classified as particular types of agencies. Earlier ANT theories, have focused most on 'agency in the context of science' while Gell begins from 'art-like contexts'. What Gell alludes to in many of his formulations is that we do not confuse persons, art objects (objects which have a function in the social-relational matrix) and 'physical events' (for example chemical, physiological or natural events understood to follow scientific, law-like rules). Explicitly, while one major goal of ANT theories has been to underscore that it is not only humans who can be analysed as having 'agency', many of these theories have focused in the context of science on illustrating how it is *not* solely the intentions and will of human agents which matter, but other agents can have as strong a role as human ones. Gell again offers a book-length theoretical framework for 'art-like contexts', and this on its own could have been a relevant contribution to the theories of material culture. This however is not what Gell aims at.

There are several reasons why in *Art and Agency*, the question concerning possible types of agents becomes diluted from the beginning. The first reason was in fact already stated: Gell makes clear that his focus is not on essences (what entities 'are') but on *agency* - what they 'do in relation' to each other. To Gell, however, the term 'in relation' stands out as an inherent part of 'doing'. What Gell asserts is that he places 'all emphasis on agency, intention, causation, result and transformation'. My reading of Gellian agency is that his goal is to zoom in on that which takes place in between different kinds of agents, these being the above-mentioned aspects that he emphasises. To put it differently, Gell's agency is about processes; meanings are not given, and the relationship between things changes from situation to situation. This leads me to what I find to be the key notion characterising Gellian agency: in analysing any particular event, agency is not static, but also distributed unevenly: in the Gellian world of agency, agents having more 'meanings' hold stronger agency than others. In other words, agency

understood as 'doing in relation' to something is by necessity indicative of a hierarchical relationship.

Although hierarchies or power are not terms that Gell would explicitly use, I find his analysis of the relations between agents and patients reminiscent of Foucault's definition of 'relations of power'. According to Foucault, when one speaks of power, people immediately think of a political structure, a government, a dominant social class, the master and the slave, and so on. Foucault, however, means something different by power: 'I am not thinking of this at all when I speak of relations of power. I mean that human relationships, whether they involve verbal communication such as we are engaged in at this moment, or amorous, or economic relationships, power is always present: I mean a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other. So I am speaking of relations that exist at different levels, in different forms; these power relations are mobile, they can be modified, they are not fixed once and for all. For example, the fact that I may be older than you, and that you may initially have been intimidated, may be turned around during the course of our conversation, and I may end up being intimidated before someone precisely because he is younger than I am. These power relations are thus mobile, reversible, and unstable.'[92] This is probably the best summary of my reading of what Gell aims to convey with agency understood as relationships where positions change. Whereas Foucault speaks of power, Gell always returns to meanings.

There is, however, another reason why the question concerning types of agents remains less relevant. What I find to be the significant theoretical contribution made by Gell in *Art and Agency* is that his project to create a theory for art which would resemble other anthropological theories leads him to introduce several terms to discuss his take on agency. The reason Gell's theoretical construction is both impressive but also far too complex to summarise briefly is that throughout *Art and Agency* he builds on the terms and diagrams that he presented in the preceding chapters. The primary table that Gell introduces is titled 'the Art Nexus'. Gell's tables, including this, are presented in the theory chapter where theoretical concepts are taken into use to analyse the library. However, it is useful here to introduce the main set of terms through which Gell unravels the different, changing relationships. I suggest that they most of all represent Gell's alternative method to get around the problem of fixating too much on agents defined by their essence, and turning all attention to what they 'do in relation' to each other.

The four primary terms are: *artist, index, prototype* and *recipient*, each of which can take the position of *agent* (the one acting) or *patient* (something being acted upon) in relation to the others. In my reading, the concepts of artist-in-

[92] Foucault interviewed in Rabinow, P. 2000 [1994], 291-292.

dex-prototype-recipient offer terms with which to discuss art-like agents, and their relationships changing and transforming in the course of events.

The second seminal term is *index* (of agency). Gell sums up his formulation of the anthropology of art by asserting that it is 'just anthropology itself, except that it deals with those situations in which there is an 'index of agency' which is normally some kind of artefact'.[93] My reading of Gell's analysis, which even answer the question of why Gell gave primacy to art instead of, for example, technology as the framing context is that he is most interested in cases where meanings are associated with particular objects. So, for example, a fishing net as a 'tool' does not attract interpretations as does a work by Rembrandt. This leads me to the concept of 'abduction of agency'.

Gellian *abduction of agency* takes place when in a certain context the material object – for example the Viipuri Library - is closely associated with meanings from outside itself, or even in a sense captures them. An example of this could be that the library as a key work by Aalto stands for Aalto's works more widely, and his skills as an architect, as a kind of visiting card. This is to say that the library is not the same as all of Aalto's works, but that it stands for, or abducts, agency so that we can perceive the library as representing something beyond the limits of one physical structure. Most scholars have then picked up on the notion that the Gellian index functions chiefly as a sign that points to something else. In this vein, *Art and Agency* has been described by Daniel Miller as a theory of 'inferred intentionality', whereby the author looks 'through objects to the embedded human agency we infer that they contain'.[94] However, the aspect which can easily go un-noted is that Gell refers to the index as 'a natural sign' in a properly Peircean sense[95], meaning that the index bears a direct causal relationship to its origin. As Gell puts it '[t]he stipulation I make is that the <u>index is itself seen as the outcome, and/or the instrument of, social agency</u>'[96] Gell's index is, therefore, not a mere representation of its object but fundamentally (part of) the thing itself, just as '[a]n ambassador is a spatio-temporally detached fragment of his nation'.[97]

[93] Gell, A. 1998, 66.

[94] Miller, D. 2005,13.

[95] In Chapter Two, 'The Theory of the Art Nexus', 2.2. The Index, Gell gives the definition: 'I propose that 'art-like situations can be discriminated as those, which the material 'index' (the visible, physical 'thing') permits a particular cognitive operation which I identify as the abduction of agency. An 'index' in Peircean semiotics is a 'natural sign', that is, an entity from which the observer can make a causal inference of some kind, or an inference about the intentions or capabilities of another person'. (Gell 1998, 13.)

[96] Chua and Elliot agree that this much is true, but what they find to have often been glossed over, or perhaps overlooked, is another vital aspect of the index. Gell, A. 1998,15; original italics underlined.

[97] Gell, A. 1998, 98.

This is both a vital point in Gell's theory, but it also provides a link between the different sections of his book. Rather than looking back through an index to its originator, we can also use it to move *forwards*, to create, improvise and expand.[98] In this research, I am particularly intrigued by the idea of indexes as spatio-temporally detached fragments as part of the thing itself. In other words, this speaks to the dilemma I recognised early on in doing this research that the library could be understood to have a life of its own in the documents which are 'distributed' far away from its physical location. Here, Gell's index is helpful for articulating how the building can be in one place, with the documents telling about it being indexes of the building. What is to be noted is that the indexes are real, like the library is, and thus have agency.

In his final chapter, Gell argues that he provides a theory of the work of art. Here the key term to be introduced is *distributed object*. In effect the creative products of a person or people become their ´distributed mind´, which turns their agency into their effects, as influences upon the minds of others.[99] While retaining the words, Gell is busy reconfiguring the concepts by asking crucial ontological questions about the nature, location and temporality of agency. This is illustrated in his depiction of the creative agency of the artist. The oeuvre of a painter, he points out, is innately temporal: each finished work usually builds on a series of preparatory studies, and in turn becomes a study for later works. Works of art taken together thus 'form a macro/object, or temporal object, which evolves over time'.[100] In other words, Aalto's works; i.e. his oeuvre, represents this kind of temporal object, in which the library is a 'key event'. Gell first articulates this proposition through a theory of 'distributed personhood', in which he proposes to treat persons 'not as bounded biological organisms, but … all the objects and/or events in the milieu from which agency or personhood can be abducted'[101] Chua and Elliot conclude that by this stage, *Art and Agency* has become a theory of creativity and (re)generation. 'While the book thus closes on the same note on which it opened - social relations - it does not revert to a stultified notion of "the social" that is distinct from 'the material'. Instead, the very idea of the social has now been enlarged and reshaped, such that it is simultaneously cognitive, material and temporal.'[102]

I assert Gell's theory is most helpful for analysing how multiplicity of f notions associated with the library can be simultaneously relevant: the library being a

[98] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2013, 8.

[99] Miller, D. 2005, 13.

[100] Gell, A. 1998, 233.

[101] Gell, A. 1998, 222.

[102] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2013, 10-11.

product of Aalto's 'artistic design process' and the building being a 'temporal monument' and a commonly used public building, which also has continued to inspire new, also mutually discrepant interpretations.

Part II

The library in four themes

Photo: Sotamuseo/Ilmavoimat

Theme I
The City

Theme I

The City

In which the library exists as a concept and an intention, finally materialising in 1935 as a library building specifically designed for this purpose in the Finnish city of Viipuri.

In the earliest stage, the library is taking form as a civil society project. Originally, there are several sets of individual persons creating independent book collections in separate spaces, each of which serve different segments in the societal hierarchy, focusing on one or two languages.

When it becomes possible to create a completely new library with aid of a private bequest in 1923, the issue transforms into a matter to be solved by the city government. In this process, the relevant questions are to determine the future location of the library, and its appearance as part of the cityscape. From the point of view of urban planning, this one building is tried and tested for all the main sites for which a future public institution could be built. The primary agency is held by the representatives of the city whose aim is to spatially define the 'heart of the city', which Viipuri is seen to be lacking. In this way, the library becomes part of the process of transforming Viipuri into a modern 'European city'.

This heatedly debated building project culminates in the extremely positive local reception of this 'House of Wonders', which is in every way new and modern. At the event of the library being completed, the other small, competing libraries and the long debate concerning the site and appropriate appearance of a city library dissolve. The materialised new library stands out as the result bringing together different language groups and the different classes of society, as the entire population of Viipuri become users of this new public building. Of the planned public buildings, the new library becomes the only one built in the 'heart of the city'.

The city in history

Viipuri had originally grown around the medieval castle (Sw. Viborg), built as the eastern military outpost of Swedish rule in 1293. However, borders have moved multiple times, and the history of the city is rooted in Swedish, Russian, Finnish as well as to an extent German history. As a border city, the history of Viipuri is inherently intertwined with the history of Finnish territory, the borders of which had been pushed back and forth by Sweden and Russia from the middle ages. From the point of view of the Finnish area, the period of Swedish rule extended from the end of 1200s until 1809. During the medieval period, the Finnish area formed the easternmost part of the Swedish realm, ruled from the castles of Turku, Häme

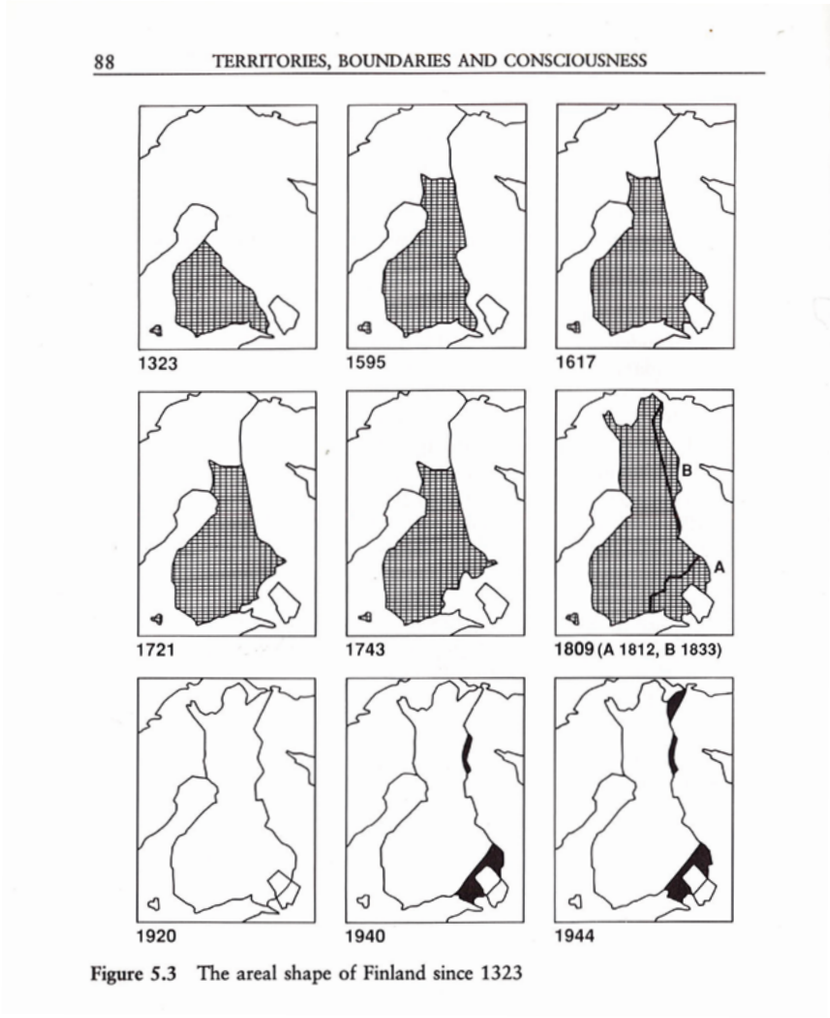


Fig. 6. *The territory of Finland since 1323. (Paasi, A. 1996, 88.)*

and Viipuri. In 1470s a wall was built around the fortress city which was extended with modern bastions to the eastern side during the 16th century. During the so-called Vasa period from 1523 to 1654, Sweden fought several wars with Russia, as a consequence of which the borders moved. The Treaty of Stolbova was signed in 1617, when territories were taken from internally divided Russia. After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 the Swedish realm was among the most powerful countries in Europe. The 17th century also marks an era of extremely strict Lutheran orthodoxy, which subsequently remained the main religion in the wider Viipuri area. During the Great Northern War (1700-1721) and the Russo-Swedish War of 1741-1743 Finnish territory was occupied by Russia. However, it was the so-called Finnish War between Sweden and Russia, when Alexander I conquered Finland in 1809. Russia established the Grand Duchy of Finland, as part of which part of Karelia known as old Finland was attached in 1812. In the Grand Duchy, the old Swedish law remained in force, though the degree of autonomy varied in different periods. During this period, and later as part of independent Finland, Viipuri grew as a commercial centre, in particular as an important seaport. After being a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire for approximately a hundred years (1809-1917), Finland became an independent nation in 1917. The region of Karelia where Viipuri is located was annexed from Finland to the Soviet Union in 1944. Finland, however, remained independent after the World War II, celebrating its centenary of independence in 2017.

A further segment of political geography which is useful to establish at this point, is the Karelian area where Viipuri is located. The Karelian region is a linguistic and cultural area, with no precise borders. What is notable is that part of it has never belonged to Finland. The meaning and importance associated with the Karelian area which was ceded to the Soviet Union is discussed in more detail in the third thematic chapter describing the period of the World War II.

The time frame of this research places the origins of the Viipuri Library in the 1800s, because the location of the library, expectations associated with the building, and the original intentions of various individuals can be seen to have their origins in the period when Finland was a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire.[103] In the early stages there were most of all individual persons working towards establishing their own libraries. Thus, before the city officials took up the issue, and building an entirely new library became topical, the libraries stand out as a civil society project, where each library strongly reflected the interests of its founders. A most appropriate definition for library as an institution has been outlined by Sven Hirn according to whom three aspects need to be simultaneously present:

[103] The first collections of books were held by monasteries, and as in so many other countries, books were made by monks. Later, it was the German merchants sold books in Viipuri, also providing books to schools. Lempi Jääskeläinen has written an informative article about history of the libraries in Viipuri, beginning from the medieval period (Jääskeläinen, L. 1940, 126-132)

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1558	1,630	**1930**	72,239
1658	1,628	**1939**	74,400
1753	1,796	**1987**	80,900
1802	3,098	**1997**	81,200
1858	5,575	**2002**	79,200

Fig 7. *Population in Viipuri 1558-2002. (Tandefelt, M. 2002, 67; Statistics Finland 2005)*

Year	Finnish	Russian	Swedish	German	Other
1812	1,279 44.10 %	846 29.20 %	412 14.20 %	363 12.50 %	
1870	6,845 51.20 %	3,257 24.00 %	2,261 16.90 %	610 4.50 %	440 3.30%
1900	27,084 73.60 %	5,378 14.60 %	3,198 8.70 %	419 1.10 %	729 2.00 %
1930	67,609 93.60 %	1,807 2.50 %	2,103 2.90 %	439 0.60 %	278 0.40 %

Fig 8. *Different language groups in Viipuri 1812-1930. (Tandefelt, M. 2002, 67)*

the books (contents), the librarians (persons responsible for running the library and keeping it open) and the library space (either a room or a building).[104] The early libraries often offered only the contents, even this being very limited. The privately-owned libraries were anything but available for all, and the space was typically privately owned.

This first chapter thus brings forth the problem of the scattered book collections, the presence of numerable small libraries, the debate over the appropriate site for the library and the individual persons becoming involved in the project, each from their respective positions they held in the city. An account of events preceding the new library presents a kind of microcosm of Viipuri between 1800 and the opening of the new library in 1935. This is a time period during which small private libraries were scattered all around the city, the library institution itself was only taking shape, and the four language groups; Finnish, Swedish, German and Russian all had their own libraries.

In this chapter, all the 'events' stand out as issues to be solved, to which the realised library comes to be the solution, giving shape to the library institution,

[104] Hirn, S., 1962, 290. Here, the books are the basis, the staff serves the role of the mediator, and the space provided the physical frame.

bringing the collections, and the citizens all together under one roof as the users of a public library.

Early libraries, public and private – the process towards materialisation

The 19th century was the time period when presence of four language groups defined life in Viipuri in many ways.[105] Accordingly, the different types of libraries from this period indicate not only the presence, but also the prevalence of the language groups. Contacts were close towards both east and west, and Continental European influences were adopted through St Petersburg, reaching Viipuri earlier than the rest of Finland, where influences were received from Sweden. Social life and events in the city have been described as so luxurious that many visitors were utterly dumbfound. The closest comparison to life in Viipuri was to be found in St Petersburg, not in any other part of Finland.[106]

Though the German speaking population represented a minority, for the first part of the 1800s they had visible influence on the cultural life of Viipuri. Their importance had grown after the Great Northern War, when a significant part of the Swedish speaking population had moved to Sweden. The city was granted the same special rights as Riga, Tallinn and Narva, and the German merchants were engaged in international commerce. Consequently, German became the official language of the city's administrative court and the language used in the public schools of Viipuri.[107] It was the German high school, opened in 1805[108] as part of which the first 'public' library appeared. In 1806 August Wilhelm Tappe[109], a teacher of philosophy and religion, started a ´reading club´ for ´use and entertainment´ with aid of his friends. Tappe referred to his library as ´the best decoration´ of Viipuri.[110]

During the period of the Grand Duchy, the number of Finnish speakers begun to grow, becoming majority by 1870. First, the Finnish speaking population represented the lower societal classes, but toward the end of 1800s emerged a

[105] This has been researched separately. See for example in Tandefelt, M. 2002.

[106] Hirn, S. 1959, 140.

[107] Vasenius, J. 1928, 12. According to Vasenius, all this made Viipuri 'like a German city'. The teachers had been gathered from all parts of the large Russian empire and Baltic countries, thus contributing to social and public life in Viipuri while adding to the influence of the German-speaking population.

[108] Vasenius, J. 1928, 13. In the same year Helle Cannelin (1928, 257-260) wrote an article describing the Stockholm City Library.

[109] Hirn, S. 1959, 138.

[110] Jääskeläinen, L. 1940, 130.

Finnish speaking economic, cultural and political elite.[111] There were influential Finnish speaking merchant families, such as the Lallukka couple, to be discussed later. The first Finnish-language lending library of Viipuri is known for its founder more than the library itself. In 1845 Juho Pynninen published in the *Kanawa* newspaper the ´founding words of a Finnish lending library´, an event which has been later considered to mark the beginning of the Finnish library institution.[112] Pynninen and his library made Viipuri a point of inspiration to the rest of the country. In addition to Tappe's German and Pynninen's Finnish libraries, there was a 'Russian reading club' and a Swedish-Finnish library. Of all the libraries established during the first half of the 19th century, Tappe´s was the one that remained, having swallowed into its collections also the Russian reading club´s library. In 1851 the Swedish-Finnish library was merged with Tappe´s library at the Old Town Hall building, and ten years later, Pynninen´s collection joined also this united collection.[113]

These early libraries, which aimed at being public, tell of three aspects. The libraries were inherently associated with the individual persons who had established them and were responsible for running them. Each library served and maintained the interests of one or at most two of the four dominant language groups of Viipuri. Finally, each of the libraries appears to have been balancing on the fine line of being public or private. As a rule, the libraries had a membership fee, thus excluding many citizens, while at the same time the founders of the libraries such as Tappe and Pynninen expressed the wish to make books available more widely, working towards popular education.[114]

[111] Neuvonen, P. 2017, 37-38.

[112] There is little information on this library, except what Agathon Meurman and Kaarle Werkko have written.(Vasenius, J. 1928, 13.) Juho Pynninen was of humble origins, but set up a library with his personal savings, and accumulated it with donations. In 1847 this library contained 222 items with 41 persons using the library's services. (Jääskeläinen, L. 1940, 131.) In March 1846 Pynninen´s library was opened in the sacristy of the Viipuri Parish Church with a collection of 168 items. The collection had been moved to Pynninen´s private house in 1847, but was annexed to the other libraries in the autumn of 1861. It seems these books have all vanished since and all that remains is a catalogue of books. *Ilmarinen* newspaper 14.05.1879 describes Pynninen's library. Also Hirn, S. 1959, 142.

[113] Hirn, S. 1959, 173.

[114] The magistrate therefore called all members of Tappe's library to a meeting to which four persons arrived. Announcement published in *Wiborgs Wochenblatt*, 4.3.1832. The library had been housed in the Old Town Hall building free of charge, and thus, these opposite views in the matter led to a long process of determining responsibility and ownership. The conclusion finally reached was to the benefit of these four German-speaking library members likely due to their high standing in the city. (Hirn, S. 1959, 139, 140) The project for organising a library which could serve a larger number of the citizens was evidently associated with the question of finding an appropriate space. Another aspect associated with this were the discussions concerning a 'public enough space'. An example of this is the vision to renovate spaces for a library in the Round Tower.

In January 1859 the newspaper *Wiborg* published a lengthy article on the background of the City Library up to its current problems. The City Council had come to the unfortunate decision in 1833 that the City Library, i.e. Tappe's library where number of other libraries had been annexed, was essentially a private institution. This decision still seemed to loom in the background, explaining why the city officials remained unwilling to take direct action in the library matter. The author of the newspaper article asserted that *every* citizen should be able to benefit from the City Library ´[a]s a natural meeting place the library would fulfil a significant purpose.', and continued, 'though this idea might seem strange to many, important changes are characterised by the fact that the need for them is not readily visible as long as there is no possibility to realise them.'[115] A second article published in December 1859 aroused more attention, this time signed by the librarian Edvard Elfström. While the first article had been titled ´City Library of Viipuri´, the second offered a frank expression of Elftröms' view of the situation: ´The so-called City Library of Viipuri´.[116]

The next noteworthy event took place in June 1861 when the City Magistrate made a public announcement published in Swedish, German and Russian, inviting citizens to make a donation in order to newly organise the Viipuri City Library.[117] Here it was specifically noted that Tappe had donated the collection to be made available to the citizens as a public library, and this time indeed there was no opposition to the matter. It is likely, however, that the motivation for the city officials to finally proceed was in fact induced by the opening of a Public Library in Helsinki.[118] On 15 June the library's organisation was discussed at a public meeting, and temporary governors were appointed for the library. The new governors established the library in the old secondary school building, where it was open for a few hours every day. The intention was to obtain the best new Swedish, German, Russian, French and English books and a ´complete Finnish public library´.[119] It was possible to pay for membership in the entire library, or for any one of the languages separately.

[115] *Wiborg* 26.1.1859. Also Hirn, S. 1959, 173. Notably at the time most libraries were dependent on membership fees, not funded as public institutions. It was only in 1928 that the first 'public library law', in Finnish 'kansankirjastolaki', was passed which ascertained the Finnish state subsidises for public libraries.

[116] The first title in Swedish language was *´Stadsbiblioteket i Wiborg´*, and the second *´Det så kallade stadsbiblioteket i Wiborg´*. Hirn, S. 1959, 174.

[117] Vasenius, J. in Ervi, A. 1935, 7. See also *Ilmarinen* 11.12.1878.

[118] Hirn, S. 1959, 175.

[119] Vasenius, J. in Ervi, A. 1935, 8. In 1879, in the list of members it is noted that the ´newly established public library contains most of all Swedish and Finnish books´. In addition there were the ´city library´ focusing on other languages, and a Swedish ´lending library´. Hirn, S. 1959, 176.

In 1862 the City Library boasted of a collection of over 5,000 items containing German, French, Russian, English as well as Swedish and Finnish literature. The city grew and commerce and industries were flourishing in particular after opening of the Saimaa Canal in 1856. Notably, a version of open shelf -system was in place, and catalogues were kept up to date for users to make the best use of the library. The library collection grew all the time, reaching over 10,000 items during the 1870s. At the time, the Viipuri City Library was considered to be the best in the country. Yet, after the mid-1870s, within some two years, the organisation of the collections fell into chaos and the number of loaners declined drastically. Thus, regardless of its impressive collection of books, the city library remained on shaky ground.

There were several other libraries in Viipuri with which the library proudly calling itself City Library needed to compete. The notable ones were the ´public library´ with most of all Swedish and Finnish literature, and a Swedish ´lending library´. An active Finnish literary society had been established in 1840, which also had a considerable collection of books. In addition, there was a very popular form of library referred to as the ´reading room´. It was primarily aimed at members of working class for reading newspapers on the premises. This library was established by the brothers Woldemar Hackman and Wilhelm Hackman, who in 1871 decided to make a donation for a library space and newspaper subscriptions. Wilhelm Hackman died in 1872, but his brother continued to fund this library up until his death in 1925.[120]

In view of the new library, a point of interest is that in the so-called 'reading room' speakers from different walks of life gave public presentations on a variety of topics, in particular when the reading room was conveniently housed in the primary school building. Thus, it is the Hackman brothers 'reading room' that can be interpreted as being reflected in two spaces of the library opened in 1935: in its lecture hall, where public lectures and variety of types of events were organised, and in the newspaper reading room, still designed for the purposes of the working men to read the newspaper of the day standing up.

Towards the end of the 1870s the libraries of Viipuri had more variety and were more complex than it had ever been before. It appears there was no lack of private initiatives, and simultaneously no common goal. In 1877 the library

[120] Jääskeläinen, L. 1940,130. The largest personal expense of consul Joh. Fredrik Hackman was said to be books. Also doctor Jaenisch was known to have collected a substantial personal collection. This reading room also had various locations. At first, it was in the Hackman building in Ala-Karjaportinkatu street. Other locations were the Keldan house (also referred to as the Helenius mason´s house), and it was moved later from the primary school to the engineer Gallen´s house (also referred to as the Sellgren office building). After being located in the primary school building, the reading room was housed in still some more locations until it was finally located in the city museum building. From there it was moved along with the rest of the public library to the space preceding the new building by the Punaisenlähteentori square.

issue on the whole was taken up by the city officials.[121] In the spring of 1877 the Viipuri alcohol company's directors made an exceptional proposition. Though the company had already offered regular support for the reading rooms in the Viipuri municipality, it was now decided that 2,000 Finnish marks would be set aside for establishing a new public library.[122] This meant setting up one more completely new library. The issue was taken up in the City Council. This is when the local merchant Walter Hoving proposed that a committee of three men should be appointed to look into the possibility whether this new public library could be set up alongside the existing city library to prevent even further fragmentation of the libraries.[123] The proposition was supported, and so one librarian was appointed to take responsibility of running the Public and the City Library together.[124]

Thus the city and public libraries functioned alongside, although serving different groups. The first, often referred to as a lending library, focused on foreign literature, while the latter provided Finnish and Swedish language publications aimed at the layman. The location of the library remains unclear. It is likely that after moving in 1861 it returned from the secondary school building back to its previous location in the Old Town Hall building. In 1885 the chamber of finance made initiative of moving the library to the upper floor of the Round Tower, a building which had originally been part of the old city wall. Plans were made to construct anew the stairs and update the heating system of this building, but nothing came of them. The library remained in the same premises, while the reading room was forced to lead a truly nomadic life.[125]

Although there is an abundance of references to different library locations in Viipuri, accounts concentrating on the history of libraries appear to have missed the plans to house it in Viipuri Castle. In early 1880s plans for restoring the castle became topical. It was considered that it was time to restore the entire construction, but in addition, to make the structure useful instead of restoring it ´as a relic´. To find a purposeful use for the castle, architect Jac. Ahrenberg made a detailed proposal for the restoration, and suggested that the main castle would be

[121] Hirn, S. 1959, 209.

[122] Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat 1877. 4.5.1877.mom.10. MMA. Also Hirn, S. 1959, 237.

[123] Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat 1877. 8.5.1877. N:o.21. MMA. Also Hirn, S. 1959, 237.

[124] While establishing this new library can seem like an odd solution, as an idea it did not come out of nowhere, as amongst the citizens, the existing public library was seen as continuation of the Finnish library originally established by Pynninen, and thus building upon it. Hirn, S. 1959, 237. Also *Ilmarinen* 11.12.1884.

[125] Hirn, S. 1959, 237.

reserved for the municipality and the city.[126] More specifically, the castle was to house the city archives, a natural and ethnographic museum, as well as the City Library, the reading room and the public library. Ahrenberg also suggested that the lowest floor could be used for the purposes of the Finnish army, for instance as an armoury. Ahrenberg's plans were quite a statement, as at the time this very space was used as the Russian army's armoury. The architect's plans were however not completely without grounds, as the Finnish army was established in 1881, and along with this a law on compulsory military service. In this respect Ahrenberg´s plans stand out as a project for creating a monument for Finland. In his plans the library, the archives and the museum were all given an entire floor, the City Library, the reading hall and the public library being located on the fourth floor.[127] The aim thus articulated was to evoke national sentiments in eastern Finland. Ahrenberg´s project thus appears to have been a local and a national project at the same time. Yet, perhaps most interesting is that being a well networked cultural person, but also closely acquainted with contemporary issues in Viipuri, this project could well be taken as Ahrenberg's solution for resolving the 'distributed identity' in the Finnish nation under construction. Ahrenberg did everything in his power to get to realise his restoration plans, but like so many projects, also this remained unrealised.

All in all the written histories and fragmented newspaper articles offer only a partial view of all the twists and turns city/public library has experienced, not to mention the simultaneously existing privately-run libraries. It is not known how long the city/public library remained in the secondary

school's premises. Old citizens remembered the library only in the Old Town Hall building, in which the which the City Library and the City Museum were located in 1895.[128] The ´public library´ was temporarily moved to the temperance association restaurant's premises on Punaisenlähteentori square, which came to be the library's permanent location in 1902, and where it remained until the opening of the new library building in 1935.

[126] Ripatti, A. 2011, 117-120. Johan Jacob (Jac) Ahrenberg, 30.4.1847-10.10.1914, Provincial architect 24.2.1885-2.11.1887. Ahrenberg was not only an architect, but also a novelist, painter, composer, reporter, and a well-known person at the time. He was also a close friend of the above-mentioned librarian Elfström.

[127] Ibid. As part of the Russian empire the Grand Duchy of Finland had special privileges, but the degree of autonomy varied. The situation changed during the 1890s, leading to the discontinuation of the separate Finnish army in 1901.

[128] Hirn, S. 1959, 239. Despite the grand plans, the reading room and the library were combined only at the end of the century. The Old Town Hall from the 1600s was renovated for the Viipuri Museum, established in 1892. As part of the renovation, a new floor was added to the building, and the façade was given a completely new appearance. ´As this work of vandalism was completed, both the reading room and the library were housed under same roof.´ Neuvonen (2017, 116-123) describes this in detail.

After all these libraries initiated by individual persons, there were plans for yet one more library, this time proposed by the city officials. This remained only a plan, but part of this library, namely the magistrate archives, remained as a requirement in the competition call for the library in 1927 and were still included in the original design. In 1907 the City Council took under consideration the question of ´a municipal library for Viipuri´. Here the idea was to create a library, which would contain most of all literature concerning societal matters, primarily for the use of the officials and employees of the city. The City Council thus assigned 5,000 Finnish marks for the purpose, but as it remained to be decided how this library should be set up in practice, and who would take responsibility for running it, the money was set aside as a separate fund. It was proposed that a library section should be created alongside the existing magistrate archives, open to the general public during office hours. The conclusion, however, was that such municipal library should not be created, as once again it was recognised that the existing libraries were already dispersed, and the municipal library would only hinder creating a proper city library. At last this seems to have created consensus to develop the existing City and Public library in the direction that it would raise ´true interest in learning, serve the need to learn and contribute towards the need of local people to add to their knowledge both in regard to their personal as well as occupational development´.[129] The City Council thus decided that the necessary step to resolve the situation was to merge the city and public library and the reading room to jointly form the Viipuri City Library. In addition to uniting these three existing libraries, it was proposed that as part of this should be established a ´reference library´, which would be free of charge to the general public. Therefore, the library has its basis in three earlier libraries, the city and the public library as well as the Hackman's newspaper reading room.

Perhaps not too surprisingly, it took years before any concrete action took place. The City Council had taken up the issue of creating permanent positions for a librarian and an archivist on 5.5.1916, but failed to make any decisions as the shared view was that '[t]he entire question remains to depend on what kind of a library building will be built'[130], and stressed that new adequate home for the library was the most urgent matter. 1917 is the year of the Russian Revolution, and the year when Finland became independent. However, the Finnish Civil War took place in January 1918, a war in which Viipuri was one of the central places of fighting. After the war, in September 1918 an official inventory was made in the Viipuri City Library. The plan had been to make an inventory already two years earlier, but the explanations given for the postponement were the elongated negotiations concerning the post of the librarian and sheer lack of space in

[129] Vasenius, J. in Ervi, A. 1935, 10.

[130] Ibid.

Fig. 9. *Approximate locations of libraries in Viipuri before 1935:*
1. Old Town Hall
2. Pynninen house
3. Parish Church
4. Hackmann newspaper hall
5. Keldan house
6. Library building by Punaisenlähteentori Square
7. Viipuri Castle (suggested)
8. Round Tower (suggested)
(Map by Otto-I. Meurman 1930, MMA)

the library. The library had begun to receive copies of new publications in 1916, and through the Finnish Government's decision in February 1919 a free copy of all domestic printing products. This was a significant privilege for Viipuri as the capital of Karelia and the most important city in eastern Finland.[131] Notably, the documents of the period concerning the city library, as well as later writings describing the history of Viipuri's libraries, leave the large political events and wars uncommented.

At last in June 1923 Johan Vasenius took up the position of the permanent librarian, responsible of the City Library.[132] This is when a sudden turn of events took place. On the fourth day after Vasenius had begun in his new position, Maria Lallukka, a local business woman and benefactor, died. Juho and Maria Lallukka,

[131] Vasenius, J. in Ervi, A. 1935, 14. The exact date is 14.2.1919.

[132] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1923, 112.

an influential merchant couple who were known in all of Finland as generous benefactors of art and culture, had made a joint will.[133] Maria, however, had changed her part of the will after her husband's death, defining in her personal will from 1919 that half of her assets were to be used for 'establishing a public library in the city of Viipuri, following the principles of the American Carnegie libraries'. This content of Maria's personal last will came as a surprise in 1923 when both the joint will and Maria's personal will were opened. The assets were left to be administered by the Viipuri City Council, which was given the mandate to determine how large a proportion of the funds was to be used for renting or building an appropriate space for the library, the purchase of collections and running the library. In other words, the City Council did not only supervised the allocation of this significant donation, but was in fact free to interpret how to spend the funds.[134] Furthermore, the donation was so substantial that financial concerns were no longer an obstacle for constructing a new building, and so the City Council took up immediately the issue of realising a new library, and began to organise an architectural competition.[135]

In this way, professor Tappe´s wish from over hundred years earlier came to be realised: ´the library indeed became a treasured favourite of the citizens, an

[133] Maria (1858-1923) and Juho Lallukka (1852-1913) ran and owned a successful wholesale business with two partners, Häkli and Paischeff under the name *Häkli, Lallukka & Co.* During their lifetime, Juho in particular was a well-known and generous patron supporting Finnish artists. This is the context which made Maria Lallukka one of the first Finnish businesswomen, and a significant patron in her own right. Maria bequeathed half of her wealth for founding the Viipuri City Library. (http://www.lallukkasaatio.net/index.phpoption=com_content&task=view&id=3&Itemid=4) Accessed May 2016. While it is clear that Viipuri was the 'logical object of philanthropy' for both Juho and Maria, no published source reveals what made Maria designate half of her personal wealth to the Viipuri Library. It is however known that after Juho´s death, Maria became close friends with the prominent Finnish author, Jalmari Finne, with whom she exchanged letters almost daily. According to a representative of the Lallukka artist's home foundation in Helsinki: ´In my view, if we speak at the foundation, so we can well blame Jalmari Finne that all this money went to the library. - Nothing unclear about that, it was a good cause, regrettably it´s now there, on the other side.´ (Hämäläinen 15.7.2013 Yle Radio 1 radio programme)

[134] 'Grand donation for the Viipuri city library'. Maria Lallukka has assigned a large part of her wealth for the city of Viipuri for establishing a Carnegie-style public library. It is not yet possible to estimate the exact sum, but it will rise to several millions. The donation will naturally be used for building a new house, the need for which has been substantial for a long time.' (*Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1923, 120) Notably, the city officials immediately make the interpretation that the funds will be used for a new building. A new building however was not a requirement in the testament. Maria Lallukka's will. The other half went to different educational institutions and feeding and clothing school children in need. (Hirn, S. 1959, 240.)

[135] Hirn, S. 1959, 240. The process has been investigated by Salmela (1994). The most comprehensive accounts of the process have been given by Heinonen (1986) and Nivari (1990). However, an unrivalled account of the discussions, which took place before the designing and construction, is provided by Meurman in his speech at the opening of the Viipuri Library on 13.10.1935 (Ervi, A. (ed.) 1935, 15-26.)

exemplary model of its kind´,[136] the best decoration of the city as Tappe had put it. However, it appears that the decision to build a new library building fulfilled the wish even more extensively that Tappe or anyone else could have hoped for. Upon the decision to open an architectural competition for a new City Library, the fragmented situation concerning the book collections, the continuously unstable position of the librarians, and the continued need to find appropriate space to house the City Library's collections all came to be resolved. While the new library building was completed only in 1935, it seems that Maria Lallukka's will, followed by the decision to open an architectural competition marked an important turn. The continued founding of new independent libraries associated with serving different language groups ended here. In the new library the fragmented small libraries became united and the different language and societal groups come to use the same public space.

A Location for the City Library

´City Planning Barbarism´ – The Project for a Monumental Square

As Viipuri had been first built as a fortress city, it was entirely surrounded by fortifications accompanied by an empty buffer zone, as it was prohibited to build anything in its immediate proximity. It had therefore become increasingly evident that the fortifications inhibited all plans for developing the city. In 1859 the Russian officials finally gave permission to demolish the eastern part of the fortifications, to permit the city to finally expand. Demolition began immediately in 1860, and the county surveyor Berndt Otto Nymalm was assigned to draw up a new city plan. The plan was completed that same year and certified in 1861, thus expanding the land under plan in the city seven-fold.[137] Now, there was also space to plan anew the central parts of Viipuri.

The city of Vyborg is still today known for its 'central park', a long park strip in the city centre called 'Park Lenina', originally established during the last half of the 1800s. This park stands out as the focal point in the process of determining an appropriate site for the library. The reason for creating a long stretch of park was that number of Finnish cities had experienced devastating fires during the first half of the 1800s. With this in mind, the Russian imperial ordinance was given to the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1856, stipulating that cities were to be divided with strips of park to limit destruction caused by fire spreading in the urban fabric. Based on the ordinance, Nymalm thus drew a linear park for his new

[136] Hirn, S. 1959, 242.

[137] Österman, E. 1976. Also Neuvonen, P. 2017, 77-96.

city plan. While the historical reasons for creating Torkkeli Park have such functional grounds, the long park area soon became a green zone beloved by the local residents. Work on the park began in 1862, reaching the eastern side of the Aleksanterinkatu Street area in 1870. Thus, at the beginning of the 1900s Torkkeli Park was for the most part newly established. In the preceding plans for building projects which would have meant diminishing the park area, the argument that local people continued to raise was, however, their concern for this 'precious old park'.[138]

Fig. 10. *C.W. Gyldén´s map from 1839 illustrates the fortifications surrounding the city. (NARC)*

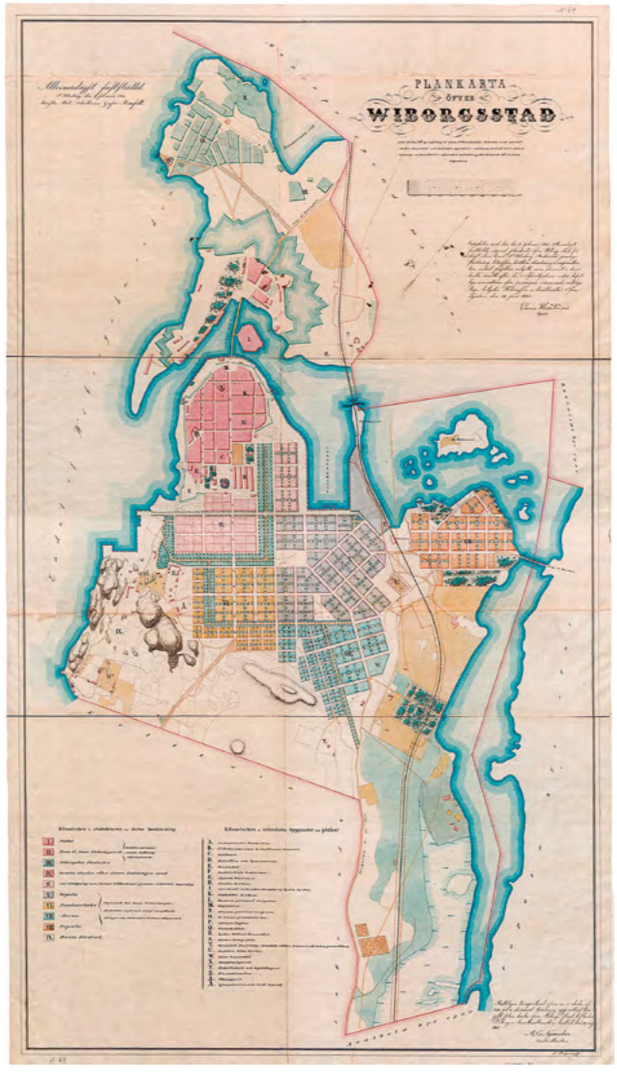


Fig. 11. *Berdt Otto Nymalm's Viipuri city plan from 1861. Rectangular blocks, squares and boulevards came to replace the fortifications and un-planned suburbs. The new areas were separated from the old town with a long park strip, later known as Torkkeli Park. (NARC)*

[138] Österman, E. 1976.

From the point of view of urban planning in Viipuri, an intriguing a chain of events began in 1896. This is when the city received a significant donation through the will of the pharmacist Johan Casimir von Zweygberg, part of which was to be used for 'the purpose of beautifying the city'. The amount of the donation rose to 167,500 gold marks, which at the time was a considerable sum. The City Council then concluded that the funds will be used when 30,000 marks of interest has accumulated in addition to the existing capital. This sum was reached in 1904. In the first stage, the idea that received the most support was to build a fountain of ´Central European scale´ in Torkkeli Park. Sketches were ordered from the artist John Munsterhjelm, who designed the fountain to have a triumphal arch-type construction.

Fig. 12. *The crossing of Aleksanterinkatu ja Torkkelinkatu Streets in the late 1800s. This is the planned location of the monumental square. (Lappeenrannan museo)*

It might well be that Munsterhjelm´s triumphal arch provided inspiration for a new project.[139] In 1910, a motion was made in the City Council demanding decisions regarding the fountain and its location. November 1911 the *Wiborgs Nyheter* newspaper published an article titled 'A monumental square in Viipuri',[140] in which prominent local citizens, most of them architects, presented their view that an architectural competition for a monumental square would be needed. They began by discussing the need to find a worthy location for the planned fountain, but within the same article went on to point out that this would be the moment to commemorate the 100th year since Alexander I of Russia returned the Viipuri province to Finland, after it had been annexed to Russia in the Great Northern War. Thus, the proposal was that this would be a prime moment to create a noteworthy monument. What was lacking was a beautiful

[139] Interpretation of Österman (1976). The remaining information concerning the Monumental Square competition remains largely in the newspapers of the period, where discussion appears to have begun in 1911, in an article signed by industrialist Hackman, and architects Ullberg, Fraser, Uotila and Schulman, published in local newspapers. *Karjala* 22.11.1911, *Wiborgs Nyheter* 22.11.1911. The competition was published in The Finnish Architectural *Review* and *Rakennustaito* specialist periodicals. The Museum of Finnish Architecture holds original hand coloured plates of the Kallio brothers' and Palmqvist & Sjöströms' entry. In addition there were Birger Brunila's, and Uno Ullberg's entries.

[140] *Wiborgs Nyheter* 22.11.1911

and monumental site. As follows, the suggestion was to arrange a square along Aleksanterinkatu Street, and assign plots for public buildings on both sides of the street. These could include a theatre, an art museum, a library or other public buildings.

In January 1912 the City Council left the issue of a 'monumental square' under consideration to a special committee, requesting it to prepare a competi-

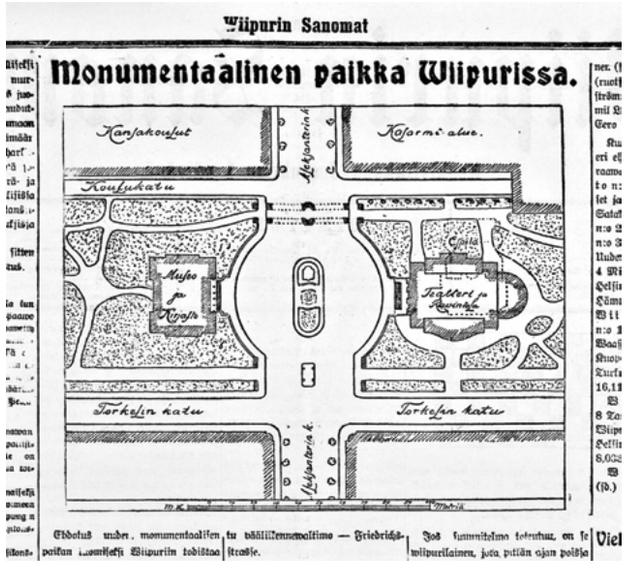


Fig. 13. *Viipurin Sanomat newspaper 1.12.1911 illustrating the proposed monumental square. On the left side is a museum and library building, to the right a theatre and restaurant building. (KK)*

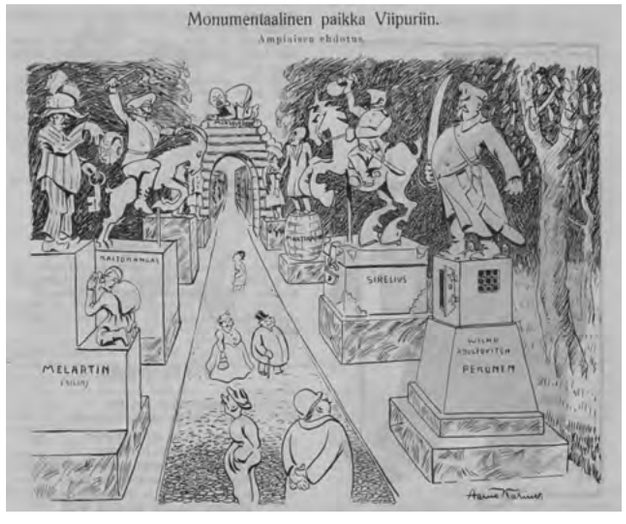


Fig. 14. *A caricature published in* **Ampiainen** *periodical 16.12.1911. The author proposed to erect memorial statues on both sides of Aleksanterinkatu Street for city´s beautification, drawing inspiration from Berlin´s Siegesallee. (KK)*

tion brief for 'organising a monumental square with works of art'.[141] This included a remark that the exact location would be left for the competitors to decide. However, alongside formulating the competition brief, the special committee was requested to propose a site for Munsterhjelm's fountain. The committee was authorised to request expert opinions for this purpose. Thus, the project appears to be characterised by several conceptions being present at once. It was stated that Torkkeli Park on both sides of Aleksanterinkatu Street should have a distinct focal area with a triumphal arch-type construction. And finally that the monumental square should be surrounded by cultural buildings. In other words, the conception of how to mark the heart of the city covered the entire range between creating a fountain to embellish the park, to the creation of an monumental square surrounded by large-scale cultural buildings.

At this point, the City Council decided to request statements from architects Eliel Saarinen and Bertel Jung, who were considered to be the country´s the best experts in architecture and city planning. Saarinen and Jung arrived in Viipuri in February 1912.[142] Their comments, resemble those already articulated by the specialist committee appointed by the City Council. According to Saarinen and Jung: 'As in many other old cities of Finland, it has also happened in Viipuri that newer areas, or those rebuilt after a larger fire, have utterly diverted from the premises of city planning which have historically defined the shaping of a city.' In their view, the fact that the more recently built areas follow a grid plan gives a lifeless, monotonous appearance, and aspects as fire insurance and easy supervision by the police having become the overpowering factors in determining the shape and direction of streets. These direct and wide streetscapes, and purposeless park areas which can be viewed as unsuccessful copies of western boulevards and gardens are exactly what they found to be the main problem in the central areas of Viipuri built during the 1800s. The solution Saarinen and Jung offered was to achieve the spirit of the older parts of the city by adding a monument

[141] In existing publications, the ´Story of the Viipuri Library´ tends to begin from three alternative moments (in which development of the library institution and its needs are not part of). The first is a competition for a monumental square: while this is the first time when drawings for a public library appear, this early competition has mostly remained forgotten. Ulla Salmela (1994) makes a note of this, but her focus is on Otto-Iivari Meurman. The second starting point is 1923 when the city received funding for a city library through the bequest of Maria Lallukka, followed by formulation of the competition call and debating location for the library. (e.g. Nivari 1990,19.) This approach could be characterised as focusing on Viipuri as the site where the library was eventually built. The third significant point is the competition for the library in 1927, leading to the completed library in 1935. Emphasis on this aspect is most characteristic of international architectural publications and articles, where the library is associated with the emergence of 'new architecture'.

[142] Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1912). 6.3.1912, 912 n:o4 MMA. Saarinen and Jung made their visit on 26.2.1912, to inspect the potential places for a Monumental Square and to take part in the committee's meeting on the same day.

which would mark a long street perspective, or through the creation of a group of buildings in an appropriate location.

Having offered these potential solutions, they remark that in Viipuri attention has already been directed to the location in the newer area where beautifying is most certainly needed, namely, the crossing of Aleksanterinkatu Street and Torkkeli Park. They thus state: 'The importance of Aleksanterinkatu Street as a route from the train station, being the highest point in the park, its width and position in the city plan all speak for enhancing this location, in particular as the aim is to weaken the brutality of the city plan, which Viipuri has experienced during the 1800s. If this beautifying is to happen, as the committee has proposed by constructing a group of buildings, in the form of two monumental buildings to be built in the park and connected with a gate structure or triumphal arch across the street, this would create not only a backdrop for Aleksanterinkatu Street but this would also provide plots for two buildings in the centre, buildings which would serve cultural purposes. An adequate compensation to the parkland being slightly diminished is that in this way the monotonous park would be divided, and both sides could be re-arranged to best benefit from their architectural background. In this respect, we would like to note the most pleasant impression the Swedish theatre in Helsinki provides for the city's most valuable park.'[143]

The project for a monumental square in Viipuri is illustrative of changing ideas in the fields of architecture and city planning in Finland around the 1910s. In architecture, the turn was towards classical orders and symmetry and in city planning towards a monumental cityscape represented by large squares and wide boulevards. To name potential international inspirations, *The Finnish Architectural Review* published for example the 'General City Planning Exhibition' in Berlin in 1910 and the Burnham Plan of Chicago in 1912.[144] The project for a monumental square in Viipuri is contemporary with other similar projects in Finland. An example of a project for creating urban space dominated by a monumental public building is the Helsinki City Hall competition, to be situated on the Sen-

[143] Statement of Eliel Saarinen and Bertel Jung. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1912). 29.2.1912. MMA.

[144] Jung, B. *Allgemeine Städtebau-Austellung* exhibition in Berlin. the *Finnish Architectural review* 5/1910, Brunila, B. Plan of Chicago (1909) the *Finnish Architectural Review* 9/1912. Intriguingly, also the city of Turku had received a donation in 1910, and professors G. Nyström and I.G. Clason were consulted as experts in 1912 for organising the centre of Turku. *Uusi Aura* 4.12.1960.

ate Square. This competition was announced in July 1912.[145] All the awarded entries were characterised by symmetry, the use of classical porticos and triumphal arches.

On March 6th, 1912 the Viipuri City Council made the decision to take von Zweygberg's testament donation to use.[146] Then, on March 15th the *Wiborgs Nyheter* newspaper published an article titled *Den Monumentala Platsen* signed by Saarinen and Jung.[147] The contents of this article are very similar to the statement Saarinen and Jung had offered in their expert statement commissioned by the city, only this time aimed for the general public. The main difference is that in the newspaper article Saarinen and Jung make stronger assertions, in comparison with their more discreetly formulated suggestions for the City Council. In the newspaper article they state that a group of public buildings, for example a theatre and a museum on both sides of Aleksanterinkatu Street. This solution would provide for a lively and presentable streetscape, and obviate the negligence the city had experienced in that no public ´monumental´ buildings had been designed for the park, and hence a great opportunity to develop the city had remained unrealised. For this reason Saarinen and Jung considered Torkkeli Park to be a product of ´city-planning barbarism´.[148] However, the idea of creating 'monumental' buildings remains imprecise in the continued discussions, as this was simultaneously discussed as a project for two cultural buildings positioned opposite each other on different sides of Aleksanterinkatu Street, but also in terms of a monumental square with several public buildings planned for the same location.

Taking von Zweygberg's testament donation to use meant opening of an architectural competition for a monumental square in Viipuri. The site was confirmed by Saarinen and Jung who after having 'inspected all places' during their visit to Viipuri, had come to the conclusion that the monumental square could only be

[145] The competition call was first announced in the *Uusi Suometar* newspaper 9.7.1912. The competition period opened July 13th 1912. The winning entries were published in the *Finnish Architectural Review* 01.05.1913, 67- 86. No first prize was awarded. Armas Lindgren received the second prize; Taucher, Cajanus and Blomstedt the third prize. The city also purchased several entries, among them entry by Valter Jung, Emil Fabritius and Bertel Jung, Eliel Saarinen and K.S. Kallio and Oiva Kallio.

[146] Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1912-1913). 6.3.1912 n:o 4 MMA.

[147] *Wiborgs Nyheter* 15.3.1912.'Den monumentala platsen´. The text is signed by Saarinen and Jung, in Helsinki 29 February 1912.

[148] In their statement for the city council, Jung and Saarinen use the term 'raakuus' meaning 'raw or brutal', while in the newspaper article they literally use the term 'barbaaria'; barbarism or barbarity. Also Österman (1976) describes: 'As no monumental buildings were positioned in Torkkeli Park, these gentlemen giving their statement maintained that an important aspect in developing the city had been neglected. Hence there was reason to speak of barbarism.' In this discussion, it appears it was Jung who first used the term in his statement published in *Wiborgs Nyheter* 5.3.1912 referring to '1800 tales stadsplaneringbarbari'.

positioned at the location where Aleksanterinkatu Street intersects the Torkkeli park. Saarinen and Jung thus proposed that the city should organise an ideas competition, on the basis of which the design could be executed. This was to be followed by a second competition, open to only the competitors who had submitted entries for the first competition.

The City Council did as Saarinen and Jung suggested. The premise for the competition was that the buildings should house at least an art museum and *a city library*, and that it should be possible to add a theatre to the group of buildings at a later stage.[149] As to artist Munsterhjelm's work, the special committee of the City Council regarded that the competition will undoubtedly offer new perspectives regarding its site and positioning, and hence its location should be decided at a later stage. The ideas competition call was published in March 1912.[150] By the deadline in May 1912, 22 entries had arrived, many of them very ambitious. The awarded entries were by W.G.Palmqvist and E. Sjöström, Jarl Eklund, Birger Brunila and Uno Ullberg.

The second round of the competition was held in the autumn of 1912. In Otto-Iivari Meurman´s words, all 'the results of this competition were considerably monumental´.[151] The first prize was given to the architect brothers Kauno S. and Oiva Kallio. What was special about their proposition, was that the monumental buildings were to be connected with an archway across Aleksanterinkatu Street, described as 'bridge of whispers'. W.G. Palmqvist and Einar Sjöström received the second prize. Their idea was to connect the buildings with a colonnade, recalling the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin. Third prize went to Valter Jung and Emil Fabritius. In their sketches the theatre was seen as bearing a resem-

[149] In this first stage, it is stated that the jury includes local men; Consul Wolff, who later used all his influence to stop Aalto's library being built in the park. The other two jury members named here are also local, the artist Lindqvist and the municipal architect Schulman. Therefore, specialist statements were requested from two of Finland's best known architects of the time, but they were not in the official jury. The ideas competition and the second competition for the monumental square were published as brief items in the *Finnish Architectural Review* and *Rakennustaito*.

[150] The competition announcement in the *Finnish Architectural Review* March 1912. The jury members were architects O.Tarjanne, B.Jung och A.Schulman, artist R.Lindqvist and Consul R.Wolff. The full competition programme was also published in *Wiborgs Nyheter* in *Wiborgs Nyheter* 01.04.1912 There was a second round organised for those having submitted an entry to the first competition, announcement in *Wiborgs Nyheter* 15.8.1912. The full programme was published in the same paper on 17.8.1912 where it is explicitly stated that the buildings are to house a 'public library and a reading hall'. Also published in Finnish in *Karjala* 20.8.1912.

[151] Meurman, O-I. 1989,265. The results were also presented to the Architects' Club [Arkitekt klubben] in Helsinki.

blance with the Paris Opera House.[152] Meurman has pointed out that in all three winning proposals, the square was closed with a grand arch or colonnade extending across Aleksanterinkatu Street, which would have been visible to everyone arriving from the Railway Station. At this point it was concluded that none of the winning entries as such could be used for developing the design into a realisable version. *The Finnish Architectural Review* published the three winning entries in 1913, under the title 'A competition for a monumental square for Viipuri'.[153]

Then the First World War began, followed in 1918 by economic inflation. After this, there was not enough money in von Zweygberg´s fund to realise anything too grand. The city opted for acquiring two statues, of which Georges Winter´s 'Maiden of Imatra' [Imatran impi] was situated on the Market Square side of the Torkkeli Park and, just in case, the other one, Mikko Hovi´s 'Boy with a Fish' [Kalapoika] by Mikko Hovi, even further away in Salakkalahti Park.[154]

While one might assume that later generations could have adopted a distanced and even somewhat ironic attitude towards these magnificent plans, this is not the case. The idea of a monumental centre lived on, although public dis-

[152] Österman, E. 1976. The references to Palmqvist and Sjöström's entry resembling 'Brandenburger Tor', and Jung & Fabritius's entry resembling the 'Grand Opera of Paris' were published in *Wiborgs Nyheter* on 2.12.1912. Kallio's entry is described as 'sweet and beautiful, in white on dark paper ['läckert och vackert, i hvitt på mörkt papper']. The newspaper article begins from the note that the issue had been discussed at the Technical Club's meeting, thus making it likely these impressions had been articulated at this meeting. On 3.12.1912 *Wiborgs Nyheter* published an article describing the six entries which had arrived and naming the winners. Also in Finnish in *Karjala* 3.12.1912.

[153] Images of the winning entries published also in *Kotitaide* 01.01.1913, *Wiborgs Nyheter* 5.4.1913 published an article where it is proposed to establish a cultural building ['folkets hus'], where there could be spaces for the library, a concert hall and space for art exhibitions. Opposite to it could be the building for a theatre. This cultural building could be taken as a precedent for the idea for a 'house of culture', a building planned to be realised opposite the library in the 1927 library competition. Also on 17.4.1914 *Wiborgs Nyheter* published an article about the library building, where it is suggested that a library should be built between the 'Eden' apartment building and the Cathedral - i.e. almost exactly where the library was built in 1935. On 6.6.1915 the *Wiipuri* newspaper's article 'Kaupungin tuleva sivistystalo' summarises the site debate, which will take place between 1923-1933. Here the offered site would be Punaisenlähteentori Square, which Aalto comes to refer to as 'Columbus's egg'. Nonetheless, on 8.4.1916 *Wiborgs Nyheter* stated that the city officials have considered the need to organise a library as part of a monumental square, and in view of Viipuri's importance as the centre of Karelia. In *Karjala* 4.5.1920 promotes again the idea that the library should be built on Punaisenlähteentori Square.

[154] Österman, E.1976. Elsewhere, Meurman describes how the only materialised result of the competition for the Monumental Square was that on May 19th 1919 as part of celebrating the end of the Civil War (Meurman uses the term ´Freedom War´, with its heavily politicised connotation) a grand wooden arch, covered with fir branches, was built across Aleksanterinkatu Street, as planned in all the winning entries. Meurman, O.-I. 1989, 268.

Fig. 15. *Kauno S. and Oiva Kallio: competition entry for the monumental square, 1912 (first prize).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1913 (KK)*

Fig. 16. *W.G. Palmqvist & Einar Sjöström: competition entry for the monumental square, 1912 (second prize).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1913 (KK)*

Fig. 17. *Valter Jung & Emil Fabritius: competition entry for the monumental square, 1912 (third prize).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1913 (KK)*

cussion about it temporarily faded.[155] When the site for the new library building actualised, the idea of the monumental square resurfaced. From the point of view of the library project, it is more than likely that the competition for the monumental square published in the notable professional periodical, *The Finnish Architectural Review* in 1913, would have been remembered by many Finnish architects at the time of the competition for the library opened in 1927. It is a noteworthy feature of the competition brief for the library that the competitors were requested to design not only a library building, but also a square and the footprint for a cultural facility to be realised at a later stage, an obvious echo of the competition for the monumental square.

In fact, somewhat ironically, the concept of two 'monumental' buildings to be built on both sides of Aleksanterinkatu Street make the entries for the library competition most fitting for the original ideas competition for the monumental

[155] Österman, E. 1976.

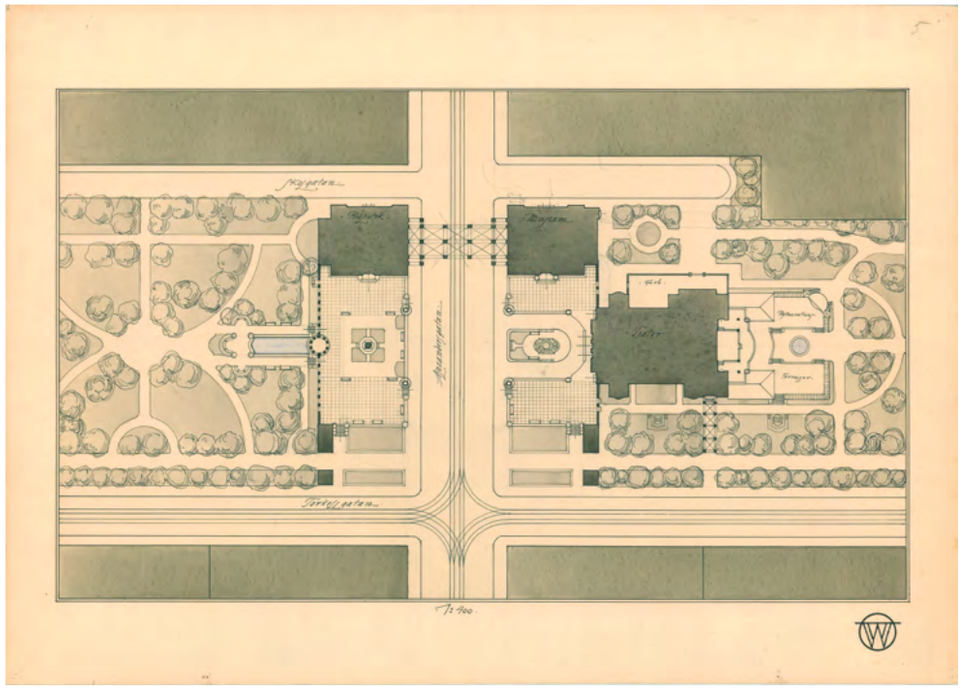


Fig. 18-19. *Uno Ullberg: competition entry for the monumental square, 1912. Ullberg´s project was awarded in the first round of the competition, but these plans were probably made for the second round. (MFA)*

square. They were perhaps even more appropriate than the entries submitted for the 1912 competition, which were all deemed too monumental to be realised.

Fig. 20. *Triumphal arch erected on Aleksanterinkatu Street 16.5.1919 to commemorate the Finnish Civil War (Etelä-Karjalan museo)*

The library as a monumental building

In 1921 the city planning architect Otto-Iivari Meurman described the challenges he encountered in Viipuri: 'Viipuri offers a town planning architect a more interesting field of work than perhaps any other town in our country. This is especially due to the fact that right in the central parts of the town there are large areas, which can be used to supplement the town plan and to create artistic highlights. But Viipuri's beautiful terrain cleft by bays and hills, historic architectural monuments, problems associated with ports and the railway and, finally, - however paradoxical it may sound - the difficulties and multiple possibilities of organising the vast suburban shanty towns also stimulate the town planner. Viipuri is at the same time also a fast-growing town, whose area has more than doubled since the 1880s and which, as the port for the whole of Karelia and as a busy mediator of trade between East and West, has given our general circumstances excellent development prospects.'[156]

Meurman began to work in the position of Viipuri city planning architect in 1918, and remained in the post until 1937. During his first years in Viipuri, Meurman produced various studies and sketches paying special attention to squares.[157] While he had not been present in Viipuri in 1912, Meurman immediately picked up the idea of a ´monumental square´, which appeared in his first general plans.

[156] Translated from Finnish by Salmela, U. 2004, 11. Salmela uses 'town' instead of city.

[157] Salmela, U. 1994, 184.

His opinion of the best location for the monumental square however differed slightly from the idea favoured in the 1912 competition. Meurman´s concern to which he returned in many of his writings was that Viipuri seemed to lack ´a heart´, a traditional focal point where public life could take place and which would serve as a significant landmark. In his view, this was not only an aesthetic, but also a practical question. In order to improve the situation and to accentuate the centre of the city as a place of civic pride, Meurman made several suggestions for public squares and monumental buildings in his 1921 general plan. Anticipating that the central barracks area situated north-west of Aleksanterinkatu Street would be vacated by the army in the near future, he chose this area as the appropriate site for the monumental square, to be surrounded with administrative buildings accompanied by an arch as an entrance.[158]

Fig. 21. *In his general plan of 1921 Otto-I. Meurman proposed groups of public buildings to noteworthy sites, as to the place of the central barracks, and to the Patterinmäki Hill.* *Finnish Architectural Review 4/1921 (KK)*

The time between the First and Second World War was a significant period of development in many Finnish urban areas.[159] Also Viipuri grew extensively during the interwar period: its area increased more than ten-fold, and the number of inhabitants trebled, mostly owing to the incorporation of large suburban areas and through migration from the countryside to the city. By 1939, with over 74,000 inhabitants, Viipuri was the second-largest city of independent Finland.[160] In retrospect, Viipuri has an established fame as having been Finland's most international city, based on the presence of the four language groups, and the city's role as a commercial centre with its harbours, railways and airport.[161] During the interwar period Viipuri however became more and more ´Finnish´ as the relative

[158] Salmela, U. 1994,185; Meurman 1921,7-13.

[159] Salmela, U. 1994, 8-10.

[160] Salmela, U. 1994,10; Nevalainen, P. 1994, 528-532; Meurman, O.-I. 1978b, 57-58.

[161] There are numerous references to how local people in Finnish-period Viipuri would blithely mix four languages. For example in an unpublished manuscript architect Uno Ullberg has described a typical event in Viipuri: a discussion between a customer and a shopkeeper, where buying a piece of cheese involves the use of several languages. (MFA Library archives.)

proportion of the Finnish-speaking population grew – from 73.60 percent in 1900 to 93.60 percent in 1930.[162]

While the competition for the monumental square has later fallen into oblivion, Meurman has recalled this period in Viipuri later in many of his writings. A reason to underscore Meurman's role is that he was present in Viipuri for two decades in the role of city planner, from 1918 to 1937 when significant number of building projects were realised, including that of the library. Furthermore, in his position as the city planning architect, he was a key person in the city's administration, involved with the entire scale associated with building and developing the city area. In addition, Meurman has been a member of the influential local institutions, as the Viipuri Technical Club. Therefore he stands out as the one person to have had a close understanding of the city administration's views and ambitions but also of the citizens' perspectives. As an individual person, it is most likely that he had the best overall view of the events associated with realising the library.[163]

Fig. 22. *Otto-I. Meurman's map from 1930 illustrates the increase of the city area after large suburban areas were annexed to the city between 1924–1930. (NARC)*

[162] Tandefeldt, M. 2002, 67.

[163] As both the city planning architect of Viipuri and as the supervisor of the city's ancient monuments, Meurman was for instance involved in deciding the fate of the old fortifications. At the same time, preparing major plans for traffic and the enlargement of Viipuri's harbour. As Viipuri was also the administrative and cultural centre of Finnish Karelia, there was a considerable need for new administrative and cultural buildings during the interwar years. (Salmela 2004, 11) In the case of the library it was Meurman who wrote the competition brief. He was also the secretary of the library building committee and involved in the matter as a member of the local Technical Club and as a private citizen. (Salmela 1994,186.) In sum, everything points to the centrality of Meurman's role, or more precisely roles, in the process.

Meurman begins his account of the long and complex processes leading to the completion of the library titled ´Viipuri´s monumental place and the library question´ as follows: 'Arriving in Viipuri along Karjalankatu Street, (previously handsomely named ´Aleksandersperspektivet´) to the corner of Torkkelinkatu Street, the visitor found himself at the focal point of the city. This was not emphasised in the town plan; it was just an ordinary street intersection. Commonly the centre of a city might be made notable with a marketplace [square], or a square of some kind.'[164] In later accounts outlining the realisation process of the library, the monumental square has disappeared, but to Meurman, the two projects remained closely connected.

At the time, the City Library was housed at the corner of Punaisenlähteenkatu and Pohjolankatu Streets in a building from 1890 by architect Johan Brynolf Blomqvist, which had originally been used as the restaurant of the temperance society. As the southeastern suburbs were attached to the city in 1924, the space of the existing City Library became hopelessly inadequate.[165] Maria Lallukka's bequest from 1923 was thus most acutely needed to be taken to use. As has been noted, the Viipuri City Council had immediately adopted the view that there remained no obstacles to realising a new library building since the bequest was so substantial, and set out to organise an architectural competition for the library.[166] However, it took years for this to happen.

The time period from the news about Maria Lallukka's testament donation to the library's completion in 1935 brings forth a chain of significant events in the genealogy of the library. In the early stage, different representatives of Viipuri participated in the discussions to decide the best possible site to build the library. While in 1923 the sincere aim was to organise an architectural competition as soon as possible, it was only in 1927 when the competition was announced. In the competition call, the site for the library was in the Torkkeli Park, to the southeastern side of Aleksanterinkatu Street. This was the very same site planned for the monumental square.[167]

The process of determining the site for the library lasts at least a decade, from 1923 to all the way until 1933 when construction of the building finally began. Riitta Thuneberg, an architect born in Viipuri, sums up in her recollections the exhaustingly long debate concerning the site for the library: ´I remember I

[164] Meurman, O-I. 1985, 264. Note: place/square: paikka/aukio both used in Finnish. This text is published in an edited book in 1985. However, also the previous text in this publication is by Meurman, signed in 1938. Meurman has written about this same topic several times, making it unclear when the text referenced here would have been originally written.

[165] Meurman, O-I.1985, 269.

[166] Hirn, S.1959, 242.

[167] Meurman, O.-I., 1985, 269.

was ten years old when it was completed, and we visited there, and it was very impressive. I even remember the broil, as they debated the location of the library for almost ten years, where it would be put; now it is going to be there, now here, now they are collecting names to prevent building it too close to the Cathedral - I remember this, though I did not take part. It was just around when I was ten years old.´[168] In 1935, upon the library's opening even many of those who had been concerned about the appearance of this building which was 'free of any existing style', appear to have been more or less content with the completed building. The site question however raised discussion all the way to 1935, because the library came to be built in the midst of the beloved Torkkeli Park.[169]

Notably, there were multiple other building projects in Viipuri. Yet, the remaining epoch materials suggest that no other project was debated with such strong feelings and dedication, for as many years, as that of the library. The question which unavoidably arises is why just the library; what made this building of relatively humble scale so crucial that it took from 1923 to 1933 for the city representatives and the citizens to come to terms with determining an appropriate site. The final site came to be the one the city planning architect Meurman referred to as the heart of the city. This probably offers some indication as to why determining the site was so heatedly debated: The potential sites for the library included practically all the plots where a future public building or other important institution could have been built. This way, it could be analysed that testing the library to all these alternative locations in a sense made visible the imagined future cityscape of Viipuri.

In any case, there is substantial reason to presume that the members of the Viipuri City Council who had full freedom to manage Maria Lallukka's donation, had no way to have predicted the process they had got into.[170]

[168] Jetsonen, S. and Pakkala, P. 1992, 5. Interview with Riitta Thuneberg. The Finnish Architectural Society interviews. Unpublished transliteration. MFA Library archives.

[169] Meurman, O.-I. 1985, 271.

[170] *Karjala* 4.11.1925. The newspaper published a causerie titled 'the library matter' ['Kirjastotalon homma'], which managed to predict the future events with surprising accuracy, describing the debate concerning the site, the architectural competition, commissioning expert statements and all the other aspects which can make a project as the one to get a new library building realised, extended indefinitely. The author, for example, describes how two men are sent to 'Otaheiti', two to Yokohama and three to Melbourne. They then have a year to write their reports of the library buildings they have seen, but as time will run short, will need two years extension to submit their reports. This causerie concludes with the note that after all the necessary steps, the library will be built during the next century.

The library in the cityscape

In their meeting in September 1923 the governors of the City Library appointed a special section to work on the project for the new library.[171] The special section's advice was that the new building was to be built as close to the centre as possible, while leaving sufficient space around the building to allow for potential need to expand the structure, to safeguard it from risk of fire, and to ascertain a site with as much natural light as possible.[172] The governors of the City Library request a statement from the city planning architect concerning two alternative sites in September 1924.[173] First alternative was the Church Park between the Cathedral and Vaasankatu Street. The second alternative was to the southwestern side of Katariinankatu Street, between Agricolankatu and Vaasankatu streets. (See no. 1a and 1b in Fig. 23.)

Next, Meurman presented the issue to the City Planning Committee in November 1924.[174] In his view, the first alternative was un-preferable. This was because the library would take up a too large chunk of the park, and clash with the landscaping by so-called heroes tomb.[175] Instead, Meurman continued, it could be possible to position the library to the site supported by the governors of the City Library, to the north-eastern end of the sports field by the Katariinankatu street. (See no. 2a in Fig. 23) The city planning architect however did not regard this as the most appropriate site, because positioned here, the library would block view to the other end of the field, to the rock which was a likely plot for an important public institution. In addition, he points out, positioning the library here would be a waste, as there are several sites within the city where a public building would be needed.[176]

[171] The exact date was 2.9.1923. The main sources for following the progress of the site issue are Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 15-26, and archival materials kept at the Mikkeli Provincial Archives. In the minutes of the Viipuri City Planning Committee, the person who signed the records was Meurman, not Ullberg. This further underlines the importance of Meurman as an original source, whereas it is most of all the newspaper writings where Ullberg's own voice can be distinguished.

[172] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 15.

[173] Ote Viipurin kaupunginkirjaston johtokunnan pöytäkirjasta 19.9.1924. Mom.5. Signed Johan Vasenius. (1924) MMA.

[174] Viipuri City Planning Committee's meeting 14.11.1924. Architects Ullberg, Vikstedt, Meurman and city engineer Taivainen. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim. kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1924-1924) Mom. 4. MMA.

[175] This statue had been commissioned to commemorate the victory of the 'Whites' in the Finnish Civil War was by sculptor Gunnar Finne from 1919.

[176] In the original documents, as in his statement for the City Council, Meurman refers to himself in the third person, with his last name, or by using his title of city planning architect.

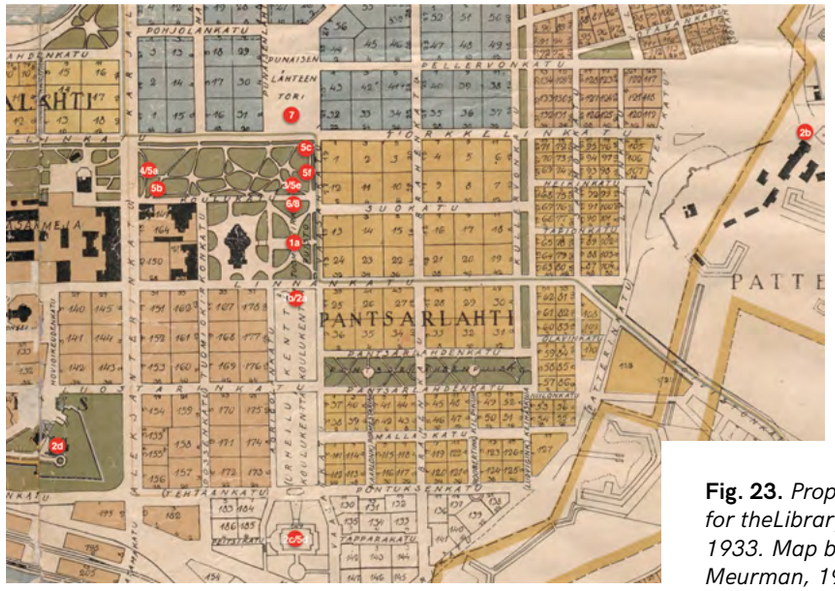


Fig. 23. *Proposed sites for theLibrary 1923-1933. Map by Otto-I. Meurman, 1930. (NARC)*

In this purpose Meurman drew some sketches, illustrative of the alternative sites. Of these alternatives, he preferred the site at the south-eastern end of the Torkkelinkatu street, at the highest point of Patterinmäki Hill. (See no. 2b in Fig. 23) The reasons why Meurman found this site most fitting was that there the library would fulfil a significant lack in respect to street views, in addition to which it would be positioned to the most important location. Here, the building would also be conveniently positioned in-between the city and the suburbs, by an important main road. The new library would thus serve also the suburbs, and there would be need to establish only one branch library for the northern and one for the western suburbs. Meurman concluded that as the sketches illustrate, the library would not deter realising a group of public buildings to Patterinmäki Hill, on the contrary, in his view this way the library and the planned university[177] would complement each other. The city planning architect stressed that the most monumental site of the city, the 'Viipuri Acropolis' should be taken to use to enhance its value, while also being ideologically appropriate. As the second most preferable alternative, Meurman proposed either the rock at the southwestern end of the sports field (see no. 2c in Fig. 23) or the Pantsarlahti Bastion (see no. 2d in Fig. 23, the site where the Art School and Museum by Uno Ullberg was opened in 1930.). He regarded that both sites are sufficiently central, close to schools while both also mark the end of a street, plots needing to be accentuated in the city

[177] Österman, E. 1976, has noted this would have been a prime location for the University of Viipuri, which was never established. Meurman similarly speaks of the planned university in many of his recollections.

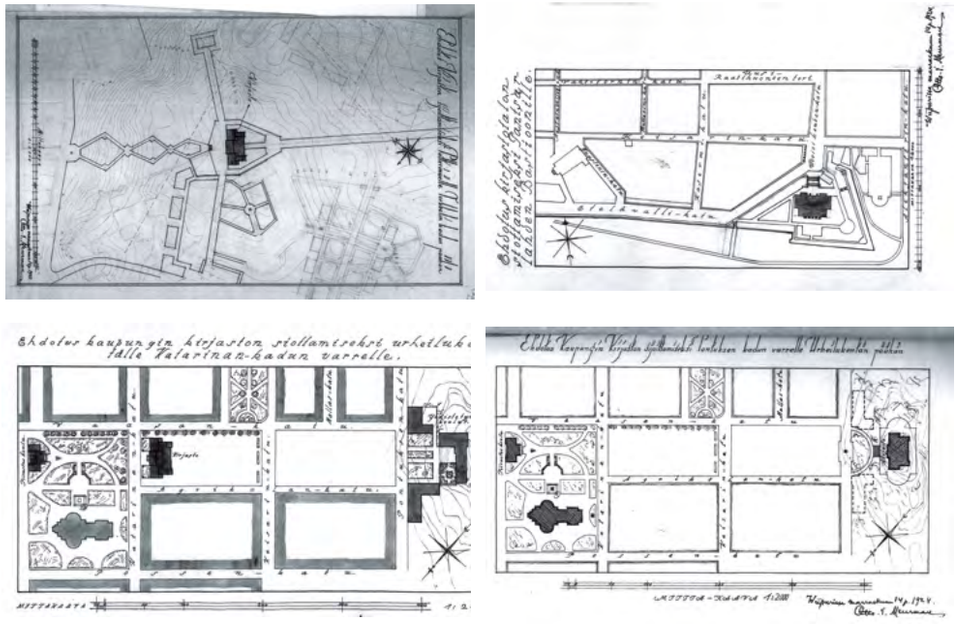


Fig. 24-27. *In 1924 city planning architect Otto-I. Meurman drafted four potential sites for the library: Patterinmäki Hill, Pantsarlahti Bastion, and northeastern and southwestern ends of the sports field. (MMA)*

plan. Meurman concludes that other buildings than the library however could be considered for these locations, unlike to the site on the Patterinmäki Hill.[178]

The City Planning Committee agreed with Meurman's preferences. The exact order was the highest point on Patterinmäki Hill, bedrock at the southwestern end of the sports field,[179] the Pantsarlahti Bastion, and the southwestern side of Katariinankatu street. This information was then submitted to the Board of Governors of the City Library.[180]

The governors of the City Library however came to the conclusion that *all* the proposed sites were difficult to access both for young as well as elderly citizens, thus not preferring any of the suggested locations.[181] To get things moving,

[178] Viipuri City Planning Committee's meeting 14.11.1924. Architects Ullberg, Vikstedt, Meurman and city engineer Taivainen. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavatoimikunnan pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1924-1924) Mom. 4. MMA.

[179] This is where the Business College [´Viipurin Kauppa- ja Merenkulkuoppilaitos´] by Ragnar Ypyä was completed in 1938.

[180] City Planning Committee to the Board of Governors of the City Library 14.11.1924. Almost the same content as in the city planning committee's meeting. Signed Meurman. Viipurin kaup.rak. toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1924-1924) n:o 37 MMA

[181] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 16.

the Viipuri Technical Club contacted the City Planning Committee and took up the issue at the Club´s meeting on October 17th 1925.[182] In the discussion that followed, the representatives of the City Library criticised the sites suggested by the City Planning Committee, which resulted in the Technical Club assigning their own select committee, members of which were architects A. Schulman, U. Ullberg and O.-I. Meurman, librarian J. Vasenius and teacher J.P. Tirkkonen.

This local club was most influential in Viipuri.[183] What is noteworthy is that it appears this was the context where representatives of different institutions were present at once, and where individual persons seem to have been able to make their views known - also beyond their professional position in the city administration. Furthermore, it is notable that the Club named three architects, among them Uno Ullberg who had been promoting the idea of a 'monumental square' in 1911, and the city planning architect Meurman. Intriguingly, this select committee also included two persons, Vasenius and Tirkkonen closely involved with the City Library.

The local newspaper *Karjala* published the original discussion having taken place at the Technical Club in great detail.[184] First was described how among the very early propositions had been that the library could be positioned in the middle of the Punaisenlähteentori Square. In this context, the first person to bring forth their opinion was the librarian Johan Vasenius, who asserted that the primary acquirement is to build the library to the centre of the city. He further explained that the new Library needs to be a true public library, not only for reading and loaning books, but in service of other important goals. Therefore Vasenius insisted that no less than 1000 square meters are needed, meaning that the building should have three floors. His view was that the best site for the building was in the park between the Aleksanterinkatu and Vaasankatu Streets, possibly along the Vaasankatu Street. Architect Juhani Vikstedt disagreed. He regarded that the best potential sites were the rock at the southwestern end of the sports

[182] *Karjala* 20.10.1925. published a detailed description of the discussion concerning the site of the library at the Technical Club's meeting.

[183] The Viipuri Technical Club [Viipurin Teknillinen Klubi] was established in 1895 as a local section of the Finnish Technical Society. One of the founding members was architect Carl Eduard Dippell. The club had 63 members in 1896, and 85 in 1898. The professions of the members were for example architect, engineer, doctor, consul, merchant, teacher. At its meetings the club discussed, and its members gave presentations on, topical matters relevant to Viipuri, such as the city plan. In the early years the language of the club was Swedish.. Information of the Finnish National Archives. http://www.narc.fi:8080/VakkaWWW/Selaus.action;jsessionid=411EBBDDE6CF3C8505E40AFFC9A1B42B?kuvailuTaso=AM &avain=3703.KA Accessed Feb 2017

[184] At Viipuri Technical Club's meeting 5.10.1925, there was discussion on the site of the library and a cluster of cultural buildings ('kulturvaggan' in Swedish). Signed by Georg Fraser. Attached is a later newspaper clipping from *Karjala* 11.12.1925 summarising the main points of this meeting. Viipurin Tekn.Klub. arkisto/ Tekn.Klub. asiakirjat (1925). 1 n:o 5. MMA.

field and the Pantsarlahti bastions, as in these it would be possible to combine the practical as well as architectural requirements. Vikstedt continued that the most important criteria was not to build the library in any ordinary street block, but the site was to be selected on basis of achieving a monumental effect.

Architect Otto V. Vartiovaara again outlined a future vision of the University of Viipuri, which would naturally need to be positioned to the eastern Patterinmäki Hill. This, in Vartiovaara's mind was the actual centre of greater Viipuri, located between the older city and the vast eastern housing areas. He referred to Helsinki's growth, concluding that the library would be the first of a group of monumental buildings on the hill. Teacher Tirkkonen pointed out that the general view among library professionals was that library buildings need to be built to the same level as most of the housing, thus taking into consideration that also elderly persons and children use this institution.

The city planning architect Meurman reminded of the proposed sites, brought forth by the City Planning Committee, all of which had received criticism from the representatives of the City Library. Meurman admitted that perhaps in the discussions too much stress had been put to the idea of monumentality, though also, that it would be most regrettable to have to diminish the parkland. He then concluded that he had not formed any absolute view over the matter, but agrees with Vikstedt's proposition. Meurman then brought up one more alternative, pondering that it is still possible that the centre of the city remains in the future approximately in the same area where it is currently. Considering this, one potential site could be the unbuilt bank by Salakkalahti bay, where the building could be positioned either to the corner of Salakkalahdenkatu and Aleksanterinkatu Streets, or alternatively in the middle of the green area at the end of the bay. This however was strongly opposed by teacher Tirkkonen and architect Vikstedt, who were concerned about the heavy traffic and likely high costs involved with building by the water bank.

The Technical Club convened in December 1925, where Meurman presented again the alternative sites, which had been brought up. At this point, the Club came to the conclusion that the Patterinmäki Hill was inconvenient, as were the rock at the southwestern end of the sports field and the Pantsarlahti bastions. The Salakkalahti bay site was also considered to be too small and potentially expensive site to build. As for the Torkkeli Park, the shared view was that being positioned opposite the beautiful Espilä restaurant, the library would disrupt the park excessively. Thus, the committee appointed by the Technical Club reached the solution that the best location would be in the Torkkeli Park near Koulukatu Street and axially aligned with Punaisenlähteentori Square. (See no. 3 in Fig. 23.) This site closely accords with the site where the library was eventually built. The committee also planned terracing to the front side of the library, including a

pond, as in old maps there had been one 'to enhance the beauty of the park'.[185] In conclusion, the Technical Club also expressed the wish that a competition should be opened among Viipuri architects to begin the process for commissioning drawings for the library.[186] It was decided that this proposition would be submitted to the governors of the City Library, who in turn were to introduce the site issue to the City Council.[187]

During the spring and following autumn the different instances provided their statements. These included the governors of the City Library, a special committee named by the City Council, the City Planning Committee, the city's Department of General Works as well as the City Treasury. The governors of the City Library supported the park area between Vaasankatu, Koulukatu, and Suokatu Streets, adding that von Zweygberg's funds could be used to create a stylish water element to enhance the beauty of this section of the park, outside the library.[188] In the end of 1925 the City Council had named a group of five men to take responsibility of the library project.[189] This committee added that they did not support the idea of including a workers' institute to the new Library, but instead, this institute could take to its use the space where the City Library currently was. However, they did suggest it would be beneficial to provide spaces in the basement floor book storage for the magistrate's archives.[190] The City Planning Committee's statement, addressed to the City Treasury, supported the same site, adding that in order to

[185] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1925, 234.

[186] Technical Club meeting 10.12.1925. A description of the meeting was published in the library periodical *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1925, 234-235. and in *Karjala* 11.12.1925. Architect Ullberg however preferred the part of Torkkeli Park next to the south-east side Aleksanterinkatu Street. Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A., 1935, 16.

[187] This statement was dated two days later. Viipurin Teknillinen Klubi 17.12.1925, liite os.2. Viipurin kaupunginvaltuusto 1926. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/ Kaupunginvaltuuston pöytäkirjat. (1926). MMA. Same under: Rahatoimikamari/ Viipurin kaupunginvaltuuston painetut asiakirjat vuodelta 1926 (painettu) MMA.

[188] 10.2.1926, Herman Hultin. Johan Vasenius signed on behalf of the governors of the City Library. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/ Kaupunginvaltuuston painetut asiakirjat. (1926). MMA. The library governors summarising statement was also published in *Karjala* 13.2.1926.

[189] The exact date was 22.12.1925. Council representatives Hultin, Inkilä, Reinikainen and the librarian Johan Vasenius. The fifth participant was Paavo Uotila. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/ Kaupunginvaltuuston pöytäkirjat (1925) MMA. Uotila was the city architect after Brynolf Blomkvist, from 1912 until 15.10.1928 (Meurman: Viipurin arkkitehdit, 1977,78). What is notable is that Ullberg's voice is recognisable, while Uotila's is not. Another person who could be presumed to have had a significant role in creating the library was the director of the city library, Johan Vasenius. Vasenius wrote for the professional library periodical, and actively for the local newspaper *Karjala*. In the discussions, however, he appears to have been in the background.

[190] *Karjala* 20.4.1926 'Building of a new library in Viipuri' ['Uuden kirjastotalon rakentaminen Viipuriin']

assign the exact position and designing the building, an architectural competition would be needed. This was continued by pointing out that the competition should also include landscaping design for the Vaasankatu Street's end of the park.[191] The City's Department of Public Works added to the previous note that the area to be re-designed should be extended all the way to Katariinankatu Street. They continued to point out that funds should not be invested excessively to the renovation of the spaces where the City Library was currently housed, because this building would be demolished in the near future when the Pohjolankatu Street was to be widened.[192] The City Treasury agreed with the City Council, and supported the site in the Torkkeli Park between Vaasankatu, Koulukatu and Suokatu Streets. It was decided that the City Council would assign from its budget funds needed for organising an architectural competition, which would be open for architects of Viipuri to participate.[193]

In October 1926, after all these instances had agreed to the site suggested by the Technical Club, the issue was taken to the City Council. This is when the events took a surprising turn. Uno Ullberg, this time as a member of the City Council, reintroduced the idea to create a monumental square for the city. According to him, the square could be realised with two buildings, the library and an art museum, accompanied by a terrace. Later they could be joined by a triumphal arch, or arcade to complete the square. 'Let us create a beautiful place, to create enjoyment, something like that we need for our grey and petty everyday environment and we have opportunity for that by locating the library to the monumental square'[194] As has been described earlier, Ullberg had actively promoted this idea already in 1911. As a member of different committees, he had evidently tried to bring forth this idea also during the discussions concerning the site of the library, but with no real results.[195] Ullberg's intervention evidently annoyed the board of the Technical Club, whose response was published in the *Karjala* newspaper: 'He [Ullberg] has allowed the issue to pass through all the committees, and only at the very last moment does he oppose the unanimously supported proposition, thereby causing disorder and confusion, which may cause new delay in this important issue´.[196]

This intervention by Ullberg was ultimately successful, as the majority of the City Council voted for this suggestion. It was decided to build the library in Torkkeli Park, south-east of Aleksanterinkatu Street, (see no. 4 in Fig. 23) and to announce a nation-wide architectural competition for the new library. The competition brief also required the ´architectural arrangement´ of the surrounding area: part of the park, the junction of Aleksanterinkatu Street and also a preliminary outline for other buildings in the 'monumental area'. By this was meant a provisional plan for a 'house of culture', to be built on the opposite side of the street.[197] The project thus proceeded almost according to Ullberg's suggestion, except that the art museum was changed to a 'house of culture'.

The City Council appointed a new committee to organise the architectural competition. It consisted of City Council members Saarinen and Koivu and the city planning architect Meurman. The vice-members were teacher Hultin and librarian Vasenius.[198] In addition, two persons were appointed by the Finnish Association of Archi-

Fig. 28. *A caricature published in* ***Karjala*** *newspaper 17.10.1926 commenting on the different groups that are unable to agree on the location of the library. (KK)*

[191] Viipuri City Planning Committee meeting. 7.4.1926. Signed Uno Ullberg, Otto-I. Meurman. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/ Kaupunginvaltuuston pöytäkirjat (1926) no. 32 MMA. Also published in *Karjala* 20.4.1926. In this context, Ullberg, the spokesman of the committee, proposed that the library would be built as part of the monumental square, as one of the public buildings.

[192] Here it was also noted that two members representing the department opposed building in the park, and recommended the bedrock area at the southwestern end of the sports field. Viipuri City Department of Public Works [Viipurin kaupungin Yleisten Töitten Hallitus]. Viipuri 31.8.1926, n:o 93. MMA

[193] Viipuri City Department of Finances 10.9.1926 n:o 1745. The issue was tabled on 5.10.1926 Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1926-1926) MMA. Also in *Karjala* 11.9.1926.

[194] Ullberg, U. 11.10.1926. His text was published in *Karjala* under the title 'Place of the library' ['Kirjastotalon paikka']

[195] The idea for the monumental square had remained a topic that was debated in the *Karjala* newspaper. For example *Karjala* 17.2.1926, 16.5.1926.

[196] *Karjala* 19.10.1926. *Karjala* 21.10.1926 still published Ullberg's reply, where he asserted that his comments had been presented in completely the wrong light, even though architect Schulman, member of the board of the Technical Club, should have been aware of all the preceding discussions.

[197] 19.10.1926. Liite mom.2. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1926-1926) MMA. See also *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1926, 200, and *Karjala* 20.10.1926.

[198] Ibid.

tects (SAFA), Kaarlo Borg and Jussi Paatela[199] to form the five-member competition jury.[200] It was Meurman who wrote the detailed competition brief, published after Borg and Paatela had given their comments on it.[201]

While Ullberg had actively participated in the debate concerning the site of the library, he was not involved with outlining the competition programme, nor was he on the jury. Ullberg, however, was a member of the City Council from 1914 to 1929, chairman of the City Planning Committee, member of the Committee for Public Works, member of the Technical Club, and secretary of the Viipuri Friends of Art Society.[202] He was born in Viipuri and as an architect was considered the 'city's own son', and even the most notable architect of the city.[203] In the discussions and competitions for the new City Hall building in 1923, it is evident that many felt that Ullberg would have been the appropriate winner.[204] Indeed, it was originally proposed that the library competition would be open only for architects of Viipuri, and there are grounds for guessing that many hoped Ullberg would become the architect of the new library. Even Meurman who himself had moved to Viipuri only in 1918, has in his later writings underscored the strong local identity of Viipuri, for example in pointing out how there were certain architects 'from elsewhere', such as Alvar Aalto, who had contributed in creating the cityscape of Viipuri.[205] Intriguingly, Ullberg designed two important buildings after the library

[199] While the reason is not explicitly stated, Jussi Paatela was probably chosen as a jury member because he had designed the Tampere library with his brother Toivo Paatela. (Competition 1922, completed in 1925.) *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* (1925, 184) periodical published a description in 1925, where it is explained that the final building was created in close co-operation with the architects and the director of the library. Notably, in the case of Viipuri, Aalto was able to work on his designs from a distance from Turku. The National Library Committee's experts were anything but content about the fact Aalto had not co-operated with a library expert.

[200] Viipuri City Planning Committee's meeting 9.5.1927. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1927-1927) MMA. *Karjala* 24.5.1927 published news about the meeting, announcing that the competition programme had been received the previous day.

[201] An unedited long version of the competition brief drafted by Meurman is in the MFA archives, among Meurman's unorganised papers. This lengthy draft had been sent back to Meurman with proposed changes by Borg and Paatela. The City Council confirmed the programme on 7.6.1927, published in ***Karjala*** 8.6.1927.

[202] Meurman, O.-I. 1976, 90. Ullberg was also a board member of the Viipuri Technical School, and an active member of local and national associations such as the Tekniska Föreningen i Finland and its subsection, Arkitektklubben. The Viipuri Friends of Art was the instance to commission from Ullberg the Art School and Museum, realised in 1929-30.

[203] Meurman, O-I. 1976, 87-88.

[204] Eventually, a new building was not built, but Ullberg designed the renovation of the existing City Hall in 1934. Neuvonen, P. 2017, 248-252.

[205] Meurman, O-I. 1977,188.

competition, both of which were commissioned from him without a competition: the Art School and Museum (1929-30) on top of the Pantsarlahti Bastion, and the Provincial Archives (1931-33) on Tervaniemi Hill.[206]

The architectural historian Malcolm Quantrill has recorded an interesting discussion with Meurman in the 1980s about the library competition. Quantrill writes that it was Uno Ullberg who had a clear recollection of a previous competition for the original Aleksanterinkatu site in which the winners had included a ceremonial public space in their design.[207] ´When the competition was written … Ullberg provided for a future cultural center in the conditions, together with the implication that both the library and the center [house of culture] should front onto a 'Monumentalplatz'.'[208] Quantrill thus concludes: 'Thus, the idea of the piazza in Aalto´s designs for the Alexander Street site was in Ullberg´s environmental memory rather than Aalto´s. No trace of the piazza idea, however, remained in the executed design on the new site adjacent to the cathedral. The cathedral site had been substituted for the original one as a result of popular demand that the city´s magnificent tree belt should not be eroded by a monument. With that change of site, Ullberg´s dream of a Monumentalplatz became a historical footnote.´[209]

There are two aspects Quantrill's account brings forth. First, how Aalto's agency as the designer of the library is so strong that preceding events and contributions of other persons simply do not tend to be included in the history of the library. Secondly, Quantrill suggests an explicit connection between the project for the Viipuri monumental square, the library, and Ullberg's role in the process. Further relevance for noting this is that the project for the monumental square offers a totally different reading of the site of the library. Quantrill discusses

[206] There are a number of buildings by Ullberg in Viipuri, but the two mentioned here offer an interesting comparison in a number of ways; the Provincial Archives and the Art School and Museum can be seen as part of the institutions associated with the monumental square and in Ahrenberg's restoration plans for the castle. The magistrate's archives were also originally part of the new library, for which Aalto needed to design space at basement level.

[207] Quantrill, M. in Connah, R. (ed.) 2008, 77. Quantrill explains that Meurman told him about the connection between the 1912 competition and that for the Viipuri Library of 1927 when they met in Helsinki on February 24.1983. However, here Quantrill has misunderstood the roles of Ullberg and Meurman, having understood that Meurman was working for Ullberg. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that Ullberg would have been behind adding the idea of the Monumental Square to the library competition, as the archival sources do not make this clear.

[208] Quantrill, M. 2008, 77. Quantrill presents his ideas in the context of analysing Aalto. Aalto´s original entry in the competition for the library from 1927 and his revised design from 1928 both embraced the concept of a piazza, and it was a requirement of the architectural brief for the competition. According to him, Uno Ullberg had a clear recollection of a previous competition for the original Aleksanterinkatu Street site in which the winners had included a ceremonial public space in their design.

[209] Ibid.

the 'Aaltoesque piazza', an architectural theme that Aalto developed in his later career, and thus, it can be analysed that it came as a surprise to this architectural historian that the 'piazza' for the library was not originally Aalto's idea.[210] Overall, the background of the monumental square and the site question make it possible to construe the process behind the realisation of the library beyond the role of Alvar Aalto.

The drawn design competition

The deadline for the library competition proposals was October 1st 1927, by which the jury received 23 entries out of which one was disqualified as incomplete. The *Karjala* newspaper published the results one week later.[211] The jury concluded that the library itself did not require a forecourt, and as it was still unclear as to exactly what kind of building would be built opposite the library and when, the shared view came to be that asymmetrical designs provided better possibilities for more flexible and modest solutions. Asymmetric designs were also found to be better suited to the terrain in the park. Furthermore, the jury concluded that the entries in which the library was situated within the park appeared most appropriate, as in these it had been possible to exclude both pretentious gate solutions, which would potentially complicate traffic, as well as expensive wings and colonnades, thus being less intrusive in the park.[212] Here, the main points of criticism came to be directed towards design solutions such as gates and colonnades, reminiscent of the entries for the monumental square. Therefore, architects who had included designs of this kind in their entries had evidently followed the wrong strategy.

Upon opening the sealed letters containing the names behind the entries, it was found that architect Alvar Aalto from Turku has received the first prize of 15,000 Finnish marks, architect Hilding Ekelund from Helsinki received the second prize of 12,500 Finnish marks. Third prize, 10,000 Finnish marks went to architect

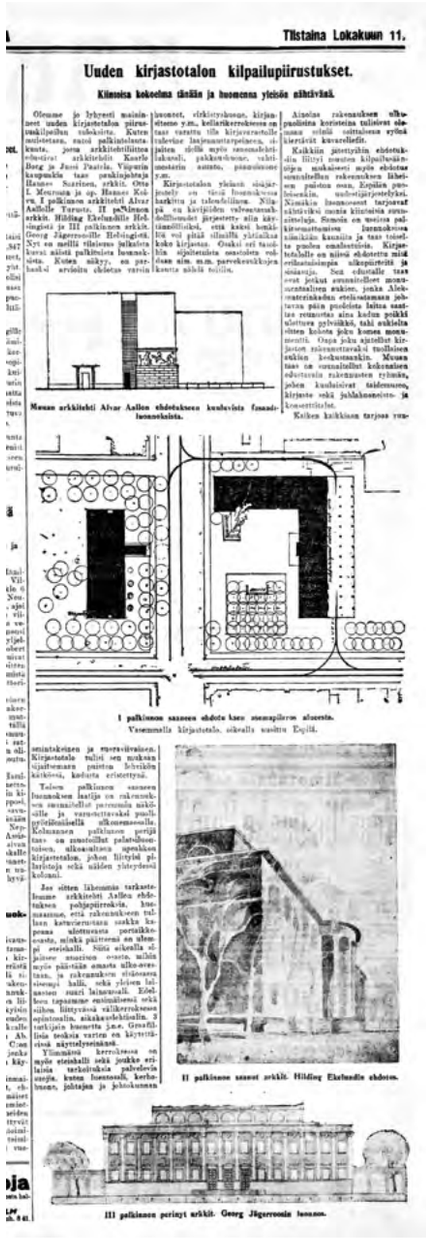
[210] While in parts Quantrill did not quite understand the context Meurman has described, the point to be taken is that Meurman has evidently underlined how great an influence Ullberg had in the events, even that he might have been the person who originally initiated the project for the monumental square.

[211] *Karjala* published the results on 9.10.1927. A longer description accompanied by drawings on 11.10.1927, and the jury's report on 1.11.1927.

[212] *The Finnish Architectural Review* 1928, 38. According to Salmela, one can hear Meurman's voice in the remarks on city planning in the final assessments of the competition entries. Simplicity and economy as well as safeguarding the park as much as possible were other clearly expressed goals of the jury. (Salmela, U. 1994,187) The competition results were reviewed at the City Council's meeting 1.11.1927. No. 23. (Followed by description of the 23 entries, as printed in The *Finnish Architectural Review* periodical.) Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavatoimikunnan pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1927-1927) MMA.

Georg Jägeroos of Helsinki. In addition, the joint proposal by Georg Jägeroos and Arne Helander was purchased. Among the awarded entries, there were none by local architects.

The jury's view was that the proposal ´W.W.W´ by Aalto fulfilled the requirements in the best way: 'One of the most successful solutions in regard to the city plan. It is good that the library is situated freely within the park. The elongated form of the building is structurally appropriate, and enhances the chosen location. The calm façade surfaces with free composition are fitting, modest and dignified. The layout and interior design are architecturally interesting while the desks for librarians to keep the space under surveillance have been kept at a minimum. Regardless of the architectural merits of the entrance stairs pulled out of the main structure, they will present difficulties with lighting and thus should be redesigned. The shelving of the children's section requires changes, as does the circulation between the lending section and the staff rooms, although this can be improved with small changes. Access between the caretaker's apartment and the boiler room impractical. Considering the local climate, the glass ceiling should be replaced with a solution providing light from the sides, and the outside roof structure should be improved.´ [213] Aalto had placed the building discreetly behind a row of trees with only a projecting stairway visible to the street.


Tiistaina Lokakuun 11.

Uuden kirjastotalon kilpailupiirustukset.

Kiinnoisa kokoelma tänään ja huomenna yleisön nähtävänä.

Meuan arkkitehti Alvar Aallon ehdotukseen kuuluvista fasadiluonnoksista.

I palkinnon saanen ehdotu kaun suunnpiiro alusesta. Vasemmalla kirjastotalo, oikealla uusittu Espilä.

II palkinnon saanut arkkit. Hilding Ekelundin ehdotus.

III palkinnon periyt arkkit. Georg Jägerroosin luonnos.

Fig. 29. *Awarded library competition entries published in* ***Karjala*** *newspaper 11.10.1927. (KK)*

[213] Minutes from the competition jury´s meeting include this statement. Full description of the meeting where the competition winners were decided: 1.11.1927 n:o 23 Viipuri City Council's meeting Signed by Hannes Saarinen, Hannes Koivu, Otto-I.Meurman, Kaarle Borg, Jussi Paatela, Johan Vasenius. Yleisliite pöytäkirjaan 1/11 -27 Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1927-1927) MMA.

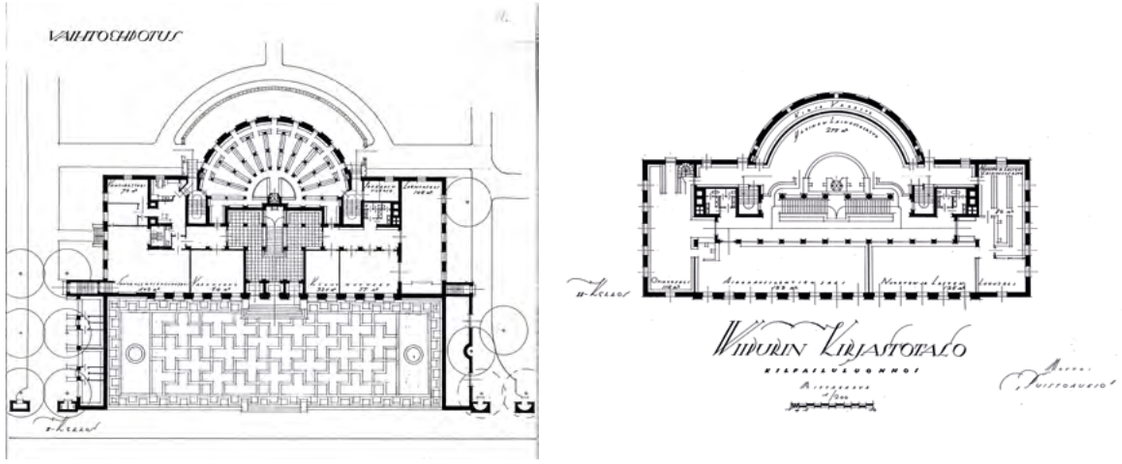


Fig. 30-31. *Uno Ullberg´s un-awarded library competition entry 'Puistoaukio', 1927. (MFA)*

The first step towards realisation

As the competition entries included a variety of types of solutions for the Aleksanterinkatu -Torkkeli Park area, the City Planning Committee decided that before the final design the City Council should still hear expert opinions about the arrangement of this site. According to Meurman, this was motivated by the fact that in the competition for the monumental square in 1912 it had been envisioned that a symmetrical square should be created at this site. But now, the winning entry had rejected the idea of monumentality, and the square had become park-like, balanced unevenly on one side of the street.[214] Consequently, the City Council sent Meurman and Ullberg to Helsinki to the meeting of the SAFA for consultations about the issue.[215] Meurman's conclusion was that the SAFA meeting provided no real aid for decisions in the matter. It was only agreed that Aleksanterinkatu Street would would be worth some kind of emphasis in this location, preferably surrounded by public buildings. Meurman's concern was that architect Aalto´s building was perhaps too well hidden behind the trees.[216]

In December 1927, the City Council took under discussion the statement by the committee responsible for the architectural competition. In their statement, the committee proposed that the winning proposal was most appropriate considering the site of the library, and with the Lallukka bequest also the funding was secure. Therefore there is no reason to delay the realisation of the new library. A statement was still requested from the Ministry of Public Works, which added that their representative should be appointed in the group working for the realisation of the library, and, that final drawings need to be commissioned before it would be possible to make any cost estimates for the construction. This way, it might be possible to begin the ground works during 1929. The City Treasury agreed to the previous note, suggesting that the final drawings and a cost estimate should be commissioned from the architect of the winning entry. The City Council named a Committee for the Building Project, referred to hereafter as the Building Committee.[217] The task of this group was to negotiate the final plans with Aalto, supervise the construction work, and having produced an estimate for building costs, to present everything to the City Council. In addition, the Building Committee was required to find out whether it would be viable to include space for the magistrate's archives in the same building. These were the same archives for which there had earlier been plans to create a special library, to have primarily served the city officials and other persons employed by the city. 120,000 Finnish marks were allocated for producing the final drawings and calculating the construction costs.

The Building Committee began its work towards the end of January 1928, choosing the teacher Tirkkonen as the chairman and the city planning architect Meurman as its secretary. Architect Aalto was invited to Viipuri to discuss the drawings,[218] and was assigned the task of producing the final drawings by February 29th 1928. The need for the magistrate's archives was set to 500 shelf meters.[219]

As secretary of the Building Committee, Meurman followed the development of the design closely, and was the person who communicated with Aalto throughout the project. At the beginning, the Building Committee was confident of the rapid execution of the project, and Meurman requested Aalto to speed up the

[214] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 19.

[215] The date of the visit was 21.10.1927. Viipuri City Planning Committee's meeting 18.10.1927. Signed, Meurman. Viipurin yleisten töitten lautakunta asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavatoimikunnan pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1927-1927) MMA.

[216] City Planning Committee's meeting 17.11.1927 n:o 11. Signed Meurman. Viipurin yleisten töitten lautakunta asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavatoimikunnan pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1927-1927) MMA.

[217] 20.12.1927 The group of persons to work with the architect were the bank director H. Saarinen, architects O.-I. Meurman, U. Ullberg and J. Vikstedt, teacher H. Koivu, lecturer J.P.Tirkkonen and librarian J. Vasenius. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1927-1927) MMA. Meurman offers slightly differing information. According to him, the appointed persons were the city architect U. Ullberg, constructor K. Massinen, teacher J.P.Tirkkonen, librarian J. Vasenius and representative of the City Department of Public Works, G.Fraser. Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 19. The *Karjala* newspaper published news of the meetings on 6.11.1927, 16.12.1927, 21.12.1927. Also *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjasto* 1927, 86.

[218] Meurman's letter to Alvar Aalto. Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimison asemakaavaosaston arkisto/ Asemakaavatoimikunnan pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1928) MMA.

[219] Aalto received the first payment for his bill of 3.9.1928 to the amount of 10,000 Finnish marks. Letter from Viipuri City department of finances. AF. Jyväskylä.

design work several times.[220] For instance, in July 1928 Meurman enquired on behalf of the Building Committee how far Aalto had come with his sketches, and whether it would be possible to get to see them soon.[221] In October 1928 Meurman wrote to Aalto, raising the concern that the ground will soon freeze, and therefore the ground works would need to be initiated as rapidly as possible.[222]

Aalto thus began to develop the design based on his winning entry. By the end of August 1928 he was able to present the main drawings, which the Building Committee considered to have improved significantly. After this, the drawings were still reviewed in three occasions. The entrance stairway originally protruding from the main volume was redesigned to make the structure L-shaped.[223] The change to the building's shape was thus made according to the Building Committee's wishes, as now the volume of the library would form a fitting counterpart to the building to be realised at a later stage, on the other side of Karjalankatu Street.[224]

During the spring of 1929, Meurman exchanged several letters with Aalto's office. In January, Meurman confirms the date of the next meeting of the Building Committee, where Aalto is to be present. Aalto is requested to send the drawings beforehand, to be displayed to the public in the current library's reading room on Punaisenlähteentori Square. The drawings arrived a few days later, though Aalto himself was away travelling.[225] In February the Norwegian architect Erling Bjertnaes working at Aalto's office wrote to Meurman to inform him that the aim was to make the working drawings as final as possible, before work on site begins. Hence, Bjertnaes explains, it would be preferable to have any pending decisions made and after this, to allow a few weeks' time for Aalto's office to get the project updated.[226] Then, in April Meurman wrote again to Aalto on behalf of the Committee, informing Aalto that he needs to announce the date when he will arrive in Viipuri to present his drawings, and that no further delays can be accepted. On the typed letter, Meurman added with pencil: 'Many regards! I must grab you by the collar a little.'[227] Aalto replies: 'Hello brother, Here I have the library completed. Would Sunday or alternatively Monday suit you better. We are just completing the cost estimate. Give my regards. Bye, Aalto'[228]

[220] Salmela, U. 1994,188.

[221] Meurman's letter dated 5.7.1928 Diar no 37/18 oz/1928 July 5. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1928) MMA.

[222] Meurman's letter to Aalto 21.11.1928. Handwritten: 'my best regards!' AF. Copy of the same: Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1928-1931) MMA.

[223] Meurman, O.-I. 1935,20.

[224] *Karjala* 5.11.1929.

[225] Letter from the Building Committee 19.1.1929 to architect Aalto, Turku. Response: typed note without title, handwritten on top: Wiipurin kirjastotalo. Turku 22.1.29. Copy of a letter informs: 22.1.1929: 'In architect Aalto's absence we send you these drawings and photographs of the Viipuri library attached. The rest of the drawings and accompanying documents Aalto will bring with him.' Unclear signature. AF, Jyväskylä.

[226] Letter written on Aalto's offices letter print paper. 7.2.1929. Signed by Erling Bjertnaes, Norwegian architect who worked at Aalto's office 1927-31. The letter was written in Swedish. AF, Jyväskylä.

KARJALA

Viipurin uuden kirjastotalon rakennussuunnitelma.

Selostusta kirjastotalon ulkomuodosta ja sisustuksesta.

Fig. 32. *Aalto´s functionalist project was first presented to the local audiences in* ***Karjala*** *newspaper 12.5.1929. (KK)*

The project progressed, although some details, such as the flat roof, were debated in the Building Committee.[229] The *Karjala* newspaper published the two recognisably different perspectives on the issue, making the situation known among the wider public. Firstly, the roof was described as a technical challenge. This is exemplified by news about Aalto having provided three expert statements, after which the City Council was convinced that the flat roof would be not only viable, but also a less costly solution.[230] Secondly, the roof was described as a very attractive element, telling of how the library was envisioned as part of the cityscape: 'What an ideal and pleasant place it will become for those willing to

[227] 19.4.1929 Letter from Viipuri city planning architect to Aalto, Turku, Rauhankatu 1. Signed by Meurman. AF, Jyväskylä. Copy of same letter without the handwritten notes: Viipurin kaup.rak. toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1928-1931) MMA.

[228] Aalto had written the letter first by hand on the back of Meurman's letter. Undated. There is also a typed version with exactly the same content, dated 23.4.29. AF.

[229] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 20; Nivari, K. 1990, 22. After Aalto had delivered the third version on 4.5.1929 the Building Committee then applied for permission from the City Council to begin construction as soon as possible.

[230] *Karjala* 7.5.1929. The idea to add a public toilet to the library building was also commented on in the same article. The wording follows exactly that of Meurman. The three experts from whom Aalto had applied the statements were professor of building technology Onni Tarjanne (formerly Törnqvist), a Swedish engineer and professor at Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, Henrik Kreüger, who had been the structural engineer of e.g. the Stockholm City Library. The third expert was engineer Emil Henriksson who had collaborated with Aalto in the projects of the Southwest Finland Agricultural Cooperatives Building, the Standard Apartment House, the Turun Sanomat Building and Paimio Sanatorium. (Heikinheimo, M. 2016, 176.)

spend time reading a book during the summer, listening to music wafting from the Espilä [park restaurant].'[231]

In a letter dated May 15th 1929 Aalto writes to Meurman:

'Dear brother, I was not able to send you the original drawings yet, because I promised them for the Keil exhibition and so they are just now being photographed for the purpose. I'll get them back at the at the weekend, so then you'll receive them there immediately. If this building issue comes to a favourable conclusion, I would think it best if the project began in July, so there would be good time to get to the roof and complete it in the spring, so that moving the library and organising it (to the new premises) would be done by autumn. I guess the decisions include the required time period for possible complaints, so I presume the meeting for the start would be only in June or around then. What do you think, is there reason to start with the work descriptions? I'll return to this when I send you the originals. Please note that my cash situation is pinched and that is why I would need to concern you with money matters. Could the treasurer of the library project send me 30,000 Finnish marks now in the next few days, we will of course go through the accounts later. This sum would be most welcome for various reasons. Say hellos to everyone there'[232]

Aalto delivered the revised set of drawings in May.[233] The Building Committee approved of the shelf metres needed for the magistrate's archives as sufficient. An additional space which had not been included in the original requirements was the public toilet. It had been already earlier that the Building Committee had looked into the possibility to include a public toilet at basement level, at the Torkkelinkatu Street end of the building. In their view, the city needed such a facility, and it would be cheaper to build one annexed to the library rather than separately. In addition, it was proposed that a public toilet would even bring in some income for the building. The Building Committee suggested that the City

[231] *Karjala* 12.5.1929.

[232] 15.5.1929 Copy of Aalto's letter to Meurman. AF, Jyväskylä. Note: 'Keil' to which Aalto refers is the city of Kiel in Germany, where a 'Nordic-German week of sciences and arts' was organised in June 1929. Exhibits from Finland included fine arts (paintings), architects's projects, including drawings of the Viipuri Library, Meurman's Viipuri city plan, and also some items representing folk art. (News published in *Uusi Aura* 21.5.1929, *Iltalehti* 23.5.1929, *Uusi Suomi* 24.5.1929) Meurman and Tirkkonen confirmed in a letter to Aalto 5.6.1929 that upon submitting main drawings, work description and cost estimate Aalto will receive payment for them. In the same letter, Aalto was requested to send as soon as possible drawings to accompany the work description, so it will be possible to request offers from potential construction companies. Letter from the Library Building Committee 5.6.1929, Viipuri, signed by J.P.Tirkkonen and O-I. Meurman. To Architect Alvar Aalto, Turku. AF, Jyväskylä.

[233] Revised set of drawings dated 4.5.1929. Letter 16.5.1929 signed by Meurman, asking Aalto to estimate the building stages so that payment from the building fund can be made in stages as the work proceeds. AF, Jyväskylä.

Council would initiate the work as soon as possible, and that 4,4 million Finnish marks would be reserved for the construction.[234]

In August, Meurman wrote in response to Aalto's letter enquiring when the ground works for the library are to begin. Meurman regretted to tell that the City Council had not made a decision during the spring period, but the issue was left for the coming autumn. Meurman, however specifies that the Building Committee had proposed that the ground works would commence during the autumn, or at the very latest in the following spring.[235] Internationally, the economic depression spreading across Europe and America also affected Finland significantly. Consequently, in September the City Treasury pointed out that the funds from Maria Lallukka's bequest would not suffice, as the estimate of building costs exceeded it with over one million Finnish marks. As there were also other urgent projects, for example building of new schools, and in the current economic situation it was difficult for the city to acquire bank loans, it was proposed that the library project should await better times, and be postponed to the following year.[236]

The City Council discussed the matter again in October 1929. Having kept close contact with Aalto, the Building Committee was able to present his drawings for the library. Yet again, they also stressed that the situation of the current library was unbearable, and therefore work on the new building should start immediately. In the City Council, however, the discussion focused on stressing that it would be necessary to finalise the decision concerning the site, and to request the final designs from Aalto to make sure that there would remain no obstacles to launching construction when it becomes possible.[237] The main difference which remains is illustrated by the views of the Board of Governors of the City Library and that of City Council member Paavo Uotila.[238] The Board agreed with the appearance of the building, the interiors and the site. They felt that changing the site could turn out to be calamitous, as alternative locations were

[234] *Karjala* 7.5.1929. It appears that this idea had been introduced by Meurman, who was in particular concerned about the upcoming Agricultural Exhibition, to be organised in 1932 in Viipuri, which was to bring in a flood of visitors. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1928-1931) MMA.

[235] Letter from Meurman in August 1, 1929 to Aalto's office, Turku, in response to Aalto's letter 23.7.1929. Written by hand, on Meurman's personal stationery. AF, Jyväskylä.

[236] 15.10.1929 mom. 8: N:o 7. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak. toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1929-1929) MMA. Also in *Karjala* 26.9.1929, and 16.10.1929. Internationally the beginning of the depression has been seen to begin from the New York market crash 24 August 1929. In Finland, it was however the first years of the 1930s which were economically the most difficult ones.

[237] Viipuri City Council meeting 15.10.1929 Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1929-1929) N:0 7 MMA. Also in *Karjala* 16.10.1929.

[238] Uotila had been the city architect between 1912-1928. Meurman, O-I. 1976, 74.

scarce.[239] Indeed, the perspectives presented here make it very clear that the librarians were most concerned about the delays, and even potentially that the library would never be built.[240] This probably explains why the librarians' views or potential criticism do not emerge in the discussions, as their most urgent need was to get the library realised.

Uotila's view, on the other hand, underlines the concern associated with the site and the appearance of the building as inseparable aspects, which would need to be resolved: 'Realising architect Aalto's functionalist-style design would make it necessary to alter the surroundings of the new library building to accord with it.'[241] The secretary of the Building Committee soon gave information to a reporter of the *Karjala* newspaper. Here Meurman tells that aspects concerning which there might remain hesitance are the façades of the building, designed according to the latest architectural tendency, so-called functionalism. Specifically, the simplified appearance, the large glass walls and the flat roof have aroused discussion among the members of the Building Committee. Meurman concludes that the façades can be modified according to the wishes of the City Council, to avoid this kind of external factor causing a problem.[242]

In November 1929 the City Council decided to postpone the issue all the way to the budget of 1931, and assigned a new committee to evaluate the drawings of the library.[243] A few days after the City Council's meeting, Tirkkonen and Meurman informed Aalto about this decision, instructing him to stop working on the library until further notice.[244]

[239] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 21. The Governors of the City Library had earlier supported the idea of building the library to the Vaasankatu Street end of Torkkeli Park, but on the same basis the City Council´s suggestion of the site next to Aleksanterinkatu Street was equally suitable.

[240] Viipuri City Council meeting 29.10.1929 os.1, os.2. and City Council meeting 31.10.1929. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1929) MMA. Also *Karjala* 30.10.1929.

[241] *Karjala* 30.10.1929 Published on the following day was a somewhat ironic commentary of the events, noting that 'The drawings are of such style, which everywhere else in the world is outdated, and based on which a library building has never been realised. If the library would be built according to the affirmed drawings, nearly half of the city would need to be rebuilt following the same style, because otherwise the building would stand in a totally foreign surroundings, and would appear ridiculous.'

[242] *Karjala* 5.11.1929.

[243] The members of this new committee were Lonkainen, Selin, Uotila, Vuoristo, Saarinen, Koivu, Kotonen. Viipuri City council's meeting 12.11.1929. Mom. 17. The issue was next discussed 26.11.1929 Mom. 27, n:o 26. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat. (1929-1929) MMA. Also *Karjala* 13.11.1929.

[244] 18.11.1929 J.P. Tirkkonen and O.-I. Meurman letter to Aalto. AF, Jyväskylä.

Library news: The Viipuri library issue continues.

Upon the city treasurer's suggestion the Viipuri City Council has agreed that the decision concerning the library building will be postponed to be taken up in the 1931 budget. The Library Building Committee has noted the need to immediately have the plans approved and 550,000 Finnish marks to be allocated for launching the construction work. Also the Board of Governors of the City Library have expressed their view that the City Council should make the decision to build the library without further delay. Selected City Council members were appointed to give their statement on the plans for the library. Most of all the decision was explained to be caused by lack of funds and the difficulty to ensure a bank loan in the current situation. Yet, it is curious that Lallukka's bequest , approximately 3.5 million Finnish marks, has been invested in other purposes in the city, so that the funds will not be at hand when it would truly be the time to start realising the plan for which they were donated. There appears to be disagreement on the location of the building, which has been decided, as well as the designs. With regard to the façade being criticised as too functionalist, the building committee has noted that changes could easily be made. The librarians of the country have begun to enthusiastically wait for the Viipuri Library, but it seems patience will still be needed.[245]

The site question re-surfaces

The City Council's decision to postpone the project made the previously expressed fears reality. As there was a pause in launching construction, the question of the site was taken up anew, and also the appearance of the building, the suitability of which some had suspected, evolved into a major issue.

The new committee appointed by the City Council felt it was necessary to review whether the façades of the library, ´free of all tradition´, would suit the location, whether changes could be made without affecting the floor plan, and if it still might be possible to use the same designs in case the plot allocated for the library were changed. This last point was brought up since many local people felt that the site which had previously been approved by the City Council would take up too much land in the park. The Committee requested architects Oiva Kallio, Uno Ullberg and Georg Fraser as experts to discuss the problem, in addition

[245] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1929, 270-271. The Viipuri Library issue continues ['Viipurin kirjastotaloasia pitkistyy']
Also a while earlier *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* (1929, 121) had published news announcing that the work is to commence without delay, and that new things are planned for the Viipuri library building, which will follow a new style, perhaps the 'functionalist' style.

to which Alvar Aalto, the City Planning Committee, the city planning architect, the Governors of the City Library and the National Library Office were asked for statements. Two of the last-mentioned statements focused on the interior of the library, based on which a few minor changes were made. The other statements concerned the site of the building.

In the winter of 1929-1930 it was Meurman´s turn to write an expert statement on the issue. The debate was so intense that Meurman expressed his unwillingness to intervene.[246] Trying to avoid any further conflict, he stated that he did not oppose any of the earlier proposals but that he preferred two alternative sites outside of Torkkeli Park. In January 1930, before issuing his statement, Meurman wrote personally to Aalto to explain the situation.[247] This letter stands out from the other letters, where Meurman speaks on behalf of the Building Committee.

'Architect Alvar Aalto, Turku

Dear Brother, I wish you good continuation to this year! Attached herewith is my attempt at a statement on the library issue. It has been sent to me for a statement, even though I have let the committee specifically know that I do not want to intervene in the question, because it has evolved into a topic which my colleagues here are unable to calmly discuss, in addition to many citizens probably hating any attempts to situate the library into the park. A concluding note is still missing from my statement, but it will at least contain that the library is to be built according to your plans without delay, while it would, however, be preferable to make some minor changes to the façades. I mean the end façade at the end of the children's section, to which you already agreed to make alterations. And I would be happy to see something done to the back wall (the long façade). The site question could potentially be bypassed by noting that all the suggested locations are possible, but really I would like to propose that the library be built on Linnankatu [previously Katariinankatu] Street at the Koulukenttä sports field, so that it would not be in the park, if the other end with its beautiful bedrock, which would accord with the location of Ullberg's Art Museum, cannot be accepted. In any case I do not want to position myself against your opinion or risk the project. It would therefore be helpful if you could think about the issue over the next few days and return my drawing plus inform me about your opinion.

With greetings, Tuus, Otto I. Meurman.'[248]

At the time, the Art School and Museum designed by Uno Ullberg was under construction at Pantsarlahti Bastion, on a hill above street level. Indeed, due to its colonnade and the location, this building has been referred to as the 'Acropolis of Viipuri'.[249] Meurman felt it would have been quite ideal that these two buildings, both serving cultural purposes, would be somewhat separate from any immediate contact with other buildings, as free-standing monuments. In this way, their monumentality would not come from their scale or size, but from their locations in the cityscape.[250] In a letter to the City Council, dated on the last day of 1930, Meurman analysed the positive and negative aspects associated with all the proposed alternatives. Attached to the letter, was Meurman's drawing in which he sketched the library three times, at each of the potential sites under consideration.[251]

'.. I feel that Torkkeli Park as it is today, forms an entity, a recreational space like no other in the city, one that most significantly enhances our city. Thus, it would be most fortunate if no buildings were located there. The City Planning Committee proposed some time ago several locations outside the park. In the opinion of the undersigned, the bedrock at the southwestern end of the Koulukenttä sports field would have offered a most successful solution. As the Board of Governors of the City Library, however, felt that this site was impossible, asserting that the library needs a location that is even more central, it was suggested that the library could be built at the Punaisenlähteentori Square end of the Torkkeli Park. This site was supported, but the City Council concluded that the library is to be built on Karjalankatu [previously

[246] This is also described by Salmela, U. 1994,189.

[247] In January 1930, Aalto received payment for his work thus far. 23.1.1930 Viipuri City Financial Department to Aalto, Turku, payment of 18,370 Finnish marks for invoice dated 8.1.1930. (Aalto has sketched the second-floor rooms on the letter). 27.1.1930 Architect Aalto, Turku. Humalistonkatu 7. Letter signed by Meurman. Aalto received payment of his invoice to the sum of 18,370 Finnish marks, with the remaining 7,000 marks to be paid upon receipt of the original drawings of which Aalto had only provided copies earlier. AF, Jyväskylä.

[248] 2.1.1930 Viipuri letter from Meurman, written on his personal stationery. To Aalto, Turku. Written by hand, based on earlier letters, H.V. in the beginning of the letter is 'Hyvä Veli' translated to D.B.; 'dear brother'. 'Tuus' means 'yours.'. AF, Jyväskylä.

[249] Rönkkö, M-L. 2000. The official opening of the Art School and Museum was on 12.10.1930.

[250] As Salmela points out, Meurman himself stated that situating public buildings on hills and other high places ´as crowns´ was a planning theme he learned from Eliel Saarinen. (Salmela 1994,190; Meurman 1985, 270) Saarinen's office was Meurman's first place of employment after graduating as an architect in 1914.

[251] According to Meurman, the site along Aleksanterinkatu Street, on the future Monumental Square, was not suitable unless 'both sides of the street were built at the same time and during the same stylistic period, when one could be certain of creating a harmonious entity.' In his view, the best solution would be to return to the site that the City Planning Committee had originally proposed, the rocky hill at the southwestern end of the Koulukenttä Field, where ´the library would form a splendid counterpart to our Art Museum, complete the town plan, beautify its surroundings, and … would have a central position.' Salmela, U. 1994,189.

Aleksanterinkatu] Street and opened the competition for this site. It seems this decision was influenced by the wish to create a so called 'monumental square' on Karjalankatu Street.

In regard to the so-called 'monumental square', it must be admitted that the junction of Karjalankatu and Torkkelinkatu streets needs to be enhanced in some way, as this location is the central point of the city, and therefore should be more spacious and attract attention unlike any ordinary intersection. Any actual 'monumental square' is unlikely to be conceived, as the square and the buildings surrounding it would need to be large in order to dominate Karjalankatu Street, lined with tall buildings, and such a solution would mean excessive destruction of the park. Architect Aalto's competition entry aroused the jury's interest e.g. precisely for the reason that no 'monumental square' or market type square was to be created, but the proposed buildings were positioned within the park and the square was only an opening in the park. Positioning the library in the park, on Karjalankatu Street had therefore lost part of its original purpose.

If the library is to be built in this location, it can lead to the fact that something needs to be built on the other side of Karjalankatu Street, so as not to leave the composition half way, and therefore again making it necessary to destroy the park to some extent. I would however believe it would be possible to achieve the result in the city plan with less destruction of the park, perhaps with no buildings being added to the park, for example as outlined in the attached drawing. In this way the park would not be reduced to such an extent.

If the library is to be built on Karjalankatu Street, I in turn would like to support positioning the building as architect Aalto has presented, which however takes up space in the park more than in architect Kallio's suggestion, while it does not destroy the park any more than in architect Kallio's plan, and makes it easier, if necessary, to position the buildings across the street so that they will then form an entity together with the library building. If the building is to be positioned as suggested by Kallio, and nothing is to be built on the opposite side of the street, the positioning of the library would in my view remain difficult in respect to the street grid.

Another alternative site for the library outside the park area would be the small hill next to Koulukatu Street opposite Punaisenlähteentori Square, suggested by the Viipuri Technical Club.

Located there, the library would remain entirely within the park, without disturbing the continuity of the park. Even though here the library would destroy a rather beautiful part of the park, its surroundings could be kept as a park and the area of beauty that is to be destroyed could be replaced with a new one equal to what is lost, through creating terraced area and a pond by the library. In building in this part of the park, it is likely that the planned building would be required to be made as a mirror image of itself, and positioned on Koulukatu Street so that it would create a backdrop towards Punaisenlähteentori Square.

The third potential site, much discussed in relation to the location for the library, is the site which the City Planning Committee left at the bottom of the list of potential sites, i.e. the north-eastern part of the Koulukenttä sports field on Linnankatu Street. Here the library would require to be built as a mirror image, with a strip of grass with trees on its south-west side, on the side of the Koulukenttä field. Of the proposed alternatives, this is perhaps least interesting, even though it could be successful with the addition of the mentioned greenery and re-organisation of the library with its surroundings. The sports field area would need to be diminished, but it should not deter the physical education of the students, and could be at least partially replaced, because a field will be constructed by the Pantsarlahti bastions, which will most of all be in service of schools. Otherwise this site can be supported on basis that this would fulfil the requirements of the library professionals while being outside of the park area. It however needs to be added that this site is likely to be applied for constructing a concert hall and music school building.' [252]

In May 1931 Aalto received a letter from the City Planning Committee suggesting several alternative locations for the library. It explained that expert statements have been received from architects Oiva Kallio, Uno Ullberg and Georg Fraser, among others. Now, it is asked if Aalto would offer his statement on the points noted in the expert statements.[253]

It is to be noted that although the Building Committee had Hannes Koivu as representative of the local library directors, this is the first time when library experts from the National Library Office were contacted to approve the architect's designs for the library. The representatives of the Library Office were evidently anything but pleased about not having been consulted from the very beginning.[254] The letter from the Building Committee, however, makes it appear that the

[252] On 31.12.1930 the City Council receives a statement from the City Planning Committee, signed by Meurman. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavakonttorin kirjediaarit. (1928-1931) Copy of letter sent to the City council, dated 24.2.1931 with almost same content. Signed Meurman.

[253] Attached is the city planning architect Meurman's statement, and his drawing illustrating the alternative sites for the library. Letter in the AF archives, drawing from the MMA. Letter: Wiipuri City Governors 16.5.1931 to Aalto. AF, Jyväskylä.

[254] 28.5.1931. Valtion Kirjastotoimisto / Kirjeet (1931-32) Sijainti S33 & 13/IV/-34. Fa:4. Also Valtion Kirjastotoimisto / Kirjeet 1933-1935, Sijainti S33, SY id Fa:5. NARC.

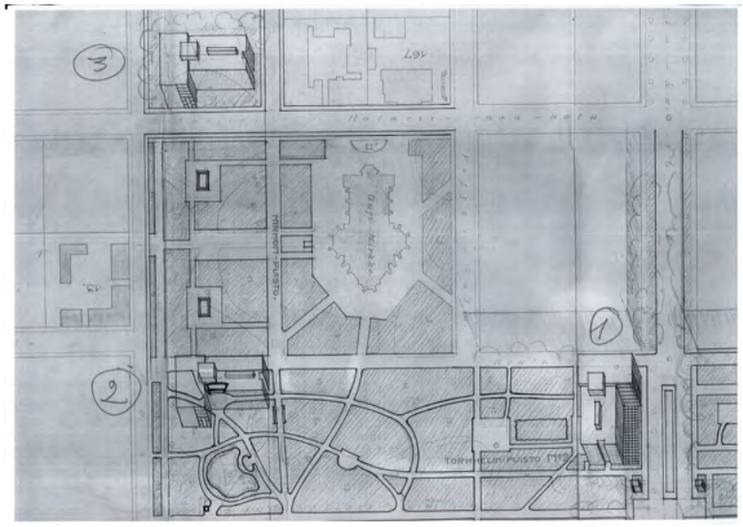


Fig. 33. *In 1930, Otto-I. Meurman presented Aalto's library in three alternative locations, drawn on the same map. (MMA)*

only reason the National Library Office was contacted is because this is correct procedure - not to receive suggestions for modifying the designs.[255] The reply arrived during the same month, addressed to the Building Committee in Viipuri: '...the building is planned for a presentable and central location, thus fulfilling all requirements in comfortably serving the needs of the public. ...Regarding the design of the interior, however, many details in the drawings show that these have not been planned according to the internationally recognised method introduced in guide books, by which a representative of the library profession is to be taken as the other person participating in the designing of a library building, so that the representative of this perspective and the architect together continue the work from the original drawings, stage by stage correcting and adding to the sketches in accordance with the requirements of both professions. The sketches are still in the kind of stage where it is possible to make adjustments.'[256]

Representatives of the National Library Office further note their appreciation for an entirely separate entrance to the newspaper reading room. However, they criticise the fact that '[t]he public toilet planned to be positioned under of the newspaper reading room, separate from the library itself, does not make a

[255] Viipuri City Council to the National Library Office 5.5.1931.Valtion Kirjastotoimisto / Kirjeet (1931-32) Sijainti S33. Fa:4. NARC.

[256] Typed copy of letter, dated 28.5.1931 to the Viipuri City Council's committee assigned to supervise the drawings. In its response the National Library Office points out that there is no such instance as the National Library Board, to whom the letter was addressed, only the office. Signed on behalf of the National Library Office K.A. Franssila, H. Cannelin. Helle Kannila (former Cannelin) is later known as the 'grand old lady' of Finnish libraries. Valtion Kirjastotoimisto / Kirjeet (1931-32) Sijainti S33. Fa:4. NARC.

favourable impression, but could in fact degrade the building'.[257] They also suspect the entrance hall is even too spacious, which might lead to being used for loitering. The National Library Office representatives also criticise the fact that in places where there is no good view from the surveillance desk, it is unlikely that it would be possible to have open shelves in use. They also suspect the functionality of the roof terrace, viewing it rather as a curiosity rather than a functional reading space due to the fact that weather conditions make it possible to read outside only for fraction of the year, and this at a time when the library is least used. As to the general impression based on the drawings the library experts conclude that the library can become acceptable if the main and work drawings will be produced with the architect, and also a qualified library professional with expertise in library buildings.[258] However, it is evident that involving library professionals from the National Office was not a particular concern for either the Viipuri city officials or Aalto. The National Library Office was contacted again only in 1934 when the Library was actually under construction.

The expert statements

In February 1932 the City Council reviewed a collection of expert statements[259], altogether seven, which had been requested with four questions in mind: 1) Is the style of the façades of the buildings such that the building is well suited to its surroundings, 2) Would it be possible to make adjustments to the façades without changing the interior plan of the library, 3) If the answer to the previous two questions is 'no', would it be possible to build the library at an alternative site and, 4) Is the decision to build in the park the choice of the best potential site, as the building would diminish the park area. These statements are again written in a sequence, as a kind of seven-part commentary on the site issue.

Architect Oiva Kallio, who had received the first prize in the 1912 competition for the monumental square, viewed that positioned in the park, the style of the building does not pose a problem. In contrast, if the library would be built on Karjalankatu Street (See no. 5a in Fig. 23) the library would be part of the monumental square, because the opposite side of the street would have a concert hall with a restaurant accompanied by a trace and arrangement of the park surrounding it. The alternatives were to build the library in the park, but with its short façade on Karjalankatu Street, (See no. 5b in Fig. 23) or possibly on the corner of Torkke-

[257] Ibid.

[258] Ibid.

[259] 16.2.1932. N:o 20. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen. (1929) MMA.

linkatu and Vaasankatu Streets (See no. 5c in Fig. 23). Therefore, Kallio felt that the only potential sites were in Torkkeli Park.[260]

Architect Uno Ullberg agreed that Kallio's suggestion to build the library on Koulukatu Street (as a mirror image of the existing drawings) with its short façade towards Karjalankatu Street was a fresh and interesting proposal. Ullberg did not prefer any of the other sites.[261]

Georg Fraser, representative of the Department of Public Works maintained that the façades represent 'a style in its childhood, an immature, extreme line of present day architecture', and thus it is only evident the building is unsuited to the proposed location. To the third question Fraser responded that the site on Koulukatu Street, even building on the existing street, would be more appropriate, [when the building would be realised as a mirror image of the designs] as it would make the appearance of the building less strange, and would not take up space in the park. Fraser concludes that in his view there is no need for monumentality, but there are other methods to mark the heart of the city than destroying the park.[262]

Aalto again stressed that the library has been designed as a 'building in the park', meaning that it can be positioned freely and is not bound by the geometry of existing structures. The two points Aalto thus makes are that the design is based on the context of a 'free environment' and *recreation area*. Namely, as a scientific institution, he sees that the library in no way suffers from being located in a park [as a recreation area]. On the contrary, its influence on the masses [of the population] is particularly effective and psychologically appropriate if it is a park building. The alternative sites Aalto considers to be possible, are either on Karjalankatu Street, where the library would have more *advertisement value* than in the other alternative locations. On an axis with Punaisenlähteentori Square (See no. 5e in Fig. 23) the effect would be more calm. According to Aalto, the outcrop of bedrock at the end of the sports field suggested by Meurman was new to him, and he had not been able to study this alternative.[263]

[260] Statements: Attachment I. Oiva Kallio. 26.5.1930 Helsinki. MMA.

[261] Attachment II. Uno Ullberg. Viipuri 31.5.1930. MMA.

[262] Attachment III. Georg Fraser. Viipuri 1.6.1930. MMA.

[263] Attachment V. Alvar Aalto. Turku June 1931. MMA. Aalto uses interesting terms to describe the difference between the two alternatives, with reference to the building being positioned within the park he uses the word 'rekreatio' (recreational) and in referring to the position along the street, Aalto describes this as having created 'reklaamiarvo' (advertisement value). Both terms are not strictly speaking Finnish, but examples of words loaned from other languages, and perhaps most of all, illustrative of Aalto's playful use of language in general. Furthermore, this statement came after the 1929 Turku Fair, in the context of which Aalto had become closely acquainted with the idea of advertisements integrated as part of the fair architecture.

City planning architect Meurman explained that he found Aalto's alternative preferable to that suggested by Kallio. Meurman however suggests a site outside the park, noting that if the plan to build the library along Karjalankatu Street is given up (pointing out that it is likely him, who has originally proposed it), it would be possible to return to the very original alternative, where the library would not interfere with the streetscapes at all, namely, the bedrock at the end of the sports field (See no. 5d in Fig. 23). There, in a central location the library would offer a fitting companion for the Art Museum, fulfil requirements of the city plan, and beautify its surroundings.[264]

Also representatives of the Board of Governors of the City Library, J.P. Tirkkonen and Johan Vasenius provided their statements. They begin by stressing that from the beginning, there have been local persons involved in the project who are closely acquainted with the library profession, knowledgeable of the latest international library buildings and that Aalto has visited the new library in Stockholm.[265] Their statement focuses on the library's interior, thus not explicitly referring to the questions posed by the City Council. Tirkkonen and Vasenius are most concerned with the supervision of the library interior, and in connection to this, analyse the project with comparison to another Finnish library, the recent Tampere Library, pointing out that the supervision of the entire main space had not been possible as had been originally planned. They conclude that there is nothing in the Viipuri Library's design which would remain a problem, or which could not be solved with minor adjustments.

In addition to their separate statements, architects Ullberg and Meurman offered their joint statement as representatives of the City Planning Committee. They were specifically responding to the enquiry concerning the two preferred sites: to build the library on Vaasankatu Street (See no. 5f in Fig. 23), or to position the building on Koulukatu Street in Torkkeli Park (See no. 5e in Fig. 23). They preferred the second option, but continue to propose placing the building directly on the continuation of the street. It would become necessary to rearrange the entire section of the park, and redesigning the long façade of the building. Later, Meurman recalled the matter in an article titled 'The Monumental Square and the Library Question'[266], how an adventurous idea suddenly struck him: The short strip of street, Koulukatu intersected the entire block's length of the park. The street was continued by a pedestrian route all the way to Vaasankatu Street. This seemed to create something resembling 'a wound in the terrain, like a railway

[264] Attachment IV. Viipuri city planning architect. Viipuri 24.2.1931. MMA.

[265] Attachment VII. Viipuri Library governors. Viipuri, 19.6.1931. Attached, preceding this is also the National Library Office [Valtion Kirjastotoimisto]. Statement signed in Helsinki 19.5.1931. Signed by K.A. Franssila, Helle Cannelin. MMA. Same also at NARC.

[266] Meurman, O-I. 1985, 264-271.

crossing in miniature'. Meurman thus came up with the idea that the library could serve as a kind of 'buckle', not cutting through but in fact connecting two parts of the park. Meurman had then gone to test his idea with architect Elsi Borg, who was working as an assistant at the Viipuri City Planning Office. Borg agreed that the suggestion was very good, after which Meurman contacted Aalto, who similarly agreed.[267] This is the site where the library finally came to be built.

However, in their statement Ullberg and Meurman still return to the notion that the City Planning Committee had originally introduced. In other words, this was the original proposal to situate the library on Karjalankatu Street (no. 5a in Fig. 23), which meant returning to the ideas of a 'monumental square'. The Committee maintained that '[a]t Torkkeli Park, Karjalankatu Street needs to be enhanced, because the crossing of Karjalankatu and Torkkelinkatu streets must be viewed as the true central point of our city. … The required enhancement would be achieved by widening Karjalankatu Street with a square type opening, and appropriately positioned buildings. …Therefore the building would need to be designed as a notable enhancement which the site requires, or alternatively as a building that neutral enough to blend with the other buildings to be built at a later stage, which together will create a unity.'[268] Consequently, it would be best still to ask Aalto to revise his proposal, to make fit the original location better.[269]

In sum, the statements circle around two issues. First, whether or not it is possible to locate the library in the park, regardless of the exact site there. Second, Ullberg's and Meurman's joint statement, in particular, reveals the differences in their views, compared with their individual statements. Here, the idea of monumentality is not primarily a question of scale, but Meurman keeps returning to the possibility to create a 'crown' for the city, positioning the building on the site which the bedrock at the end of the sports field would offer. Ullberg, however, chooses to work with the idea of creating a monumental square surrounded by public buildings. This is confirmed by Ullberg's sketches that he drafted for a future concert hall to be built opposite the library.

The conclusion reached by the Building Committee in 1932 was that the library should be built on the southeastern continuation of Koulukatu Street, in Torkkeli Park, with the building's short façade to Vaasankatu Street as suggested

[267] Meurman, O.-I. 1985, 271. It appears, however, that at the time Meurman's assistant must have been someone else. Elsi Borg was working in Viipuri between 1925 and 1926. From 1926 to 1927 she worked at Oiva Kallio's office and founded her own office in 1927 after winning the competition for Taulumäki Church.. From 1929 she also worked for the Finnish Ministry of Defence. Henttonen, M. 1995, 18-22.

[268] City planning committee's meeting 15.10.1931. n:o 8 Architets Ullberg, Selin, Hänninen, Meurman. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavakonttorin kirjediaarit / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1931-1931) MMA.

[269] Attachment VIII. Viipuri City Planning Committee. Viipuri 13.10.1931. MMA.

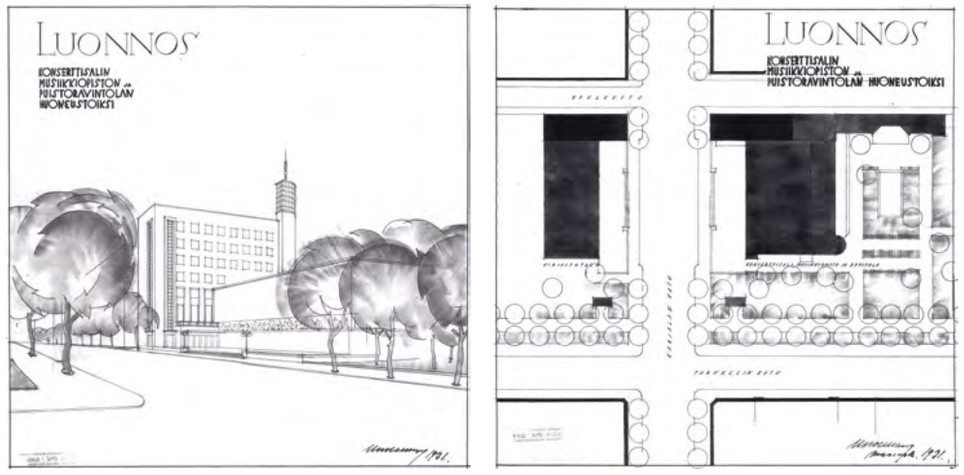


Fig. 34-35. *Uno Ullberg´s project for a concert hall, a music college and a park restaurant on a site opposite the library, 1931. (MFA)*

by Ullberg and Meurman. This was to be done with Aalto's 1929 drawings, with alterations as far as the changed site required.[270] The City Council discussed the issue in March 1932, where most of the members supported the suggested site for the library.[271]

Later that year, Meurman presented an extensive plan for reorganising the centre of Viipuri in an article published in *The Finnish Architectural Review*.[272] Here Meurman develops further the ideas already presented in the City Planning Committee's statement, with support of a perspective drawing and a plan. This illustrates well the debate taking place in Viipuri: the contradicting aim to protect the park and the need to develop the city by creating a group of public buildings.[273] Once again, this article leaves no doubt of Meurman's ambitions for the realisation of a monumental square in Viipuri. The site that Meurman con-

[270] 26.1.1932. Liite mom. 23 Viipurin Kaupunginvaltuusto N:o 1 1932. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavakonttorin kirjediaarit / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1929-1929) MMA. Same to be found under: Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/painetut dokumentit no 1 1932 Cf:33 MMA. This is also recollected by Meurman: Based on the statements, the committee appointed by the City Council concluded that the building should be located to the southeastern end alongside Koulukatu Street and realised according to Aalto´s 1929 drawings, taking into consideration the new site. Meurman, O-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 23.

[271] City Council's meeting 1.3.1932. N:o 1 mom. 2. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1932-1932) MMA.

[272] Meurman, O.-I. 1932, 146-147. 'Organisation of the Viipuri central area in the urban plan' ['Viipurin asemakaavallisen keskuksen suunnittelu']

[273] Ibid 1932, 146. Also Salmela, U. 1994, 190.

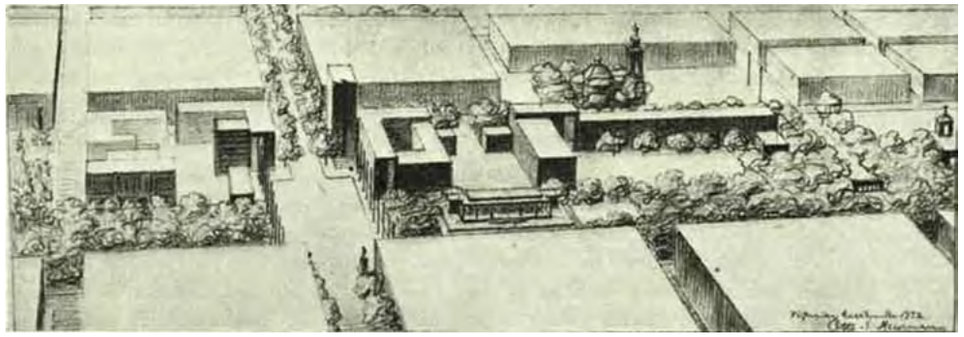


Fig. 36. *In his monumental centre project of 1932 Otto-I. Meurman returned to the idea of positioning a group of public buildings to area of the central barracks.* ***Finnish Architecture Review*** *10/1932. (KK)*

siders to be the best possible area to be developed is the one occupied by the so-called central barracks, buildings which were due to be vacated by the army in the near future. His proposal was to widen Karjalankatu Street by ten metres on both sides, making the park accordingly narrower, to create the feel of a 'street square', with monumental buildings being located on both sides of the street. In this plan, the army barracks area would provide space for a new City Hall, which would be a tower-like, some 15 storeys tall ´skyscraper´. Next to the City Hall would be created a more intimate square, accessed from Linnankatu Street and through Torkkeli Park. One side of the square would have been dominated by the back façade of the City Hall. On the opposite side, there would have been space for a new Concert Hall, a City Court Hall etc. The Espilä restaurant, at the end of the square, would have been rebuilt. The plan also included a large office building, located on the Linnankatu Street side, its other end close to the existing Parade Square. Meurman acknowledged himself that realising all these buildings would not be possible in the immediate future. Again, he explained, the suggestion was based on the army barracks area becoming available to the city for development, making it thus possible to solve the question of the monumental square in a new way.[274]

Meurman's plan[275] also visualises the idea of locating the library on Koulukatu Street (See no. 6 in Fig. 23), the site where the library would finally be built. In these visions, the library is perceived in relation to other public buildings, parks, squares and the network of streets, as part of a much wider conception of the Viipuri cityscape. Furthermore, it can be deduced that Finnish architects had professional interest in the latest plans for Viipuri, and the library project. Thus,

[274] Meurman, O.-I. 1932; Österman, E. 1976.

[275] Meurman, O.-I. 1932, 147.

writing this article aimed for his colleagues, Meurman was able to voice his ideas without needing to be concerned with the local conflicts in Viipuri.

Columbus's Egg

Before the final conclusion was reached, one more turn took place. The City Council discussed at its meetings in February and March 1932 the Building Committee's proposal, but it was returned to the City Council for budgeting, regardless of the fact that no definite decision about the site had been made.[276] The only result was that for the 1933 budget 2 million Finnish marks were appropriated for building a library. It might well have been that still nothing would have happened, unless some of the Council members had not pressed the urgency of the issue.[277]

> ***Library news: Viipuri City Library's building matter***
>
> *The project for building a new library that has been ongoing since 1926, has now proceeded in the sense that the City Council has decided to assign the building to be positioned to the south-eastern part of Koulukatu Street next to Torkkeli Park, with the building's short façade on Vaasankatu Street. The Council left to the City Government the necessary decisions to begin the building work. The opposing motion, according to which the building is to be positioned on the edge of the sports field on Linnankatu Street, received only five votes. The City Government has now announced that the funds available for this project are approximately 4,400,000 Finnish marks, and based on the cost estimate from 1929 the cost would be approximately 4,500,000 Finnish marks, excluding furnishings. Due to reduced building costs, it is now possible to realise the building, including the furnishings with the existing funds.*
>
> *Hopefully the building project will now start in Viipuri!*[278]

Nonetheless, the City Council still remained hesitant about the site, and requested still new suggestions and a statement from the City Planning Committee. The main reason for the being unable to confirm the site seemed to be the continued concern over many citizens opposing any disturbance to the park. For

[276] The exact dates were 16 February and 1 March 1932. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1932-1932) MMA.

[277] At the meeting of 14.3.1933 Koivu, Häkkinen and Pelli underlined the need to begin the works immediately. (Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 23) Also Viipuri City Council's meeting of 10.4.1933 Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat (1933-1933) MMA.

[278] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1933, 201.

this reason, the site question was considered once again. In addition to discussing the alternative sites in the park, the city architect Ullberg pointed out that it appeared that the central barracks area would be vacated by the army, and becoming part of city land, this will provide completely new potential for planning the central areas. In his view, it should be even easy to assign a lot for the library there, though, Ullberg continued, it is probably not possible to wait until this area becomes available. He did not prefer the alternatives to build in the park, but felt that the north-eastern part of Punaisenlähteentori Square or the previously discussed sports field would be sites to consider.

This is when Mr. Selin, the President of the Court of Appeal pointed out that it is unlikely the city would get the chance to use the Karjalankatu Street end of the central barracks area, as it was likely that the state would still keep the land. Instead, Selin suggested that the library could be positioned at the south-western end of Punaisenlähteentori Square (See n:o 7 in Fig. 23), leaving a gap to Torkkelinkatu Street so that it would be possible to arrange some plants between the library and the street. Ullberg was evidently pleased with this alternative, as this way there would remain sufficient space for the market stalls and the north-eastern end could be reserved for a service station or similar structure.[279] Governors of the City Library agreed to this.[280]

'Turku, May 1933

Dear Mörre,

I received your letter and here I send my thoughts concerning it as I promised over the phone / first I want to thank for the last / there, when we visited Uno, Uno spoke about this site on Punaisenlähteentori Square and that you had been discussing it, but at the time I did not pay enough attention / when visiting the square I did not quite catch the idea, because I did not think of the possibility to position the building as it is in the drawings you have sent here / upon receiving your site sketch something very strange happened to me, namely to my surprise I had to conclude that the site is good after all, and the further I got acquainted with the idea, the better and better it seemed / so in the end I almost reached the conclusion that here we have a kind of Columbus's egg of city planning / I also find the solution appropriate in regard to the square and the park zone / so in terms of urban psychology the site is good, positioning the library frontally towards the park is in my view the core of the solution and marks well the park area's rectangular, skewed edge. / in addition it is possible as you have outlined in the sketch that the building is to be short enough so that it does not block the end of the square but becomes more like a 'building on square', à la Round Tower, without which this positioning of both these buildings would result in a city planning tautology. / positioning a piece of shrubbery in front of the library is in my view the other core idea; it naturally does not need to exist more than just enough to create a 'contact across the street' / I find the solution appropriate and I'd be inclined to say this is no compromise but is in every way correct and fresh, better positioning than the other one we last discussed / and there is another amusing coincidence / I have naturally from time to time been reviewing those library drawings and at one time during the winter I was intending to discuss some changes due to Uno's suggestion and some other improvements too, but because of the site question it was not acute / as mentioned, I have myself made some changes and now it happens that positioning the building this way comes as if called for regarding the revised shape which I would have suggested in any case, even so that this site gives the final solution for the changed shape.

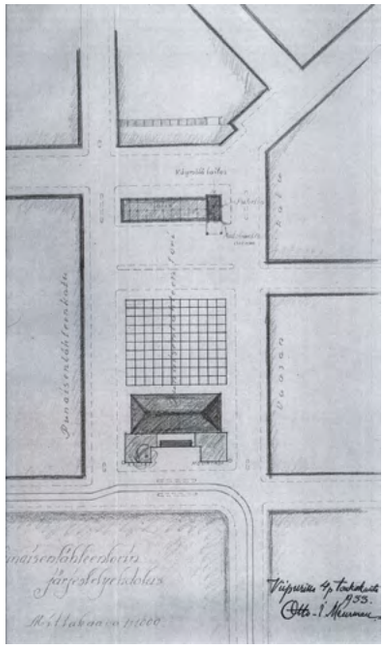
The changes focus mainly on the following points: fewer stairs from street level to the level of the library's main hall, positioning the hall more organically in relation to the exterior but also maintaining sufficient proportions for traffic, surveillance and in work spaces, a few adjustments to supervising the space, a simpler entrance i.e. cheaper, smaller cubic volume etc. / not more of these in this context, the main issue is that this site is good also in this way, even inspiring / I would believe that transforming the library for this place would be soon done / though this site requires somewhat different toning than inside the park, towards the square more symmetry and a little stronger architectural tone, but this is unlikely to be any disadvantage, on the contrary it might diminish potential disagreements concerning the library's appearance / I add here a few papers that I have quickly sketched just to illustrate my support for this site and that in my view there are good chances for an organic solution in accordance to how my thoughts about changing the library have developed / do not in any way take these examples too seriously, these do not include the beginnings of the building, but as you well know time has been limited and yet I would like to affirm to you that the site and in particular the orientation is good and fits in a curious way with my latest ideas / my regards to you there, your good wife and the Ullbergs / I will write to Uno also in tomorrow's post.

Tuus, Aalto.[281]

[279] Several persons supported this idea. It was decided to request Aalto's opinion on this new site. The Viipuri city planning committee's meeting of 2.5.1933. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1932-1933) MMA.

[280] Meurman, O-I. in Ervi, A. 1935,23. Salmela (1994, 191) points out that this site has been neglected in existing analyses concerning the building.

[281] Aalto's letter to Meurman. May 1933. Copy of the letter. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1932-1933). MMA. Also Salmela, U. 1994,191. Intriguingly, in a letter to Aalto in 30 December 1931, Sigfried Giedion had described Aalto's sketches of arm rests which folded out from the seat as 'the egg of Columbus for restaurants bars etc.' Rüegg, A. 2016, 143-173 in Stritzler-Levine, N. and Riekko, T.(eds.) Thus, it is possible that Aalto had picked up the term from Giedion.



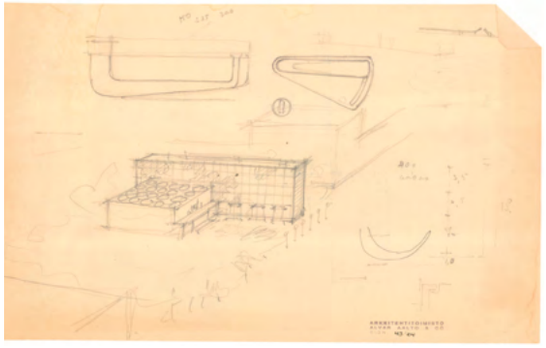


Fig. 38. *Alvar Aalto's sketches for the same location, which he referred to as the 'Columbus's egg of city planning'. (AF)*

Fig. 37. *In 1933 Meurman studied the possibility to locate the library to the Punaisenlähteentori Square. A service building is outlined to the opposite end of the square. (MMA)*

In Meurman's signed and dated drawing, the library turns its back to Punaisenlähteentori Square, facing the park. In the middle of the existing square there is a paved area which appears to be the space planned to be used for market stalls. At the opposite end of the square is a narrow block, where Meurman sketched the market facilities, including a public toilet, a telephone, and car service station, leaving space for cars to drive around this structure.[282] Convinced by Aalto's enthusiasm, the City Planning Committee decided to give up the plans to locate the library in Torkkeli Park, and to build it on the south-western side of Punaisenlähteentori Square. The library would then be in the city centre, and it would improve 'the architecturally fragmented and contradictory nature´[283] of the square. In addition, the Building Committee suggested new designs to be ordered from Aalto.[284] In Aalto's sketches, there is an L-shaped building with the main

[282] O.-I. Meurman's drawing of Punaisenlähteentori Square and surrounding blocks: Viipuri 4.5.1933, signed by Meurman. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim. kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1932-1933). MMA.

[283] Ibid.

[284] In the existing accounts, this stage tends to be left out, perhaps because the site question has mostly been introduced in association with Aalto's design. In this context the site on Punaisenlähteentori Square does not stand out as a stage that would have exist alongside one of Aalto's versions for the library. Hence, on one hand it can be deduced that this site has been regarded as less relevant, while on the other hand , I suggest this site can only be understood when materials from Aalto and Meurman are put together.

doors opening onto a small entrance court decorated with plants. Here the library can be seen to create a link between Punaisenlähteentori Square and Torkkeli Park across the street.

After the City Planning Committee and the Governors of the City Library had confirmed their support to build the library at Punaisenlähteentori Square, the City Council was able to make their decision in September 1933. However, this was not the site at Punaisenlähteentori as last discussed and the City Council decided that the library is to be built in Torkkeli Park in the south-eastern part of Koulukatu street with the building's short façade towards Vaasankatu street (See n:o 8 in Fig. 23). It was also decided that the City Government was to get the work started immediately.[285] Having reached this new stage, the City Council ordered the Building Committee in September 1933 to proceed as stipulated in the Council´s decision in December 1927. Thus, the Building Committee convened in October 1933 after over an interval of three years.[286] As it happened, some of the members had changed due to the length of the process.[287] Meurman then made the required alterations to the city plan to have the library built in the park.[288]

The new design

As the City Council had not found the site on Punaisenlähteentori Square agreeable, the drawings needed to be revised completely. However, due to the prolonged debate concerning the site, some other projects had proceeded in the meantime. At this point, there was no longer need to reserve space for the magistrate's archives, as the magistrate had its spaces in the new Provincial Archives, to be soon opened, designed by Ullberg.[289] It was decided that also the public toilet

[285] Viipuri City Council's meeting of 5.9.1933. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat. (1933-1933). MMA. Also Meurman, O-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 24.

[286] Meurman, O-I. in Ervi, A. 1935,23. The precise dates are: the City Council's letter of 22.9.1933, the Council´s decision having been made on 20.12.1927. Thus the Committee convened again on 5.10.1933. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat. (1933-1933). MMA.

[287] The highly regarded chairperson, J.P. Tirkkonen had died and bank director Hannes Saarinen had moved away. Viipuri City Council's meeting of 3.10.1933. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup. valt. pöytäkirjat. (1933-1933). MMA. Also *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjasto* 1933, 214-215; Meurman, O-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 24.

[288] Copy of letter to the City Governors signed by Meurman Viipuri 18.12.1933. Viipurin kaup.rak. toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemak.toim.kun. pöytäkirjat liitteineen (1932-1933). MMA.

[289] This building, designed at Ullberg's own office, was opened on 17.1.1934.

was to be left out, because it would rather be possible to include these features as part of the service station to be built on Punaisenlähteentori Square.[290]

Aalto was again invited for consultation and new drawings suitable for the changed site were commissioned. He was also requested to carefully consider how the building should be positioned in the new site, allocated by the City Council. Also some changes were requested in regard to the interior. It was proposed that the newspaper room would be located at the Vaasankatu Streets´ end, and 600 more shelf metres to be added to the lending hall. As the construction needed to be started urgently, the architect was requested to produce the new drawings as soon as possible.

In December 1933 Aalto was able to present the new drawings, which closely accord with the realised building.[291] The Building Committee concluded that in comparing the new drawings with those designed for the site alongside Karjalankatu Street, many new beneficial aspects had emerged. The building's volume had slightly diminished, while shelf metres had been added. The main entrance had better contact with both the main hall and the lecture hall,[292] which in the previous drawings had been on the second floor. The children's´ library had its own entrance, with fewer stairs, as the different spaces were now almost at ground level. In comparison with the previous design, the loans desk was situated 1.5 metres lower than earlier. Public elevators were not needed at all, whereas in the earlier plan there had been two of them. Surveillance of the space had become easier, and the reading rooms had a more spacious feel altogether. At the same time, the façades of the building were found to have become calmer and more impressive. The new location became a great success, having allowed freedom in situating the building.[293] The Building Committee's review of the revised design is illustrative of the issues which had been in fact discussed all along. Rather than analysing explicitly the architecture of the building, or the design specifically as a library space, the Committee focused most of all on accessibility, connections between the spaces and supervision being made as easy as possible. In this – rather limited – sense, the focus of the perspective was on the users of the library.

After Aalto had produced an estimated budget and a rough work description, they were handed over to the City Council for approval. Also Aalto appeared to

[290] A public toilet building by Ragnar Ypyä (city architect after Ullberg), was eventually built on the side of the square in 1939.

[291] Aalto presented the drawings on 14.12.1933 and received part of the payment for the new drawings on 20.12.1933. Letter confirming payment from Viipuri city department of finances. AF, Jyväskylä.

[292] Here the term 'club room' is used. The same space is referred to as the lecture hall - which can be divided with the use of folding partitions to create separate spaces for meetings, e.g. for clubs.

[293] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 24.

Fig. 39. *Aerial photo of Torkkeli Park in 1934. Pine trees mark the site where the library was built. Next to the site is the Cathedral, and on the background the Punaisenlähteentori Square. (Sotamuseo / Ilmavoimat)*

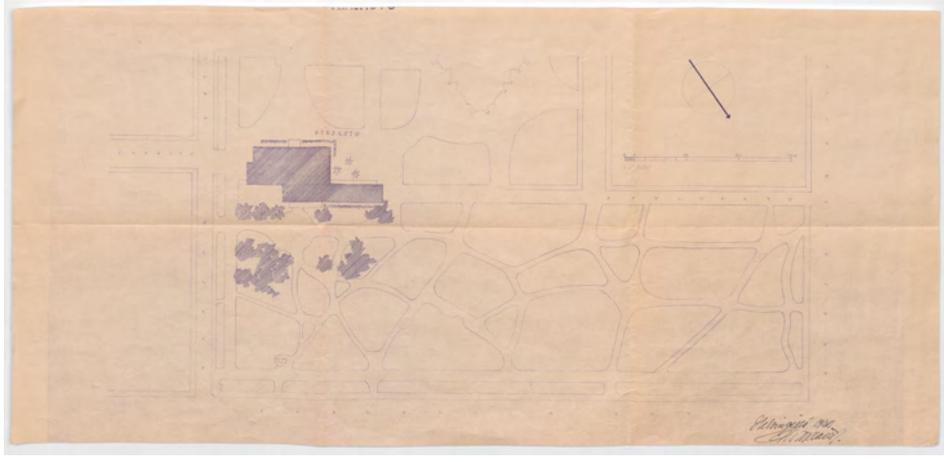


Fig. 40. *Site plan of the realised library, 1934. (MMA)*

be satisfied with the final location, which according to him 'gave much greater possibilities for the design and freed the task from the constraints of external formality, which in the earlier alternative was considerable.'[294] In December 1933 the City Council met to consider the plans for the library.[295] Under review was a model presenting the lending and reading rooms and Meurman, the secretary of the Building Committee, explicating the drawings and the structure of the building. This is the first time that Aalto provided a lengthy description of the interior of the library. In connection with the long debate over the site, the Building Committee stressed that the larger volume of the building was towards the rear, towards Church Park and the lower entrance mass towards Torkkeli Park, where the long window of the lecture hall preserved the intimacy of the park. Aalto further pointed out that the building could be constructed without touching any of the old trees.[296]

The City Council accepted the plans, the budget and the preliminary work plans and assigned the Board of Technical Works to be in charge of arrangements for the construction work. In the budget, 3,803,551 Finnish marks were allocated for the purpose, and 371,800 marks for furnishing the building. Having reached the construction phase, and as the drawings and work plans had been revised, the Board of Technical Works called for bids from contractors, based on which the City Council decided to give the project to Rakennusosakeyhtiö Pyramid constructors from Viipuri for 3,220,000 Finnish marks.

The professional library periodical *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* is illustrative of how the Viipuri Library project was closely followed by the librarians of Finland. However, the persons who were in close contact with Aalto were the city planning architect Meurman, and the city architect Uno Ullberg, not the librarians. Other library buildings that were referred to in Viipuri were the Tampere Library designed by the Paatela brothers, and it was pointed out that Aalto had visited Stockholm City Library by Gunnar Asplund. The news published in the specialist library periodical however make it painfully obvious that after the first contact in 1931, the National Library Office had not been consulted again. The

[294] Aalto, A. 1935, 152. By 'the earlier case' Aalto was most likely referring to both the site on Aleksanterinkatu (later Karjalankatu) Street and the site in Punaisenlähteentori Square. (Salmela, U. 1994, 92.)

[295] 28.12.1933 Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat. Sidottu. (1933-1933). MMA.

[296] Attached were the work description and cost estimate. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat. Sidottu (1933-1933) MMA.

Governors of the City Library contacted the National Library Office for the second time only in March 1934.[297]

> *'To the National Library Board.*
>
> *The directorship respectfully requests the Library Board's statement on A. Aalto's altered designs for Viipuri's new library building. The directors ask for the following:*
>
> *The drawings in question, provided as copies of the originals, have been created for the reason that due to the changed site the previous drawings needed to be revised. This is when it was aimed to preserve all the benefits of the old drawings while also making corrections, for which the National Library Board had found need. In addition, in revising the drawings the architect has found simpler technical solutions. Therefore it has not seemed necessary to request the Library Board's statement before, most of all because the matter was urgent for multiple reasons. The building issue has reached a positive solution in that the City Council approved the plan on December the 28th. As it is still possible and also necessary to consider details, the directors have wanted to offer the drawings to be viewed and commented to the National Library Board. The directors wish that the Library Board could handle this issue quickly, so as not to delay the beginning of construction work any longer. Since architect Aalto now resides in Helsinki, he is available to participate in the Library Board's meeting upon request to give detailed a description of his drawings.'*
>
> *On behalf of the Governors of the Viipuri City Library, Toivo Valtavuo, Johan Vasenius'*[298]

The National Library Office writes its reply in April 1934, pointing out that there is no Library Board, only an Office. At the beginning of their statement it is noted that the drawings have in fact changed quite significantly since 1931, when the National Library Office offered its previous comments on the project. In their new and lengthy response the representatives of the Library Office describe the interiors with remarkable accuracy, almost sounding like they were describing the

[297] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* (1934, 78-79) Published news under the title 'Construction of the Viipuri and Vaasa Libraries Underway'. It is noted that the Governors of Viipuri library have requested the National Library Office's statement on the drawings. By the time of the library's construction the funds had grown to approximately 4,600,000 Finnish marks, and hence the building was realised in its entirety with the bequeathed funds. In the hall an honorary place was reserved for the busts of Juho and Maria Lallukka. It was even suggested that a special Lallukka museum would be set up in the library. (Närhi, M. 1935, 204.)

[298] Letter of 2.3.1934 from the Governors of the Viipuri City Library to the 'National Library Board'. Valtion Kirjastotoimisto / Kirjeet (1933-35) Fa:5. S33. KA.

realised building. Their main concern is whether the spaces will become cramped too soon. The stairs, most of all the so-called 'book pit', which later proved to be one of the design solutions that the library is praised for, was suspected to be hopelessly impractical, forcing visitors to follow a series of stairs up and down before reaching the lending desk. Yet, the main point of criticism remains the failure to have consulted library experts during the project: 'The architect has evidently paid attention to, and has aimed to get acquainted with, the requirements for this type of building as a work space, but a person who has not worked in this field understandably cannot take into account the practical aspects as persons of this profession can. As a general impression it can be said that the Viipuri Library can become acceptable based on these drawings, with the premise that in designing the details and interiors, this will be done in close collaboration with a (library) expert.'[299] The construction of the library had begun on 12 April 1934, a day before the National Library Office's letter was dated. This ends the communication with the National Library Office,[300] but also the event of the library project being dominated by the perspective of the Viipuri city administration, for which the main point of interest was in imagining the cityscape, and as part of it ideas of historic Torkkeli Park, the 'monumental square ' and the library as a public building.

Citizens petition to halt construction

The interruptions also permitted the general public to discuss the site question. From the perspective of local citizens, the library issue raised two main concerns: first, that the new building would take up land from Torkkeli Park, and second, the appearance of the building. While these arguments were brought forth separately, the two are inherently connected because both boil down to suspecting whether Aalto's 'new style' design was suitable for the 'historic' park. Among those opposing the new library building on aesthetic grounds was Consul Eugen Wolff, who had considerable influence in Viipuri.[301] The opponents of the modern design therefore took action, and commissioned a more conventional alternative plans for the new library, the designs of which were put on display in the window of a local bookstore.[302] These drawings have since disappeared. However, it is possible that this alternative proposal would have been requested from Uno Ullberg.

[299] The exact date is 13.4.1934, signed K.A, H.C. Handwritten draft of the letter. 'On behalf of the National Library Office'. Valtion Kirjastotoimisto / Kirjeet (1933-35) Fa:5. S33. KA.

[300] To my knowledge, the only later source where it is noted that library experts were not heard in the process is in Hirn, S. and Lankinen, J. 2000, 31.

[301] Wolff had also been on the jury of the 1912 competition for the monumental square.

[302] Salmela, U. 1994,188. This issue has been published in different forms in Leppo, J. 1946, 43-44; Schildt, G. 1986, 29; Jääskeläinen, L. 1957,181-182; Meurman, O.-I. 1978, 63.

The alternative proposal did not have real consequences, as Aalto had won the competition for the library, and the project was at last well under way. In March 1934 the City Council needed to deal with the legal side of the project. Namely, in the City Planning Act, park land was categorised as street land, on which it was not possible to build without applying for official dispensation from the Government of Finland.[303] After Meurman had drawn up the alteration to the plan, a number of citizens submitted a complaint on the basis that the revised plan not only allowed for excessive destruction of the park but also that diminishing park land would be against the planning act altogether.[304] With support of Consul Wolff, some 600 citizens signed a plea addressed to the City Council to halt the construction, and replant the part of the park which had already been damaged. At this point the contract had been signed with the constructor, and the ground works were well on their way. From the public's perspective the issue seems to have been twofold. In addition to the will to preserve the park, it seems that another, perhaps even stronger reason for opposing Aalto´s library was its appearance.[305] Many senior citizens felt that as Juho and Maria Lallukka had donated the building funds, it would be necessary to follow old traditions and not erect 'a new style' building in the 'old Torkkeli Park'.[306] Some locals, most poignantly the above mentioned Consul Wolff expressed the view that the new building was unsuited as a neighbour to the Cathedral by Eduard Dippell, which Wolff considered to be exemplary of Viipuri´s 'more classical buildings'. Väinö Löyskä, one of the local architects however took Aalto´s side. Frustrated with the situation, Löyskä had exclaimed that the Cathedral was not by Dippell at all, but that the design was from a German hardware store´s catalogue, from where Dippell had it copied, ordered the parts from Germany and constructed it in the corner of Torkkeli Park.[307]

[303] 10.3.1934 Meurman submits the updated plan to be approved by the City Governors. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavakonttorin kirjediaarit (1934). MMA.

[304] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 25.

[305] Later, P. Morton Shand wrote in *The Architectural Review* (1935) that 'Owing to opposition 'on aesthetic grounds' from the local clergy and the intervening financial crisis, building did not start till 1934.', and that a neighbouring neo-Hanseatic church's pastor fought for years to preserve its impeccably academic ´periodicity´ from the sullying proximity of this uncompromising example of Kulturbolschewismus´. Also discussed by Salmela (1994,188-189).

[306] The issue was debated in local newspapers. In Finnish: ´uusasiallista´, from german neue sachlichkeit, in english new objectivity. Leppo, J. 1946, 43. Furthermore, it could be argued that it had been Maria Lallukka, who had specifically wanted a Carnegie-style library, a term of the period underlining the point that the new library would in every way be new and of latest design.

[307] Ibid. The Cathedral was a red-brick neo-gothic building from 1893, designed by Eduard Dippell, badly damaged in World War II and pulled down in the Soviet era.

According to Aalto´s friend and biographer Göran Schildt, it was finally Aalto who resolved the situation: ´The most influential person in Viipuri at the time was Consul Eugen Wolff, who had headed a delegation at the turn of the century which was to submit a great citizens´ address to the Tsar [of Russia] on the subject of infringements of Finland's civil rights. Wolff was nearly 80 years old in 1928, but his opposition to Aalto´s library carried great weight in the city administration and business circles. In the resulting deadlock Aalto resolved, or so he told me, to seek out the lion in his den. Dressed in his best suit, Aalto was admitted to the old man's presence, and in his impeccable Swedish explained the background to the controversial plan. Wolff listened to him without interrupting for a long time, until at last he burst out: ´My God, but you're a gentleman! That changes everything!´[308]

In his official response, Meurman stated that he had changed the city plan in accordance with the decisions of the City Council and the architect of the building, and that locating the library in a park was in accordance with the spirit of the new City Planning Act. Also here, however, Meurman adopted a conciliatory role and remarked that the park would benefit from the library, giving the citizens an additional reason to visit the park.[309] To avoid a great delay in beginning the construction work already debated for years, the City Council saw it possible to proceed relying on the City Planning Act, and applied for ´right of exception for building on park land´ from the Government of Finland.[310] The permission was granted without delay,[311] and the construction began almost exactly two weeks later. The city of Viipuri took responsibility for the foundation work, after which the builder took over, handing the completed building over to the city on 19 August 1935.[312]

Meurman's summary from 1935 illustrates well how the context of the city, the building and the library institution were all interconnected. He states that 'our library' is complete in the midst of its beautiful park, expressing his wish that the building will receive the undivided support of the citizens. 'Even though it is

[308] Schildt, G. 1986, 29. Meurman (1985, 271) later recollected that '[e]ven Consul Wolff had to admit to me at the opening ceremony: 'The building is relatively good, but I cannot agree with the placement!'

[309] 10.3.1935 Meurman's report to the city council, proposing to dismiss the complaint on the city plan. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavakonttorin kirjediaarit. (1934-1935). MMA.

[310] Viipuri City Council meeting of 19.4.1934. Viipurin kaup.valt. arkisto/Kaup.valt. pöytäkirjat. Sidottu. (1934-1934) MMA. With use of 'right of exception', there was no need to update the plan.

[311] The revised city plan also went through the ordinary procedures as was necessary to confirm the changed city plan legally. The National Government granted permission for right of exception for building on parkland without delay. (Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 25.)

[312] See appendix 3 for additional letters and invoices concerning the library project. AF, Jyväskylä archives.

a true child of modern times, and looks strange to older generations, one must agree that it gives the impression of a true park building, and makes it possible for our library service to fulfil its purpose of enhancing and civilising our society.'[313] After the library had been completed, Meurman and Ullberg returned to the question of the Monumental Square. This time the tone of the plans was more modest. Meurman suggested that a semi-circular square should be created on Karjalankatu Street, by shaping the street corners and changing the street profile, with the square paved with stone. And, in order to 'enhance the beauty and dignity of the centre of our town' rows of flagpoles and a monumental sculpture should be added.[314] These plans however remained unrealised.

The house of wonders

A poignant example of the local concern over the appearance of the library, is the *Karjala* newspaper's article published a short while before the opening of the library. The article is titled: ´Ancient wisdom on our library façades´,[315] indeed offering quite a striking description of the building still hidden behind the walls set up around the construction site:

´Greek, Latin, hieroglyphs, cuneiform writing etc. Diorite letters on the walls. The new library, which has received a lot of attention and been debated, is close to completion. At last, the ugly cardboard covering its iron-framed windows have been taken down, and one begins to get an idea of its façades. The work inside has also proceeded. As is known, the plan is to attach to the large windowless façades three-dimensional texts to enliven the surfaces. Except for utterances by Mikael Agricola and other great men of Finland, also other wise words have been selected from the wisdom of ancient peoples. Thus, on the walls we will see some Roman and Greek sentences, some Egyptian letters, even Assyrian cuneiform writing from the ancient laws of Hammurabi. – As there are vast surfaces available, there is also space for Japanese and Chinese proverbs. – This is most appropriate considering that by the time of its opening, our library will have

[313] Meurman, O-I. in Ervi 1935, 26.

[314] In Ullberg's drawings, there are two sketches for the street intersection, one with a round area and the other with a rectangular area, which can be interpreted to be motivated by the idea of marking the 'heart of the city'. (MFA drawing archives) Salmela (1994,193) describes how in his sketches Meurman outlined an obelisk-like monument, not in the middle of the square but alongside it on an oblong platform. Two identical small buildings, apparently kiosks, on each side took the symmetry of the semi-circular square further. Another sketch outlined an expansion of the street area into a rectangular square with a sculptural element in the middle of it. Notably, Meurman never gave up the need to create a focal point to the city and the monumental square, but the plans were taken up in 1941–1944, when Finns returned to Viipuri during World War II.

[315] *Karjala* 1.4. 1935.

received a valuable gift of books from the Far East, promised by Baron Matsui who just visited our country. A special order from an English company has been made for the three-dimensional letters and symbols to be made of shining black diorite stone. Attached on the white walls these will no doubt give a most decorative effect. Adding these will be done with a special technique during the summer, but already now work on positioning and artistic considerations are taking place. For that purpose, temporary installation on one part of the façades began yesterday evening and thus part of the writings will be in place this morning, when the architect will arrive in the city to inspect the impression and efficacy of the decorations.´[316]

The article however was published on April Fool's Day, and thus, not an account of true events but the practical joke of a news reporter. It can however be interpreted that the reporter drew inspiration from the very real concern many locals had expressed over the empty white façades of the new building next to Dippell's Cathedral. Furthermore, the effect of this joke was rooted in the fact that Aalto had decided that the incomplete structure should not be shown, and therefore the construction site of the library had been shielded from the eyes of the public. As one might expect, this had induced heightening curiosity among the local residents, who had due to this secrecy come to refer to the building under construction as a ´house of wonders´.[317]

Some six weeks before the opening of the library, *Karjala* published an almost full-page article accompanied by two interior photographs of the building, still without any furniture. This time the title read 'The house of wonders in the park nearing completion', with the sub-headings: 'Head contractor has completed works and handed the building over to the city – Finishing touches and furnishing continue – A preview of curiosities to come'.[318] The reporter describes how he happened to catch Alvar Aalto on the site, and tried to interview the architect. Aalto however refused to divulge anything, appealing to the fact that the furnishings are not in place, and on the outside the climbing plants and flower beds are yet to be completed – aspects significantly affecting the overall appearance of the building.[319]

[316] Ibid. The writer might have drawn inspiration from the Stockholm City Library, the facade of which is decorated with 'modern hieroglyphics' designed by Gunnar Asplund.

[317] Hirn, S. and Lankinen, J. 2000, 30. Sven Hirn is an expert on libraries, Lankinen of Viipuri's architecture and history of Viipuri.

[318] *Karjala* 20.8.1935.

[319] 16.9.1935 Karjala newspaper describes the opening of the space which used to be the library, renovated for the 'Viipurin Työväenopisto' (Viipuri Adult Education Institute) space. Interiors were designed by Uno Ullberg.

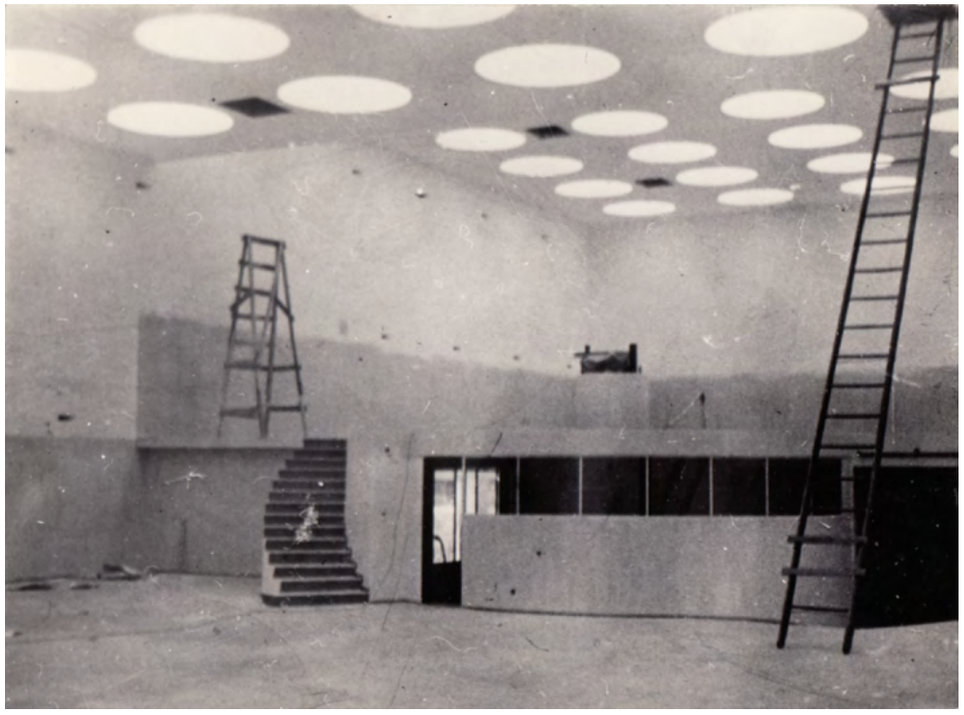


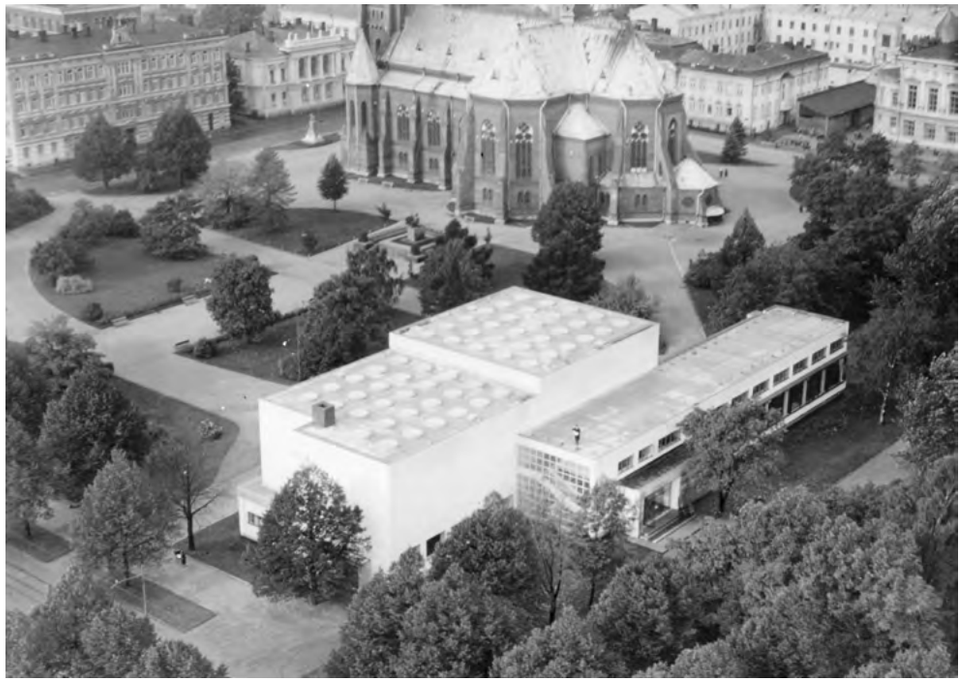
Fig. 41. *The main hall under construction. (AF)*

Contemporary reception of the library in Finland

The new library was opened on 13 October 1935 in Torkkeli Park, with its main façade towards the south-west end of Punaisenlähteentori Square, and Torkkelinkatu Street. The plot however is not next to the street, but the library is approximately 70 meters from it within the Park. The main doors form a junction for the criss-crossing paths of the park. The building's short façade is on Vaasankatu Street with an entrance to the newspaper room, and its back façade with a separate entrance of the children's library towards the part of the park referred to as the Church Park. The bluish steatite framing the main doors attracted attention, on them is printed in modest copper-coloured lettering 'Viipuri City Library', a ´calling card´, as the architect put it.[320]

As a noteworthy public building project in the young nation of Finland, the library's opening was reported not only by the local press but also the nation's

[320] Ibid. The name of the library as it was written on the façade was in Finnish, ´Viipurin kaupungin kirjasto´



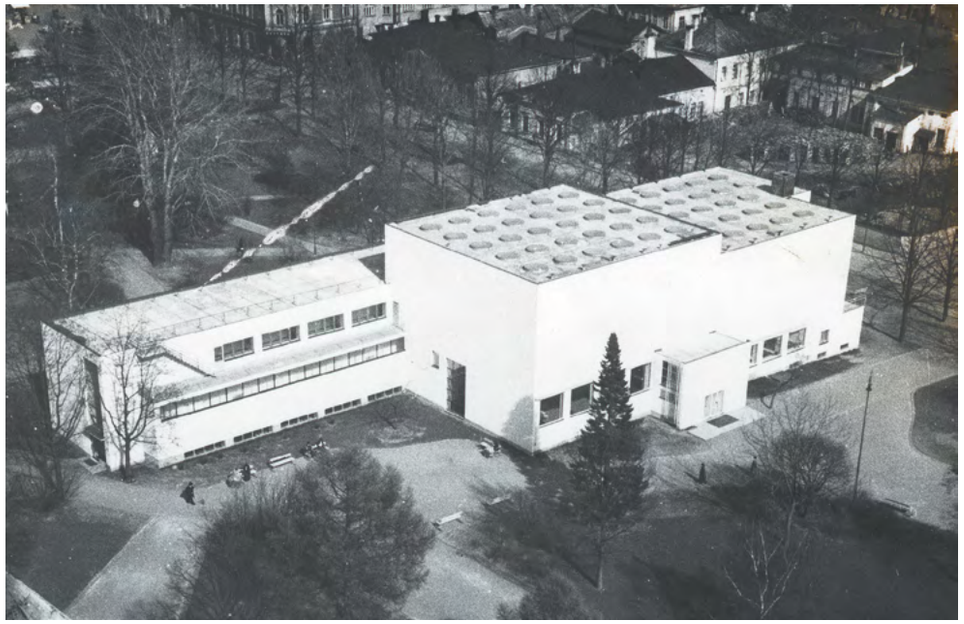


Fig. 42-43. *Aerial views of the library in Torkkeli Park, next to the Cathedral. (Sotamuseo/Ilmavoimat, Etelä-Karjalan museo)*

leading newspapers on the day of the opening, or shortly after.[321] Of the nationwide papers, the Finnish-language *Helsingin Sanomat* and *Uusi Suomi* and the Swedish-language *Hufvudstadsbladet* published news of the library.

In reading the newspapers of the period there is an evident division: *Helsingin Sanomat* published the reporter's impressions, relying closely on Aalto's introduction and the comments that he offered to the reporters.[322] The Swedish language *Hufvudstadsbladet* and Finnish language *Uusi Suomi* published the architect and architectural writer Gustaf Strengell's account of the library. Strengell's analysis for *Hufvudstadsbladet* positions the library in the contexts of 'the new architecture' and Alvar Aalto's works, and how this building reflects the modern style. Thus, Strengell writes from his position as an architecture professional, and in doing so, his text associates more closely with the professional reception than the other early domestic accounts.

The other expert description was by the art historian and writer Nils Gustav Hahl,[323] who was involved in establishing the Artek furniture company with Aino and Alvar Aalto and Maire Gullichsen in 1935.[324] Though published in Finnish public newspapers, the original reviews by Strengell and Hahl are recognisable in expressing the critics' voice rather than that of Aalto's and stand out as the views of experts. In addition The *Karjala* newspaper which appeared in the wider Finnish Karelian area, had followed the project more closely, and accordingly described the opening of the library in length. All in all, as the wait had been so long, the need for a library so pressing, the fact that Viipuri could afford to realise an entire building specifically designed for this purpose and that the design was by Aalto, already a known architect, it is hardly surprising that the reception is

[321] The *Karjala* newspaper focusing on eastern Finland dedicated almost two full pages to the topic, and also *Uusi Suomi*, and the Swedish language Hufvudstadsbladet published an article on the day of the opening. The most widely read Finnish-language newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* published the article 'Viipurin kirjastotalo vihittiin eilen' a day after the library's opening on 14.10.1935 focusing on the programme of the opening events, as did *Aamulehti* 14.10.1935. As some newspapers have noted the library's opening only at some point after its opening, it is difficult to ascertain that all the newspapers made note of the new library. However, it is evident that this new library building was a noteworthy event in Finland, not restricted to Viipuri or the Karelian area of which the city was perceived to be the capita.

[322] Consequently, the coherence of the early descriptions of the library, written by the reporters for the Finnish newspapers is striking. In the 1930s the name of the reporter was rarely included, and in regard to some of Aalto's interviews in the Finnish newspapers covering a longer period, it has even been suspected that the entire piece of text is by Aalto, edited to appear as if the article would have been based on an interview.

[323] N.G. Hahl in a newspaper article titled 'Viipurin kirjastotalo vihitään tänään. Sen on rakentanut arkkitehti Alvar Aalto. Käytetyt varat 4,6 milj. mk. ovat Lallukka-puolisoiden lahjoittamat'. Undated newspaper clipping. SAFA newspaper clip- book 1935. MFA library's archives.

[324] The Artek company was established by Aino and Alvar Aalto, Maire Gullichsen and Nils Gustav Hahl in 1935. http://www.artek.fi/company/history Accessed Feb.2017.

Sunnuntaina lokakuun 13. KARJALA N:o 276 – 1935 – 9

Perustavan lahjoituksen ja luovan työn yhteistulos

Viipurin uusi kirjastotalo vihitään juhlallisesti tänään

Maailmassa ainutlaatuinen yhdistelmä ennen näkemätöntä alallaan

Katolla ja seinillä uudet tehtävät – Uutta akustiikkaa – Ihanneilmanvaihto – Kaikki alusta loppuun omalaatuista – Viihtyisyyttä ja käytännöllisyyttä

Rakennus kokonaan toteutettu Maria Lallukka-vainajan testamenttivaroilla

Arvokas lahjoitus

Kautta monien vaiheiden

Kokonaan lahjoituksilla

Ratkaisuun

Taloon tutustumassa

Kaikki omalaatuista

Kaikille yhtä paljon valoa

Uutta akustiikkaa

Rakennustyön hallinto

Valo ja lämpö — katosta

Ihanneilmanvaihto

Ensi kerran maailmassa

Mitä »lentokoneet» ovat

Arkkitehti Aalto:

Fig. 44. *Karjala newspaper introduced the library in length to the local public on the official day of the opening in October 1935. (KK)*

essentially characterised by awe and an intrigued attitude. The *Karjala* offers the 'layman's view' describing the building and its interiors, the reporter following with the footsteps of other visitors who had the opportunity to visit the library during the first days after its opening. After the inauguration for invited guests, three days were reserved for showing the new building to the public. Illustrative of the general interest towards this new building, long queues formed outside the doors throughout the opening hours. Due to the number of interested visitors, all were requested to follow the same route through the building, the order of which the *Karjala* reporter's account approximately followed.[325]

Fig. 45. *The entrance hall, view toward the lecture hall. to the left are the dividing walls for depositing cloaks. (AF)*

The reporter of the *Karjala* does not hide his enthusiasm for the new library. The main points of the article are summed up in the five headings that he gave to his text. The head title announces: ´Product of a founding donation and creative work´, which is followed by further four headings; ´Viipuri's new library building inaugurated today', 'Compilation of unprecedented [solutions] in its field', 'Roof and walls have new functions - New acoustics - Ideal ventilation - Special from beginning to end – Comfortable and functional', and 'The building fully realised with Maria Lallukka's bequest.[326]

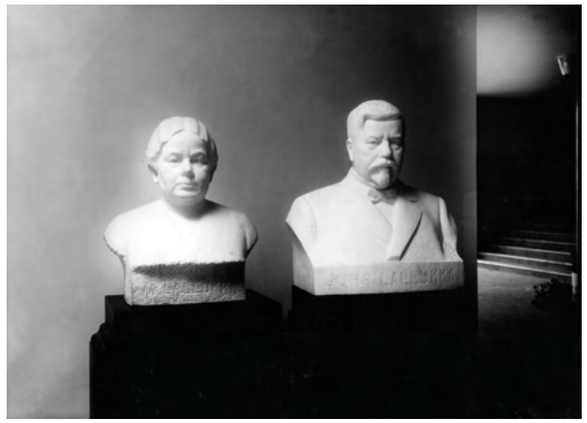


Fig. 46. *Busts of Maria and Juho Lallukka in the nook of the entrance hall. (AF)*

In describing the interiors, the reporter makes references to aeroplanes and boats, for example in commenting on the lending desk in the centre of the main hall which

[325] Närhi, M. 1935, 203.

[326] *Karjala* 13.10.1935. Evidence of the *Karjala* paper's article speaking to the local audience is, for example, that it stated the hours during the following days when the new building was to be kept open for the public to visit.

'..from the point of view of a layman resembles a modern boat's wheelhouse and bridge´.[327] Or in describing the integrated light fixtures on the smooth surface of the ceiling of the main hall: ´It is like an entire squadron of small aeroplanes had taken off from their carrier, which the [lending desk cum librarians surveillance point] bridge in the middle of the hall could audaciously interpreted to be'[328] All in all, the reporter's account makes the first experience of the library sound like an exhibit of new technical innovations, at the time most likely inducing more people to join the queue to see this place where even 'Roof and walls have new functions' as it was put in the sub-heading of the article. The main article further describes how the white building in middle of the park is now complete, and how its contemporary architecture and façades representing the very latest in architecture have intrigued local citizens for a long while. The reporter added that [the library] is most modern in both our country and the Nordic countries – in some respects most modern in the world. He thus concludes that, as such, this building will offer a new direction to the library institution in Viipuri, which so far has been in the role of an 'adoptive child' due to the difficulties of finding premises.[329]

While the newspapers of the period offer a glimpse of how the library might have been experienced upon its opening, it is the *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* specialist library periodical the contains evidence of the functioning of the library space at the time. Moreover, in describing the interior solutions, this periodical reveals specific features associated with this particular library, and what kinds of designs would have been in use in other library spaces or other buildings by Aalto.[330]

One aspect which has become difficult to grasp from the later architectural publications is the atmosphere of the library, as it might have been experienced in the 1930s. In *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti*, there is regret about the fact that in many Finnish library spaces the floors were treated with tar, and thus the atmosphere resembled that of a mortuary. Considering this, the white building with its light interiors needs to have made an impression. However, the white building would have still been furnished with dark books, to the contrary of many later descriptions where it has been envisioned how the white spaces would have been enlivened by colourful books. Upon its opening in 1935, Aalto´s Library inherited book collections from the previous libraries, many of which had been absorbed

[327] Ibid.

[328] Ibid.

[329] Ibid.

[330] The special solutions in the library that were designed in Aalto's office are discussed in more detail in the second thematic chapter, focusing on the role of the architect.

to the City Library's collections.[331] Still at the time in Finland, library books were bound in covers of black or dark brown sheepskin, which did not change before 1939 when the World War II began.[332]

As most libraries had scarce space, the library was also special in making available separate, designated spaces for different users. I propose there are four distinct spaces within the frame of this building. First, the main library, consisting of the reading and lending halls, second, the newspaper hall and third the children's section, between which there is no interior connection for the public, each being accessible from their separate entrance from the outside. The fourth space which can be distinguished is the lecture hall with its large window on the park, accessible from the ground floor entrance.

To recapitulate, among the earlier types of library spaces in Viipuri, there had been a newspaper reading club which however had been known to have focused on 'playing cards', and the other newspaper reading room, run by the Hackman brothers which had been established to serve the working population.[333] A photograph from 1935 of the library's newspaper reading room shows men standing next to newspaper stands, to which the papers of the day are attached. The function of these stands was described already in 1929 in *Karjala,*[334] where it is described that there will be no ordinary tables or chairs, but special stands. The motivation is to deter people from gathering in the newspaper room to hours on end there, under the excuse of reading newspapers. Interestingly, these stands were in use for example in 1916 in the Kallio district library in Helsinki, and in the Helsinki Main Library (in Rikhardinkatu Street). *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjasto* described how in the Kallio library the newspaper room had a separate staircase from the entrance, also revealing the reason for this special type of furnishing: 'There are no seats whatsoever, or proper tables for that matter. Newspapers are attached with a lock to a steep desk. It is quite uncomfortable, but the intention is not to attract idle men sitting by the newspapers all day. The experience is from the Helsinki Main Library's newspaper room from the time when it still had ordinary long tables and long benches, which resulted in groups of drifters gathering there for days, dozing at the tables, lying on the benches, even playing cards and drinking. For all these reasons, the current stands are uncomfortable,

[331] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1936, 99-100. In the same article in *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti*, it was pointed out that black as the dominating colour intervenes with the atmosphere which otherwise would prevail in the libraries of Finland and how in the Deichman Library in Oslo there indeed were four bright colours in use for book covers; green, yellow, blue and red.

[332] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1939, 32.

[333] Närhi, M. 1935, 208.

[334] Karjala 12.5.1929.

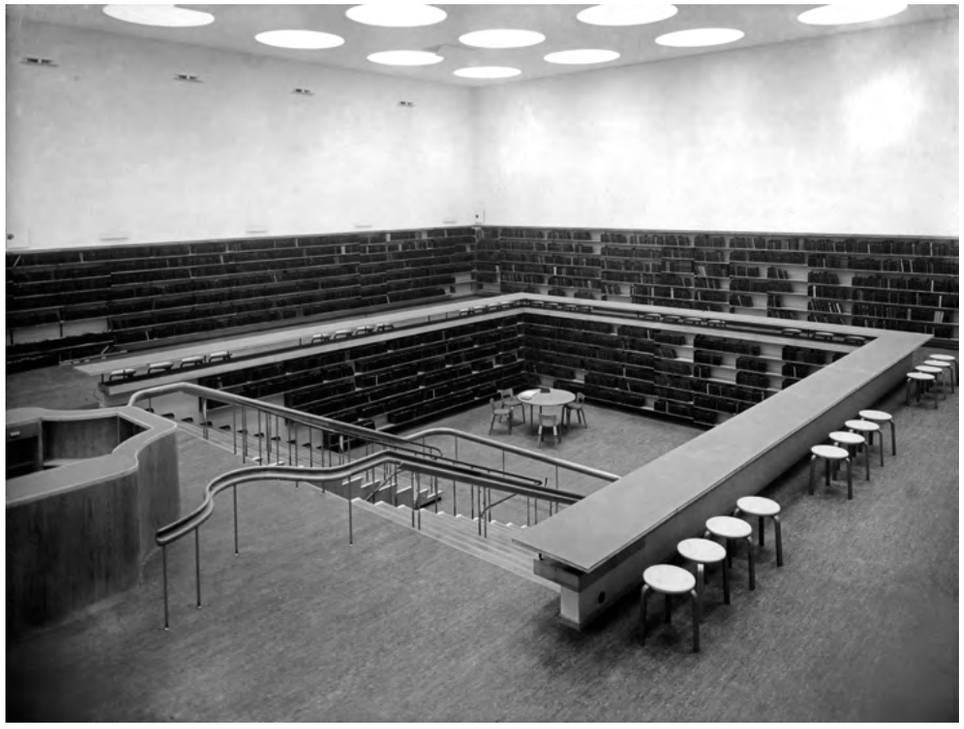


Fig. 47. *The main hall furnished. View from the highest point, toward the 'book-pit'. (AF)*

Fig. 48. *The newspaper reading room with newspapers attached to stands. (AF)*

Fig. 49. *The childrens´ library seen from the librarians desk. To the right is the curtain designed by Aino Aalto and washbasins, located next to the entrance. (AF)*

Fig. 50. *The lecture hall with its undulating ceiling, foldable partition walls and Artek furniture. (AF)*

but for reading they do function. As the purpose of the newspaper room is for the visitors to spend only a while reading a newspaper, it has no vestibule prone to petty thieves, and the public is allowed in wearing their hats and coats, overshoes, i.e. those who have them.'[335] In similar fashion, it can be deduced that in Viipuri working men visited the newspaper room early in the morning, with no need to take off their coats, but also not necessarily needing to have contact with those using the other spaces in the same building.[336] This stands out as an example telling that local librarians in Viipuri had been consulted in respect to at least some interior solutions.

On the south-west side of the building was the children's library,[337] with its own lending and reading rooms, thus being a kind of miniature version of the main reading/lending room. Here, the separation of the spaces was marked with the reading section being located a few steps lower than the rest of the space. The librarian's desk was positioned in the middle, offering an unobstructed view left and right, and to the entrance doors, with the washrooms and nooks for hats and coats flanking the door. For decades before the completion of the library, library experts had expressed the need to teach children, in particular, to wash their hands upon entering a library space. This was a long enduring topic in *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* periodical, but one early point when this has been discussed was in 1917. In describing the necessary facilities of a library space, it is pointed out: 'Besides, like schools, also libraries have their requirements in regard to cleanliness and manners. Already at the entrance there are washbasins for cleaning hands and the face before being allowed to enter',[338] and it is continued that washbasins are ´an absolute necessity in a children's section´. In the Viipuri Library, there was a curtain by the entrance,[339] 'like a candy wrap in silver and yellow',[340] designed by Aino Marsio-Aalto. The curtain marks a boundary between the children's reading and lending sections but, most of all, it functions as a backdrop for washbasins attached to a low wall. This library specialists' concern was expressed in discussions about 'dirty hands', associated on one hand with worry over the precious and expensive books being damaged, while on the other hand, with the concern that library books might transmit bacteria and spread illnesses.

[335] It is unclear how widespread this solution became, as the article of Kallio Library is the only one describing similar stands for the newspapers. (*Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1916,13) Use of a separate entrance for a newspaper reading room appears to have remained in use much longer. For example, Aarne Ervi's Töölö Library in Helsinki had a similar solution in the early drawings: the newspaper reading room was totally cut off from the rest of the library. This library project was initiated in the 1950s, opened at last in 1970. In the realised Töölö Library it was possible to open metal framed glass doors to connect the newspaper reading room to the main entrance hall. Originally this space still had its specific function, as the newspaper room opened earlier than the rest of the library, for the readers to have access to fresh newspapers. (*Kirjastolehti* 1971, 89.) Notably, Ervi had been working at Aalto's office during the Viipuri Library project.

[336] This recalls Peter Stallybrass'(1998) text about Karl Marx, who had needed to pawn his overcoat, and without a coat, was not allowed in to the British Museum to undertake his research for *Capital*. This underlines the role of also libraries being certainly aimed at educating the public, but the kind of public that can afford an overcoat.

[337] Like in Viipuri, earlier in Turku, the children's section was organised according to the open shelf-system, following the 'American methods'. (*Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1916, 97.)

[338] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1917, 23-25.

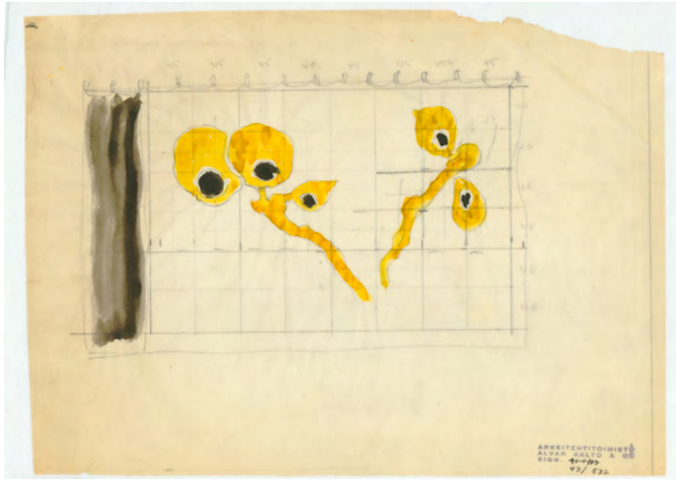


Fig. 51. *Aino Aalto´s drawing of the curtain for the children's library. (AF)*

The previous concern is also associated with a completely different piece of furniture in the main hall, next to the librarians' supervision point.[341] This is a woven wicker basket on three metal legs, with a small metal counter above the basket, an example of an period design which has long since lost its original purpose. In 1935 the librarian Emeric Olssoni wrote an article where he made suggestions for 'improvements for common grievances' that libraries had. The points he made were that books needed to be properly bound so that they deserved to be treated with respect. Broken, dirty books with drawings should not be lent out before they had been cleaned and repaired. Returned books needed to be inspected. And most of all, he enquired, how was it, that in a bookstore even

[339] Närhi, M. 1935, 208.

[340] The curtain hung behind the wash basins, thus serving multiple purposes. It was an artwork by Aino Aalto, a visual barrier, while it also functioned as a practical backdrop as a kind of shower curtain. The fabric had plastic coating and protected the reading room from children splashing water while washing their hands in the basins. (*Karjala* 13.10.1935) The curtain has not been restored.

[341] The basket has been reproduced as part of the restoration of the library in 2010–2013. Today, the basket can be found in its original position by the librarian's desk at the highest point of the main hall.

a small notebook was carefully wrapped in paper, whereas from a library, anyone could borrow even an irreplaceable book without any protection against rain, dust and wind? Therefore, he concluded, there always needed to be wrapping paper available for lenders to use when taking a book out of a library.[342] In later accounts of the library, this basket designed in Aalto's office has been referred to as a paper bin. However, in 1935 there was clean, folded wrapping paper on the small metal counter for lenders to wrap the book they were taking home. Upon returning the book, the used wrapping was dropped in the basket. In the design process of the library, this basket made its first appearance in the very last stage, when it was also marked in the floor plan of 1935 with a circle next to the lending desk. Later, in the 1950s, this kind of basket was created for an another Aalto building, the Säynätsalo Library.[343] Indeed, further reflection reveals that not only the newspaper stands, but also other interior solutions such as the wash basins, and the wicker basket indicate that Alvar, and most probably Aino Aalto heard the librarians' views concerning the requirements of an up-to-date library space.

Finally, *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* also offered a glimpse of a historical context of larger scale. This specialist library periodical was ideologically rooted in promoting free primary school education and public libraries for the entire population of Finland. There was, however, also another reason articulated in this library periodical, telling of what the public libraries would ideally 'do'. In 1923 the periodical published an article titled 'Libraries as unifiers of the divided population' promoting the need for cities or municipalities to organise space for clubs and events in the premises of a local library, where all inhabitants would feel at home. A place where master and servant, worker and employer, educated and uneducated would all come in contact. The author concluded by asking whether this would provide a bridge to unite the different social classes, as a source of knowledge and pleasure, the common interest of all?[344] In the Viipuri Library, it was the lecture hall, previously referred to as the fourth space within the building. The lecture hall was interchangeably referred to as a club room, because this same space could be used as one large hall, or alternatively use dividing walls to create smaller spaces for meetings or use by local clubs. Earlier, one of the reasons why the Hackman newspaper reading room had been popular among the local residents was that different types of lectures were organised on the prem-

[342] Olsoni, E. 1935, 222.

[343] The periodical does not offer evidence of whether this kind of basket would have been in use more widely.
Evidence of this basket being used in Säynätsalo is based on the librarian's account, where it was described that in the children's section there are washbasins separated with a curtain, and that basket for wrapping papers was available for the loaners to use. (*Kirjastolehti* 1953, 44.)

[344] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1923, 119.

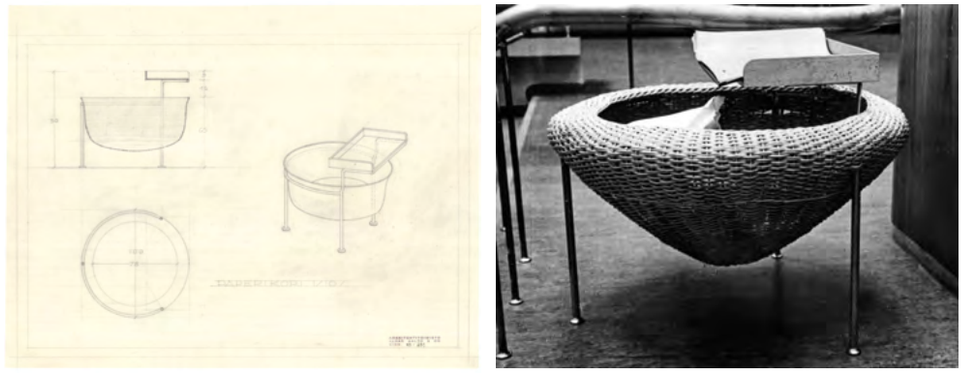


Fig. 52-53. *Preliminary and realised version of the basket for book wrapping papers, located next to the librarians' supervision point. (AF)*

ises, ranging from popular to more academic topics. In 1935, Aalto promoted the lecture hall as a space which was designed to serve equally well for general discussions and individual presentations, as a space of acoustic equality. In sum, it can be interpreted that the lecture hall continued the tradition of different kinds of talks, having been popular in the Hackman's newspaper reading room. Indeed, different types of events were organised in the library's lecture hall, and thus, it can be also interpreted to have contributed towards the library specialists' wish of providing a space where different societal classes, as well as the different language groups of Viipuri would have all been able to participate in events organised in this space.

One striking aspect which requires reflection is the outstanding lack of reference to other library buildings or architects with experience of designing libraries. As has been mentioned, the only exception to this was Gunnar Asplund, whose Stockholm City Library was built between 1924–1927,[345] the one which Aalto volunteered to divulge as a point of inspiration. Nevertheless, it seems somewhat surprising that in architectural publications neither Aalto's earlier versions nor the completed building have been compared with other, even Nordic, libraries. The most evident point of comparison would be in Norway, the Oslo City Library also known as the Deichman Library, by architect Nils Reiersen. The realisation of this building also took a long while, from construction beginning in 1922 until the library was finally opened in 1933. This library is more classicist in nature, but it has interesting interior solutions, and most strikingly, the main reading room boasts an impressive glass ceiling. From Aalto's travels, it is known that he vis-

[345] The Finnish library specialist periodical informs that e.g. Asplund had made a research trip to the United States with the director of the Stockholm City Library. (*Kansanvalistus ja Kirjasto* 1927, 28-29.) In a newspaper article from 1928, after winning the library competition Aalto does point out that he has made two visits to 'Scandinavia'.

ited Oslo at least in 1930, and considering his close networks with his Nordic colleagues, it seems unlikely that he would have failed to hear about a notable building project such as the Deichman Library.[346]

In the Finnish context, Aalto's Viipuri Library was among the very first to be designed and built specifically for this purpose. A close precedent from the 1920s is the Tampere City Library.[347] Furthermore, this library completed in 1925 had been designed by Jussi and Toivo Paatela, architect brothers of whom Jussi was a jury member in the Viipuri Library competition.[348] Still, Finnish, not to mention international, authors have not picked up the connection, or that at the time it would have been impossible that Aalto - or other persons involved had not had knowledge of the Tampere Library. In fact, if the library jury, or later in the process Aalto, would have wanted to consult an architect concerning requirements for a library building, Jussi Paatela stands out as the person to whom any such enquiries would have been directed.

A term which associates the library with the international context of library buildings is Maria Lallukka's wish to create a Carnegie-type library for Viipuri. However, there remains no evidence of this term being brought up by Lallukka, and then referenced in 1935 in connection with the library's opening, having been analysed further or referenced as part of the design process. In her doctoral dissertation, Ritva Sievänen-Allen presents in detail the use of so-called open floorplan in Finnish library architecture before 1940, the Viipuri Library as one of the representative cases presented in great detail. According to her, there was no established meaning of the term in Finland before World War II, and the Carnegie

[346] There is no lack in references, but most appear only in the late 1930s, thus making them too late to have served as possible inspiration for design solutions of the Viipuri Library. E.g. in Sweden, Stifts- och Landsbiblioteket, Västerås, Västmanland, Sweden, by architect Sven Ahlbom, with plans made before 1939, construction begun 1953 and the building finally opened in 1956. The entry through stairs leading up to the main lending hall by the librarians' surveillance point is very reminiscent of Viipuri. Here, however the entire main lending hall could be thought of as a ´book pit´ in itself, as stairs lead yet further up to half floor level, opening to the main lending hall - as a kind of architectural play between the idea of a balcony and a book-pit. The lending hall is lit with use of daylight, consisting of a thermolux glass ceiling, with 100 fluorescent lamps in pairs above. (Thompson, A. 1963, 181.)

[347] Sievänen-Allen, R. 1989, 125. The Finnish library-specialist periodical published an article about the Tampere City Library, (competition 1922- completed 1925) describing how both the first and second prize went to architects Jussi and Toivo Paatela. Still it was regarded that none of the winning proposals fulfilled the requirements, and thus the drawings were produced in cooperation with the library director and the architects. (*Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1925, 184.) Of the Tampere Library, however, about half came to be used by the library, the rest being used by different departments of the City of Tampere. Due to all the compromises that were made, it is difficult to see the architect's original intentions in the realised building.

[348] Sievänen-Allen, R. 1989,103.

library was referred to vaguely, often implying the use of an open-shelf system.[349] The background research for this work supports Sievänen-Allen's interpretation. The specialist library periodical *Kirjastolehti*, mentions Carnegie libraries only a couple of times in the history of this periodical. In Viipuri, it appears that the 'Carnegie-type library' was a descriptive term, to point out that the design was in every possible way 'new' and 'modern'.[350]

Furthermore, as has been noted in the case of Aalto's library, a statement was requested from the National Library Office in 1931 and after that only when the construction work had been started. While one of the complaints raised in both of the Office's statements was that there was no direct consultation, not to mention cooperation between the architect and the nation's library experts, the local librarian Valter Juvelius was well-travelled, and is known to studied the libraries of Gothenburg and Malmö, the municipal libraries of Copenhagen and Brussels, as well as the old Deichman Library in Oslo already in the 1910s[351]. In 1927, the year of the library competition, a ´significant library man´, Erwin Ackernecht, director of the Stettin City Library visited Finland, where he got to know the Tampere Library, but also paid visits to Turku, Kuopio, and Viipuri, also meeting the then head of the Viipuri City Library, Johan Vasenius. Although the librarian Vasenius was in the competition jury, and had knowledge which could have carried some importance, there remains no direct evidence concerning this.[352] The

[349] Sievänen-Allen, R. (1989, 37-38) The Carnegie system, associated with receiving funding, required cooperation between the librarian and the architect. This system however raised from early on criticism of cities aiming to build monumental and decorative public buildings, neglecting the very purpose for which the libraries were built. A solution came to be to emphasise the librarian's contribution to the designs and warning against the ´white elephants´ that city officials were so willing to commission. Consequently from 1908, Andrew Carnegie decided that the donation for a library was made only after approval of the drawings. (Sievänen-Allen, R. 1989, 48.)

[350] In 1919 *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* published an article where it is noted that a special architectural library building type has evolved: Carnegie Library (*Kansanvalistus ja Kirjasto* 1919, 85). Johan Vasenius writes in *Karjala* 10.8.1924 'What has Andrew Carnegie done for libraries' and (23.11.1924) 'one more time about the city library' where he describes Carnegie as a benefactor, and Carnegie as an American library type. Vasenius speaks of funding, and making information available, but not about architecture or space. Hence, it appears that Carnegie was a popular idea, but even librarians in Finland were not acquainted with the ideology and system that it was originally based on. Maria Lallukka's bequest represents an early example where the Carnegie concept was explicitly taken as the premise in creating a new library building, Intriguingly, in his original description in 1935, the librarian Närhi sees that it is the 'library extension'; the lecture cum club meeting hall that makes Viipuri a Carnegie style library. (Närhi 1935, 204.)

[351] *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* 1923, 2.

[352] Sievänen-Allen (1989,127) describes that Vasenius as an extremely modest person. This is likely to be the explanation why Vasenius's voice does not stand out in the documents produced in the local meetings. Vasenius however did describe the Viipuri Library project in his articles for *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* periodical, and *Karjala* newspaper.

interpretation to be drawn is that though local librarians in Viipuri would have had knowledge of contemporary international library buildings, their contributions seem to have materialised only in selected interior solutions. It can be deduced that the local librarians sought to be as discreet as possible, to avoid causing any further delays with getting the long-awaited building realised. At the same time, in the city officials' discussions, the library was for best part understood in terms of the footprint that the building would take up, while public criticism of it quite literally stopped at suspecting the 'style-free' façades. As the accounts of the design process reveal, Aalto was for the most part in Turku and in the last stages in Helsinki, and was thus rarely present in Viipuri. With all this in mind, getting the library realised stands out as a real accomplishment.

In sum, upon the realisation of the library, number of separate projects appear to be resolved. There is no longer need for individual persons to establish their own libraries, or different language groups to have their own ones. Some of the potential sites in need of a public/institutional building were built, most notably Uno Ullberg's Art School and Museum, positioned on a 'monumental place' on Pantsarlahti Bastion as a 'crown' for the city. The library united the separate parts of the park, marking the 'heart of the city' both spatially as well as socially. Therefore, what the library 'did' was to bring together persons from local inhabitants to city officials, but also projects ranging from the need to develop the cityscape to providing public libraries in order to create educated citizens. In its part, the library provided a solution to multiple projects, larger than the building alone.

Theme II
The Architect

Photo: AF

THEME II

The Architect

In which Alvar Aalto designs the library and the building becomes recognised as an important early work of Aalto and internationally a key example of the 'new architecture'. In the context of architecture, Aalto's voice and person dominate throughout: he holds the main agency.

In the earliest stage, the library's design is introduced in context of Aalto presenting his ideas about the meaning of architecture in society, and other building projects he was working on at the time. This is followed by Aalto submitting his entry for the Viipuri Library in 1927, and the design stages during which the library transformed from a classicist entry to an example of 'new architecture'. Then, the creation of the library is analysed in the context of Aalto's office, to provide some view of other persons involved with the design, and their articulations. Since the completion of the library, architectural authors have tended to analyse it through the architectural themes of light, acoustics and continuous space. Consequently, the library is described through comparing it with other buildings by Aalto, and buildings around the world. These comparisons are made on the basis of formal resemblance. Finally, this section introduces the earliest international reception of the library.

The second thematic chapter concludes with discussion on the 'archetypical library', suggesting that Aalto as a person, how he presented himself and his designs, and his realised buildings have become inseparable. However, the role of this building as a library space remains in many ways ephemeral. Aalto himself avoided giving direct answers, rather speaking of the purpose architects and architecture are to serve in modern world. Whereas in the previous chapter, the library was imagined as part of the Viipuri cityscape, here this building is presented as part of the 'landscape of architecture': a landscape made of buildings and their designers.

The Viipuri Library as a work by Alvar Aalto – 'Aim to be dangerous'

In 1927, 29-year-old Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) won the competition for the Viipuri City Library. Upon the completion of the building in 1935, he was 37 years old. Thus, the library's design process covers a long time-span in Aalto's career, the 'formative years' during which Aalto did an abundance of other projects, travelled, wrote, and gave talks both aimed at his colleagues as well as the general public. During this period, he became a well-known architect both in Finland and internationally.

Aalto had moved from Jyväskylä to Turku, and opened his architectural office there in June 1927, after winning first prize and receiving the commission for Southwestern Finland Agricultural Cooperative building.[353] At the time he was also working on the main drawings for Jyväskylä Civil Guards building.[354] Soon after he begun working on the Tapani standard apartment building and Muurame Church.[355] From the beginning of 1928 Aalto begun working on a fourth large commission, the Turun Sanomat newspaper building.[356] A short while later, Aalto received yet another commission, for Paimio Sanatorium,[357] on which he begun to work in 1929. Consequently, Aalto was experimenting with similar themes and details in several buildings at the same time, and indeed all these buildings could be seen as part of his moving away from classical architecture, towards functionalism.[358] Were these not enough, simultaneously to the building projects and competition entries Aalto travelled widely, made important contacts with both

[353] Competition deadline February 1927, completed 1928. AF database. http://file.alvaraalto.fi/search.php?id=208 Accessed May 2015.

[354] Competition in spring 1926, new competition 1927, built 1928–1929. AF database. http://file.alvaraalto.fi/search.php?id=172 Accessed May 2015.

[355] Work on the Tapani standard apartment building began in November 1927, completed 1929. *Finnish Architectural Review* 6/1927. Drawings for Muurame Church were commissioned in May 1926, and the building was taken to use in May 1929. For a detailed account of Muurame Church, see Ollikainen, P. 2010.

[356] Aalto started the work in January 1928 and signed a complete set of drawings on 15 June 1928. Reworking and detail drawing continued up to July 1929. Completed in the spring of 1930. Schildt, G. 1994, 135-136. See also AF database. http://file.alvaraalto.fi/search.php?id=300 Accessed May 2015.

[357] Competition announced in November 1928, deadline 31 January 1929. The building was erected 1929–1932. (Schildt, G. 1994, 68-69; also AF database. http://file.alvaraalto.fi/search.php?id=119 Accessed May 2015.) As an original source the booklet published for the opening of the sanatorium in 1932: *Varsinais-Suomen Tuberkuloosiparantola* is most informative, accompanied by Aalto's 'Building technical account'.

[358] Heinonen, R-L. 1986, 99.

domestic and international colleagues, joined CIAM[359], served as a jury member in architectural competitions, participated in organising different types of events, gave speeches and wrote a wide range of texts from short essays to newspaper articles and professional publications. Thus, while buildings have been understood to indicate Aalto's move away from classicism, it is not solely the designs but in fact much of what he was saying and doing, which is illustrative of Aalto's turn towards 'new architecture'.

It is most of all newspaper interviews with Aalto and articles he wrote, which most poignantly illustrate his changed thinking soon after he had won the competition for the Viipuri library. In August 1928, when Aalto was working on the first set of drawings for the library, the *Sisä-Suomi* newspaper published an interview titled 'How is architect Aalto doing?', exemplary of the way he presented himself to the press.[360] The best part of the interview is taken up by Aalto´s enthusiastic description of the benefits of flying in the context of a trip he had made to Denmark, Holland, France and Sweden.[361] In describing not so much the trip but the mode of travelling, Aalto exclaims: 'It is quite amusing, actually, that in the morning one can drink a cup of coffee in Paris, have breakfast in Amsterdam and lunch in Hamburg only to be in time to have dinner in Malmö.' Aalto also told the reporter that he is currently working on the Jyväskylä Civil Guards building and Muurame Church, which is under construction. The other significant projects he names are Viipuri Library, Southwestern Finland Agricultural Cooperative building and the Suomen Biografi cinema in Turku, nearing completion. And, Aalto continues, a large building for the Turun Sanomat newspaper as well as an apartment building of concrete in Turku.[362] When asked what is special about his latest works, Aalto summed up: 'In my latest buildings I use solely concrete as the construction material. My roofs are flat garden rooftops.'[363] While this brings to mind

[359] CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d´Architecture Moderne) congress in which Aalto participated, was held at Frankfurt am Main 24.–26.10.1929. *Uusi Aura* 3.11.1929 published an article in which Aalto, the only representative from Finland, describes the event. Also in *Aamulehti* 4.11.1929 and *Uusi Suomi* 3.11.1929. *Turun Sanomat* 3.11.1929, about the same meeting also lists names of some of the notable international participants. News in Swedish in *Åbo Underrättelser* 3.11.1929. A slightly shorter version in *Hufvudstadsbladet* 3.11.1929.

[360] *Sisä-Suomi* 18.8.1928.

[361] Also the Norwegian architect Wildhagen recollected of working in Aalto´s office, how Alvar was often abroad – in Stockholm, Berlin and Zurich: 'The only Finnish I ever learned was to say 'He [Aalto] is abroad' [´Hän on matkoilla´] when I had to answer the telephone´. Schildt, G. 1986, 44. Aalto seems to have been quite taken about aeroplanes in many ways, as he has drawn these e.g. for *Kerberos* magazine in 1922. See list of Aalto´s writings, Appendix 3.

[362] *Sisä-Suomi* 18.8.1928. The only ´adventure´ was an emergency landing due to a storm, but Aalto happily told that this provided a chance to revive and have a drink in Bremen. Apartment building referred to is the Tapani standard apartment building in Turku.

[363] *Sisä-Suomi* 18.8.1928.

Le Corbusier's influence on Aalto, it is notable that interviews such as this one were published in ordinary Finnish newspapers, and thus aimed for the Finnish public in general.[364] Thus, one can deduce, if there still was someone who had not heard about Aalto at the time, newspaper articles such as this leave no doubt that Aalto was a modern, well-travelled man and an important architect undertaking a breath-taking number of large building projects simultaneously. This also makes a poignant case of how Aalto was in no way timid about promoting his ideas, his works, and the 'image' of himself as an architect.

A theme which has been analysed in retrospect is when the 'new architecture' gained a foothold in Finland, and became more widely accepted. In respect to Aalto's turn away from classicism, contacts with his international colleagues were crucial. As a single event, the Swedish architect Sven Markelius's speech to Finnish architects at SAFA's meeting in April 1928 in Turku has been later offered as an occasion which ascertained that the entire architectural profession in Finland was acquainted with 'new architecture'.[365] Aalto also organised Markelius's visit to Finland, which he describes in an interview for the *Uusi Aura* newspaper,[366] and wrote his version of the occasion, summarising the main points of Markelius's speech for the *Finnish Architectural Review*.[367] Markelius's speech titled 'Strive toward rationalisation in modern architecture' spurred an enthusiastic debate concerning the role of architecture in society.[368]

Hilding Ekelund, who had a positive view of Aalto and his 'new architecture' later recalled:

[364] Another project which made Aalto known in Finland was the idea to build a stadium in Helsinki as a monument to national independence. This was a symbolically important project, through which Aalto was able to introduce his views to wider audiences, originally published in *Uusi Suomi* 25.11.1927, *Iltalehti* 5.12.1927 and *Turun Sanomat* 6.12.1927.

[365] This is an overarching theme in Raija-Liisa Heinonen's (1986) work. In the Finnish Architectural Society interviews, this question has also been enquired throughout the series of interviews from architects who were students or in professional practice at the time.

[366] *Uusi Aura* 20.4.1928. Aalto told that he has just returned from Stockholm, where he had visited cinemas and restaurant kitchens, which are of extremely high quality. Aalto also commends the fact that coming from Turku, Stockholm is an ideal place to make international calls, as it is for example possible to make a call to Copenhagen in ten minutes during office hours. Notably, Aalto had become acquainted with Markelius already in 1926, and appears to have been behind the idea of inviting Markelius to speak to Finnish architects.

[367] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1928, 71.

[368] Rudberg. E. 2005, 21. Markelius is also the one to have suggested to the CIAM president Karl Moser appropriate members from other Nordic countries. These were Aalto from Finland and Poul Henningsen from Denmark. Consequently, Aalto participated in the second congress in Frankfurt, themed 'Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum' in 1929.

Ekelund: '...Aalto changed [his style] in just those years, ´29 perhaps. How was it, the competition for the Southwestern Finland Agricultural Cooperative building in Turku, that was..'

Interviewer: 'It was in summer of ´27, if I remember.'

Ekelund: 'In the spring there was that feeling.'

Interviewer: 'Yes, but it was still rather classical.'

Ekelund: 'Yes it was, but you could see he [Aalto] had been abroad. It was that visit by Markelius here in Finland. They say it was some kind of turning point. It was the SAFA yearly meeting in ´28, or when was it. He gave a speech on new architecture, and they claim that would have been in some way an awakening.'[369]

As Hilding Ekelund suspected, this event has been named among, or even as 'the' start of functionalism in Finland. According to the *Turun Sanomat* newspaper: 'Finnish architecture is undertaking great change. It is in a way looking for its own form.'[370]

While in Viipuri many locals were suspicious of the appearance of Aalto's library, as 'free of all tradition', also architects were actively discussing, even debating the topic. Among the persons actively promoting the 'new style', was Aalto, with a number of his newspaper articles.[371] In December 1927, Aalto had written an article for the newspaper *Uusi Aura* under the title 'The Latest Trends in Architecture'.[372] In this article Aalto takes a strong stand on what architecture should be about, reminiscent of ideas that also Markelius had articulated: 'It is known that from time to time new styles arise and achieve a dominant role. These style changes, which nowadays take place more and more frequently, have always encompassed all the fine arts and some spheres of literary work. This kind of style change or new direction is not happening now. 'New architecture' is more of a pursuit to move aesthetic experiences away from these quixotic, and trifling style expressions to a realistic ground.'[373] Here Aalto further offers his critique of both

[369] Finnish Architectural Society interviews by Asko Salokorpi with architect Hilding Ekelund. Translitteration. MFA Library archives.

[370] *Turun Sanomat* 23.4.1928.

[371] E.g. *Turun Sanomat* 22.4.1928.

[372] *Uusi Aura* 1.1.1928. Later published in English under the title 'The Latest Trends in Architecture'. Schildt, G. 1997, 58-63.

[373] Ibid.

'modernists' as well as 'traditionalists', introducing the concept of 'new realism', and his view of how it is not possible to create new form where there is no new content:

> *'Some artists – let's call them modernists – strive to make sculptures and celebratory buildings (churches), for which form is loaned from modern technology resembling almost literally the parts of a machine. These modernists, oddly enough, do not see that their 'modern art' exists much more proficiently where they either knowingly or un-knowingly draw their inspiration from. This type of 'modernism' is a good example of the kind of a caricature into which free art is transformed when it seeks to faithfully reflect its own time.*
>
> *In the other class we could place the representatives of fine arts who do not accept the above mentioned modernism, but solely emphasise the traditional concepts of a culture, creating art which takes its form from the past. Most of Finnish architecture and fine arts are like this. These we could call traditionalists. For them, mirroring their own period is only secondary or a matter of third degree, and their works could be reviewed with the sensitivities of past times as the norm.*
>
> *Both modernism and traditionalism thus in their way work outside the questions of the time, and for both, it is similarly hopeless to attempt to mirror their [own] time, just like their real importance in society and its culture of form minimal. Modernists make paintings, which are a travesty of real art, constructions or machines. Traditionalists strive to fit tradition where it does not belong and forget the most important aspect of a cultural tradition, that is, tradition always contains an inheritance for future generations to resolve thousands of problems with incomplete solutions.*
>
> *As the guideline in the 'new realism', …is not, like the earlier realism, directed to description of life literally, but instead in the art phenomena themselves and their classification, evaluating their effectivity and the very content (which is the premise of form) in a correct manner and as the sole starting point for creating form. Hence we cannot create new form where there is no new content.'*[374]

Aalto had provided five images to illustrate his conceptions. One is of Asplund´s Stockholm city library under construction, of which Aalto remarks approvingly: 'where the appropriate architectural use of modern-day construction has

[374] Ibid. Aalto's original Finnish language description contains multiple non-standard words, both period terminology, but also words invented by Aalto, making it difficult to offer any direct translation. Aalto's formulation 'traditionalists and modernists' is reminiscent of Poul Henningsen's formulations in the article 'Tradition og Modernisme' in *Kristisk Revy* 3/1927.

achieved a typological aesthetic.'[375] This was followed by an image of an aeroplane, according to the image caption designed by the architect Le Corbusier, where ´art´ was fully based on realism. Aalto considers this to be an example of shape as a practical solution, which would not have been possible to achieve only through technical considerations. Third, was an image of Erik Bryggman´s Atrium housing complex in Turku, which Aalto considered to be 'straightforward, a plan based on real-life requirements. The details on the building [are] traditional-decorative - reproductive art - and the positioning represents new monumentality, to become the standard: both in harmony´[376] These are accompanied by images of a Greek temple and a turbine. Both the turbine and the temple were *sachlich* to Aalto, and he explained: 'An image made in fresco, oil paint, bronze or marble does not have a social function today, or monumental effectivity. Their creation is not an aesthetic problem of our time. These are already solved, created types. In this sense their artistic meaning is limited, their aesthetic value does not change: a part of a turbine, is [an example of] form dictated by its function. In its rationality, comparable to the accompanying image of a temple.'[377] There was also a sixth image: the reporter had included a drawing of Aalto´s competition entry for the Viipuri Library, of the short end façade with its door to the newspaper reading room, with a frieze embellishing the façade. Notably, this *Uusi Aura* article came out before Aalto had handed in the first set of drawings. Thus, while it took longer for the library to transform its appearance, Aalto had a clear decision about the main ideas concerning the 'new architecture' at the very beginning of the project. It can be deduced that at this point Aalto would have begun to consider his own use of a frieze running across the façades of the library as traditional-decorative. All decorations such as this were, however, soon to disappear as the library's design progressed.

In sum, the arguments Aalto makes here stand out as representative of his articulations from the period, how his descriptions are sprinkled with terms 'real' and 'rational', but also of how he is evidently concerned with the relationship of architecture with technology and art. Furthermore, he was most articulate in reminding that new architecture was not just a passing whim, and in association with this criticised modernists purely interested in form separated from function. More widely, Aalto and the younger generation of Finnish architects left no doubt as to what they thought about the 'traditionalists', repeating forms of the

[375] Ibid.

[376] *Turun Sanomat* 7.10.1928.

[377] Ibid. Here *asiallinen* is translated as *rational/rationality,* which is associated with the term Aalto also uses, the German *Sachlichkeit.*

Sunnuntaina, tammikuun 1. p:nä UUSI AURA N:o 1 — 1928 11

Uusimmista virtauksista rakennustaiteen alalla.

Taiteen olemuksen ydinkysymyksiä ja meidän aikamme probleemeja. Mihin uusi realismi rakennustaiteessa pyrkii.

Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto esittää mietteitään Uudelle Auralle.

Oheiliset kuvat on hänestä teitävämme itse valitsut vaikeimman sanontojtan ja vertaamat ne selittykiä. Lisäksi johtaisiemme tässä kuvan arkkitehti Alvar Aalton viimeisimmistä työstä, erään laasuolisuomalaisen Viipurin kaupungin uuden kirjastoaitoon pääsuunnitelmaan, jossa hän sai ensimmäisen palkinnon.

Silloin tällöin on [illegible] rakennustaiteen [illegible] valitsevista suunnista [illegible]. Kulkenta pääsuunnan [illegible] taidemaailma [illegible] sodassa, jossa sähköisen [illegible] edellä tällä kertaa [illegible] ei enkä aio [illegible] Aan lehtemme lukijoille [illegible] varmaankin mielenkiintoista kuulla ammattimiehen mielipiteitä näistä asioista, käännyimme eräs arkkitehti Alvar Aalton puoleen, joka kiireestä työdajasaan huolimatta asiasta alistui haastattelevaisuutta ja kertoi seuraavaat:

— Tämä kysymys on tavattomasti laaja, ja sen vuoksi on mahdoonsa ammattimiehistaantuttu puitteissa saada edes osapuolien selvyyksi kysyttävästä asiasta. Kysymykseen voisi kuitenkin ensimmä vastata seuraavasti:

On tunnettua, että aika ajoittain ihmiskunta uusia tyylejä nousee kulttuurevan asemaan. Niinä tyylivaihtoisi, joka nykyiläin ovat käyneet yhä tiheämmin tapahuvuksi, ovat aina käsittäneet koko kuvataiteilla ja osinain kirjallisenkin työn rintamat. Tällaiseen tyylimuutos tai uusi suunta ei kuitenkaan syt ole kysymyksessä. «Uusi rakennustaide» on pikemminkin kyllämyt pyrkimyksiä siirtää estyttiset elämykset aikaa harhaterlevista ja lerkkivistä tyyli-ilmaukisista retaalisemmalle pohjalle. Suurin osa maailman taiteilijoista ei tiä yhä noiden tyylisensaatiiden luotoisa ja uusien tyylien synnyttä ärkien. Se vuosi taidetoisuus, jota kysymyksemme tarkoitaan, ei kuulu tähän tottuisan ilmiöluokkaan. Sen tarkoituksena ei mytäkiläin ole olla jonkunlainen tradition ja modernismin viimeisinnä tai sovittelu-yrityksenä, vaan se tahtoo olla silden yläpuolella. Me voisimme kuvailla sitä suunavan tapaisilla luuseilla:

Ns. taide on verrattavissa vankaan, jonka toiessa pässä ovat pääsmäärätiläin enemmin vapaat koomat ja toiessa pässä arkkitehtoin enemmin sidotut tehtävät. Edellisen voisi lyhyesti sisällytetä monumentaalirakennusaiteen, koristeetaleen, kuvanveistonaiteen, maalaaiden ja romaiden, sikimmäisen konstruktion ja rakennusaiteen siidotun rakennustaiteen, asuinot, julkaiset käyttämiillaat laitokset ja ehkäpä kirjallisella lajiella sellaisen ilmiön kuin journalismin.

Tässä taidemaailmassa esiinnyvät parhaat luomat ja täydellisimmät saavutukset, aikaansa parhaitten kuvaavat työt kulloinkin siinä mässä, jota elevat elot, sosiaaliset kaistankannat ja realiteetit tikevat. Otaaksemme esimerkin Ludvig XIV:n ajasta, on myönnettävä, että silloin sosiaalisia eisi luokan vaatimuksia taiteelle olivat koristaaisehtiivät, luistoilemin tehostamiseen niin muotoiltuessa kuin kirjallisessakin tuotannossa. Siksi syntyi korkea taide silloin lähinnä vapaampien taiteiluomien piirissä: koristehtiivisä, vertaamiivaiilissa voimisteissa ja romantiikissa, joiden sisällyksenä oli dekoraatiivisen elämän yläsyn.

Jos nyt tarkasti vertaamme meidän aikamme tuohon ähäiseen esimerkiin, emme löydä sinä edes samanlaisiakaan taiteelle asetettuja vaatimuksia. Meidän aikamme — pietapuolisen arvion aiheuttamis huolestumista ilmaisevia sanontoja.

Tähän voimme omasta puolestamme lisätä: Kassa ei nykyiläin symmärrä taidetta, mutta sinä näkyy yhäti itsepinäisesti elävän käsitys, että taidetta saman varsinaisessa merkityksessä vielä edellisenkin on vain ja yksinomaan päämäärä vailla ja oleva koruesineitten ja kuvien luomisen. Voisimme verrata nykyajan joukkoihmisiä höyhäin tyttöin tyllerröön, joka talvipukkaisessa kateelee siskän herraskartanon jäkunsruudusta käsittien kauniiksi vain sen salonkitaassin, joka vaiteinusta johtaisiksa näkyy, täydellisesti tietämättömänä siitä, että hänen omassa elämässään on tehtävä, jolla on yhtä suuri sisällön kuutensarvo kuin hänen näkemillä jäähäisellä.

Saisimme äänen nykyaian sosiaalisten olosen antavan kannatuksensa niille taidetilaisiille, jotka syntyvät enemmän käytäntöön sidottuina; siksipä syntyykin meidän aikamme painava taide ja vaarinalnen luova taide juuri muotokulttuurin tilssä puolessa. Voisimme verrata antiikin jumalpatsasta johoekin nykyaikaiseen konstruksaan: molemmilla on eräässä suhteessa sama pyrkimys olla jäkostettu ja viimeisen saakka liioitu muoto sisällyksestä, tolla on reaalimerkitystä ja todellisesti tajuttua kaikupohjaa omassa ympäristössä.

Muutamat taiteilijat — sanokaamme heitä modernisteiksi — pyrkivät rekonsäin veistoksia ja maalaaksia tai johtarakennaaksia (kirkkoja), joihin muodot ovat laiinatuin nykyaikaisesta tekniikasta muistuttaisen mutkin sinnen mekaanisesti konsensoia. Niinä modernistit, kummallista kyllä, eivät tajua, että tuo heidän «moderni taiteensa» näinä päävälinpiinä on jo olemassa vielä, joste he aiheuvaikin joko tietoisesti tai vaikonmiksesti ottavat. Tällaisen «modernismi» on hyvä esimerkki siitä, miksiläisekki kariikatyyrikki vapaa taide muodostuu, kun se pyrki olemaan alkansa uskollinen kuvastin.

Toiseen luokkaan voisimme sijoittaa ne kuvaamataiteilijat, jotka eivät hyväksy edellämainitun tapaista modernismia, vaan koroistamalla yäkinomaan kulttuurin sisällyrvää traditiokäsitteit luovat taidetta, joka muotoilunsa nähden ottaa oikeesta menneiksi aikakausiista. Sellaista on suurin osa suomalaisesta rakennustaiteesta ja kuvaamataiteesta. Niinä voimme sanoa traditionalisteiksi. Heille on alkanut kuvana oleminen vasta tiesen tai kolmanssa sijan kysymys, ja heidän tiitään voi arvostella menneiden aikojen herkkyysasiella normeina pitämiä.

Sekä modernismi että traditionalismi toimivat siis nyaiaan ainskysymysten ulkopuolella. Ja molemmilla on oman aikansa kuvastimena elemiten yhtä toivotoa yritys, samaten kuin niiden merkitys reaalisekiinä yhteiskunnassa ja sen muotokulttuurissa on yhtä mitätön. Modernistit rehevät mantaukisia, joita ovat todellisen taiteen, konstruktion tai kuosen, irrikuvia. Traditionalistit pyrkivät seurtamaan tradition elämäkin ionne se ei luuta ja unohtavat kulttuurittraditien tärkeimmän osan, ulmiitkin sen, että tradition aina sisältää perinnöllä lähipotville rai-kasta tuhaenet vaillinaiksi jäänee probleemit.

Puuiisena laykana «uudessa realismina», joka tekstaiksi on rakiiltuut selvitäisäinnäsaa ensimmäisen rakennustaiteeseen, on jonkinlainen realistaiteita, joka ei, niin kuin aikaisempi realismi, kohdistu johonkin ellämin kuvaamisilmiöön kirjallisesti, vaan sen sijaan itse taiteellisiöihin ja niitten tarkitteihin, niitten efektiivisyyden arvioinilin ja itse sisällön tiöka on lähtökohta muodollet ohkein arvioimeen ja aiemmin ilkötkohtana pitämisnoe muotoa luotessa.

Siksi Emme voi luoda uutta muotoa sinä, missä uutta sisällystä ei ole olemassa. Emme voi tehdä kirkkorakennuksesta kokonaisuutena taideteosta, joka olki mahdinyte vin 1927 kulttuurista, emme voi saaan varsinaisessa merkityksessä luoda modernia kirkkorakennusta siä tyyttä, että se sisältä tunnalinpalvelusi, joska kehykselsi muodo luodaan, on traditionellimä elävä eikä sinkiä meidän aikiamme mitän erikoisesti fejinda-asiavan uutta henkistä otetta. Toiselta puolen on line tekiillinen rakentaminen (myös kirkon) vonna 1927 asia jota ei sinäsä voida perustaa traditioon, ellemme tahdo olla aivan lapsellisia ja pysyä muakeerzukseen intuuden tiäsiä. Niin ollen saattavat siis samassa tehtävässä itse konstruktio, rakenne, ja sen muodot sisältää luovan taiteellisen tehdävän fundamuodon, uuden käsitteen laj tyypin luominen) ja siihen liittyvät rakenmäksen herkiksen sisällön, ja funktion edellyttämät muodot iassen olla tradition perustettavaa taidetta, tehtävää, joia on pidettävä reproduoivana taiteena. Tällainen kaksikaiseen tehtävä, edellyttää tekiiläsä laitaisien selvä aiveja, jotka osaavat pitää eri asiat erillään ja kuitenkin aikaamaada harmonian. Siitä, ettei tällainen tehdävä kaksikaiseisuutta ole oikein käsiteity, siitä johtuu, että meillä niin harvoin on aiiäisissa canstiartta.

On olemassa toisaalta tehtävä, joissa tätä kaksikäisäisuutta ei ilmene. Kuvaamataiteet, erikoisesti nä-iäte ne ovat monumentaalitehtävä, eivät voi olla tyyppiä luovaa taidetta vuodelle 1927. Ne ovat traditioon sidoitaa, tyylitäkävä, reproduoivaa taidetta. Freskon, elipyvärin, pressäin tai marmorin tehdyilä kuvalla ei ole sosiaäisia tehtävät nykyäin, et nyöstäkä mmmeniaäisia efektiivisyyttä, eikä niiden jäonisseen sisällä erikoisesti meidän aikamme asettama esteettinen probleemi. Ne ovat jo ratkaistuja, tyypeiä luotuja. Siksi niiten taiteellinen merkitys on rajoitettu.

Fig. 54. *In an article titled ´The Latest Trends in Architecture´ Aalto explained his ideas concerning 'new architecture'.* ***Uusi Aura*** *1.1.1928 (KK)*

past regardless of the fact that times had changed.[378] The issue, however, did not remain on the pages of newspapers, but the division between supporters of different ideas was visible for example in architectural competitions.

Soon after the *Uusi Aura* article, the *Turun Sanomat* newspaper published a text by Aalto that he had written due to the dilemma that two very different kinds of entries had been awarded in the competition for 'Henki-Suomen liiketalo', an insurance company building. According to Aalto, who was one of the jury members, everyone who had followed recent events in the field of architecture were able to immediately conclude this was a case of a clash between two opposite perspectives, and the choice of two such different entries was illustrative of the jury's inability to decide between two world views. The entry by architect Yrjö Vaskinen accorded with the traditional approach, whereas that by Erik Bryggman was described as functionalist. In Aalto's view, Bryggman's entry was of international quality and in accordance with the requirements of the present day, as well as those of the future.[379] Here Aalto made explicit that the clash is between those who see that traditional ways are to be followed, and the so-called functionalists, who feel that each building should be designed primarily for its specific purpose.'The preceding approach prefers to build its structures with the usual brickwork, the latter appropriates all of today's methods always according to the project: in the case under discussion naturally concrete, which allows the positioning of the different parts as best suits the purpose.' He continued, using again the chance to explain functionalism as the unity between form and function: 'Many architects think that the new architecture is about renewed, formal changes and appropriation of new decorations, in search for 'new style' – In vain, because instead of new style will be created a term with which the word style does not accord, functional architecture, which does not contain a separate aesthetic value but with the surface faithfully following the content. The aesthetic world view will be replaced by the organisatory [world view].'[380] Within the architectural profession, this division in attitudes approximately followed the division between generations. The older generations suspecting that this 'new architecture' was a

[378] In *Turun Sanomat* 9.4.1928 under the title 'Turkulaista ja Eurooppalaista arkkitehtuuria' were 13 images of buildings (years not included), where it was for example stated about the Rettig & Co factory building in the caption: 'A styleless and tasteless façade'. The article was not signed – as many of them were not. Thus, it is not possible to ascertain as a fact whether this image collage was by Aalto. Also in *Keskisuomalainen* on 28.4.1928 Aalto described how he had been given the responsibility to design the site plan for the Torkkeli esplanade, and, that the library had made it necessary to pay already two visits to Scandinavia, to become acquainted with functional details.

[379] Bryggman was not only Aalto's colleague, but also his close friend. In 1928 Aalto wrote an article on Bryggman titled 'Architect of Turku'. *Uusi Aura* 21.4.1928.

[380] *Turun Sanomat* 7.10.1928. In the jury were architects Alvar Aalto, Armas Lindgren, Uno Ullberg, and the directors of the Suomi company, W.A. Lavonius and A. Uusikylä.

passing fashion, while the younger generations maintained that the real issue was to redefine the role of architecture in society altogether.[381]

In September 1929 Aalto described his projects to the reporter of the *Keskisuomalainen* newspaper, telling that the Paimio Sanatorium and the Viipuri Library appeal to him the most: 'Both have the sympathetic side, that neither belongs to so-called decorative buildings, but are socially positive institutions, the cultural sensibilities of which have thus far been more or less neglected. Or has someone heard of a person having returned from their travels and talking about buildings of this kinds as types of cultural hallmarks? References to these can be found only in the commentaries of professional commentaries, and these sage professionals always describe churches and old city halls as the main aesthetic experiences from their travels. But I dare to argue this will change … What do we do with simplicity for the sake of simplicity or castle-like constructions with their excessive impressiveness at a time when we can truly can build in more delicate, light, humane [manner] than in any historic period, whether Hellenic or that of Oliver Cromwell or Mr. Washington of the USA!'[382]

As to Aalto's own thoughts about library spaces in general, there remain only few references. However, again in association with the housing question, he wrote a short piece which underscores his perception of libraries primarily as a shared, public space, which also harks back to the role of architecture in society: 'In the past, the castle contained within its moat everything a family unit required, children could mature to adulthood within it. Time has since developed to decentralised forms. The minimum apartment is made possible by many of the functions being moved outside – to shared spaces – schools, sports fields, libraries, cinemas, concert and lecture halls etc. The function of these shared spaces changes and grows. They, too, make visible the problems of the minimum apartment, with a number of questions waiting to be solved. Imperialistic public buildings need to impose gives way to another kind of function. In past times, Abbé Coignard sat on a heavy decorated chair almost alone in the library of the Bishop of Séez now the public library is shared by all those who do not have one at home, and would not have the space for it. (How many homes of 250 m2 have a library that would be of any use?) The use of public libraries has grown immensely

[381] The schism between different generations was particularly well illustrated in Aalto's response to Eliel Saarinen's interview which had been published earlier in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. The 'great schism' raised in association with the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition, for which Gunnar Asplund was the responsible architect, and traditional artists, such as Carl Malmsten had been severely criticised. Aalto's perspective, supporting Asplund and the exhibition's new style, was published in ***Uusi Aura*** 29.8.1929.

[382] *Keskisuomalainen* 10.9.1929. In Finnish the note about 'more delicate, light, humane' clearly echoes the Olympic motto 'Citius, Altius, Fortius'. Success in the Olympic Games of 1920, 1924 and 1928 was a source of national pride in Finland.

- the masses of people there, the psychology of this institution gives the task, our work, its whole substance and extent. This is an unknown territory down to its smallest details. – Who would remain interested in purely decorative architecture regardless of whether its prejudices are old or new?'[383]

Thus, it was right after Aalto had won the competition for the library that there appeared an entire cluster of newspaper articles where Aalto offered his views about the 'new architecture' and his latest building projects. These newspaper articles evidence of how Aalto was a well-known person not only among his colleagues, but also to the general public in Finland. An aspect which enhances Aalto's own, active role is that there were several articles which were framed as an interview, but the entire text consisted of Aalto's explanations. Thus, these interviews could rather be taken as a type of press release, as in many cases it was even told that Aalto paid a visit to a particular newspaper's offices to offer information. As follows, Aalto as a known person, his views and his building projects were all presented as part and parcel of these news. This is consequential because Aalto's first, recognisably 'new style' buildings were completed only a few years later.[384]

It is more rare that Aalto's colleagues would have reviewed his character and methods in public newspapers. However, in his review of the newly opened library, Gustaf Strengell, architect and known architectural critic, summarised well Aalto's position as a representative of the new architecture: 'One is at a loss of words in trying to describe Aalto, whose lively wit leads him onward. I have once said that experiment is his method of work. That is: aim to be dangerous. But if one does not dare to try something new, development will stagnate. It is better to take a lions' leap every now and then, even with the risk to go all wrong, rather than graze like a flock of sheep – to freely cite Mussolini.'[385]

[383] Aalto, A. 1930, 25. Reference to Abbé Coignard is from a novel by Anatole France.

[384] In retrospect, a recognisable theme in Finnish architectural writings associated with Aalto is how he and his works influenced other Finnish architects. This again is inseparable from what Aalto was understood to 'represent' at the time. According to Kirmo Mikkola (1970), Aalto's international role provided him with artistic leadership quite naturally in Finland in the 1930s. However, alongside Aalto there were, for instance, P.E. Blomstedt, Yrjö Lindegren and Hilding Ekelund, all of whom managed to avoid turning the societal principles of functionalism into props of nationalism and politics. At the beginning of the 1930s the group of functionalists still needed to fight against anachronic classicism, represented by older architects such as Lars Sonck, the Jung brothers and J.S. Sirén.

[385] Strengell, G. 1935.

A design towards freedom

Architect Aulis Blomstedt: 'There is one aspect to which perhaps not enough attention has been paid when analysing functionalism, and that is maybe, or in my mind, that so many leading architects, from Aalto and Corbusier, have actually had quite strong influences… Corbusier for example from Greece, and Alvar Aalto from his own education here in Helsinki. So, in other words many of the masters of that time had a very strong classicist education. If we think for example of Aalto's Viipuri Library and how much freedom it formally expressed, it had a completely classicist "discipline", in my view.'

The interviewer: 'Discipline in form?'

Blomstedt: 'Yes, in form.'

The interviewer: 'Well, the Viipuri Library did have its classical preliminary version, that competition entry..'

Blomstedt: 'Indeed.'

The interviewer: '…from which the final result grew in a way, could one say in this context, in an organic manner?'

Blomstedt: 'Yes, towards freedom.'[386]

The process of designing the library has been typically described as exemplifying Aalto's move away from classicism, towards 'new architecture', with the design being altered in three stages. This is based on three sets of drawings: Aalto handed the first set of drawings to the Building Committee in Viipuri on 29 February 1928, the second set on 4 May 1929, and the last and third in mid-December 1933. However, it is possible to extend the design stages to five, by including Aalto´s original winning competition entry from 1927 and as the last stage, the final construction, during which various adjustments to the third set of drawings still took place.[387] In

[386] Aulis Blomstedt interviewed by Kirmo Mikkola 11.6.1973. The Finnish Architectural Society interviews. Transcript. MFA Library archive.

[387] Sievänen-Allen, R. (1986, 152) and Heinonen, R.-L. (1978, 249-262) speak of three identifiable stages, which followed the competition entry. Schildt, G. (1985, 28; 235-236) speaks of four different versions, of which the last one was realised. Pearson, D. (1978, 112-119) sees only three versions. Salmela, U. (2004, 186-193) however proposes five stages. Furthermore, Aalto is also known to have made changes during the actual construction, making clear categorisation of this kind difficult.

the following, some points already stated in the first thematic chapter are recapitulated in order to position Aalto's design stages in the context of the changing sites.

The first stage 1926–1927

First announcement about the forthcoming competition for the Viipuri Library was published in October 1926.[388] However, as there was some difficulty with formulating the competition programme, it was not until June 1927 that the competition call was sent out, and when the *Finnish Architectural Review* also published it.[389] The building was to include a large lending hall with open-shelf-system, a children's and youth section, reading rooms along with researchers' rooms, a newspaper reading room, a lecture hall and a few club rooms as well as a book storage, rooms for personnel, a caretaker's apartment and other maintenance spaces.[390] The plot marked in the competition programme was at the corner of Aleksanterinkatu Street (later Karjalankatu Street, present-day Leningrad Prospekt) and Torkkelinkatu Street (nowadays Lenin Prospekt).[391] The entries were to include the site plan with the volumes of the library, and that of a house of culture, a building to be realised at a later stage. Although the competitors had freedom in the exact positioning of the buildings, it was stipulated that the park should be kept as intact as possible, and thus, the site plan was to include the organisation of the Torkkeli Park in the vicinity of the buildings.[392]

In 1928 the *Finnish Architectural Review* published the winners of the competition.[393] Twenty-three entries had arrived by the deadline, four of which were left aside. Of the remaining 19 entries the jury's short commentaries were published in the periodical. The jury selected four entries from among which the winners

[388] Brief note published in the *Finnish Architectural Review* 1926.

[389] Competition deadline 1.10.1927. *Finnish Architectural Review* 7/1927.

[390] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1928, 38. This is interesting in the sense that later, based on Aalto's design, the programme has been interpreted as two-fold, requiring the lecture hall – the 'public, societal' area – and the main library spaces representing 'private, quiet spaces'.

[391] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 14.

[392] Vasenius, J. 1927, 198. Notably, Vasenius described details of the other awarded entries, information which has since been lost.

[393] The *Finnish Architectural Review* (1928, 38-41) published only selected images of the four best entries. Notably, architectural publications describing Aalto's competition entry and design stages of the library tend to give no mention of the other entries from which Aalto's work was chosen.

were voted. Number 19, pseudonym ´W.W.W.´ received first prize.[394] Illustrations consisted of the drawings of the two façades, a floor plan, the section and the site plan. Here, the library consisted of a long rectangular volume and a protruding portico, which contained a staircase. The stairs led into the entrance hall from which the visitor entered first a vestibule and then a lending hall lit from above by a vast glass ceiling. The elevations of the three-story building were decorated with rustication and a classical frieze. Opposite the library was the L-shaped house of culture, and a square with a large statue positioned almost next to the building. On the opposite sides of the street, the main entrances of the library and the house of culture were aligned. The site plan took into account the tramline, adding a loop to the tracks, drawing it inside the house of culture. This makes it appear that the tram was to have its stop underneath the entrance canopy of the house of culture, to permit a smooth transition from the tram to the building, safe from bad weather.

The jury regarded the entry of pseudonym 'W.W.W.' as exemplifying one of the best solutions in regard to the city plan. They considered the positioning of the library freely in the park as successful, and the elongated shape enhanced the site. The calm walls of the façades with free distribution provided the building with a dignified appearance. The plan was regarded as architecturally interesting, while at the same time locations for surveillance in the space had been kept at a minimum. The protruding stair structure was seen to have architectural merits, but it was considered to be poorly lit. The positioning of the children's section's shelves, and the access between the lending hall and the personnel's offices needed to be changed. Also having access to the heating room solely through the caretaker's apartment was considered impractical. Last, it was concluded that due to the climate, the glass ceiling of the lending hall should be replaced with light entering from the sides, and the structure of the roof needed to be revised. The jury unanimously chose this entry as the winner. Upon opening the sealed envelopes revealing the architects' names behind the pseudonyms, it was found that first prize went to Alvar Aalto.

Johan Vasenius, the librarian involved with the project since 1923, described the interior of the entry in *Kansanvalistus ja Kirjastolehti* periodical. Upon ascending the main staircase, one entered first into the square vestibule. To the right there was separate access to the children's section. Continuing directly, one arrived in the interior hall where coats were left. From there it was possible to turn left, to the periodicals room and the main reading room, connected so that one person could supervise both spaces. In the reading room there was space for at

[394] There remains no record as to why Aalto titled his entry 'W.W.W'. However, at the time the name of the city was spelled Wiipuri. This way, Aalto's motto would be short for 'Wiipuri'. As for the portico idea, Aalto had designed one for the realised version of a house for his brother, 'Casa Väinö Aalto' in Alajärvi in 1926.

least 10,000 books, and in connection with it, there were three small researcher's rooms. The lending section was half a floor above the above-mentioned space. It was a mezzanine hall 28 metres long, and 10 meters wide, accessed from the middle along four metre-wide staircase, encircled by a low railing, leading up from the middle of the hall. The lending desk was then immediately opposite, and the bookshelves were positioned along the walls. In this hall there would be 500 to 600 metres of shelving, and space for some 20,000 to 25,000 books. Near the lending desk were two balconies, from where it was possible to see both the periodical and the study hall. At the cellar level there was substantial space for book storage. Access was along stairs which were direct continuation of those leading to the lending hall. There was also a newspaper hall, which had its own entrance from the outside. The rooms for personnel, club rooms etc. were on the second main floor. The connection between the lending hall and the rooms for personnel was not quite ideal, but could be improved with small adjustments. As the volume of this building was relatively small, 11,000 m^3, the appearance except for the frieze was unpretentious, and the organisation of the interior was well thought out – the points of supervision have been diminished to a minimum – and the design could be considered economical. There even were possibilities for extensions; it could be possible to build extension wings on the park side at both ends.[395]

In the above description attention is drawn to the fact that at this design stage the library had interior balconies and a mezzanine. They recall other library buildings internationally, while Aalto does not reveal any direct sources of inspiration.[396] However, in respect to the evolution of the design it can be interpreted that Aalto in a sense inverted the concept of the mezzanine in the design of the 'book pit': whereas the mezzanine floor offers more space within the building through using the height of the space, the 'book pit' was below the main floor level, but similarly functioned to create additional wall space for bookshelves.

The second prize was given to ´Codex´ by Hilding Ekelund.[397] For this entry, published drawings were of the two floor plans, the main façade, one section and the site plan. Ekelund's entry had a large lantern. From the relatively small entry

[395] Vasenius, J. 1927, 199. It appears that this is the most detailed description written about the interiors and moving between the spaces. The librarian's description is also recognisably different from the architectural analysis, as in the focus on the architectural design, the exact amount of space for books is less relevant. Also e.g. Heinonen , R.-L. (1986, 250) has written a description of this. Her analysis is less detailed, but similar. Notably, other descriptions have been made in retrospect, through analysing the drawings.

[396] The only library building Aalto was willing to admit knowing of was Asplund's Stockholm City Library.

[397] Ekelund was at the time secretary of SAFA, the same person from whom the competition programme could be acquired.

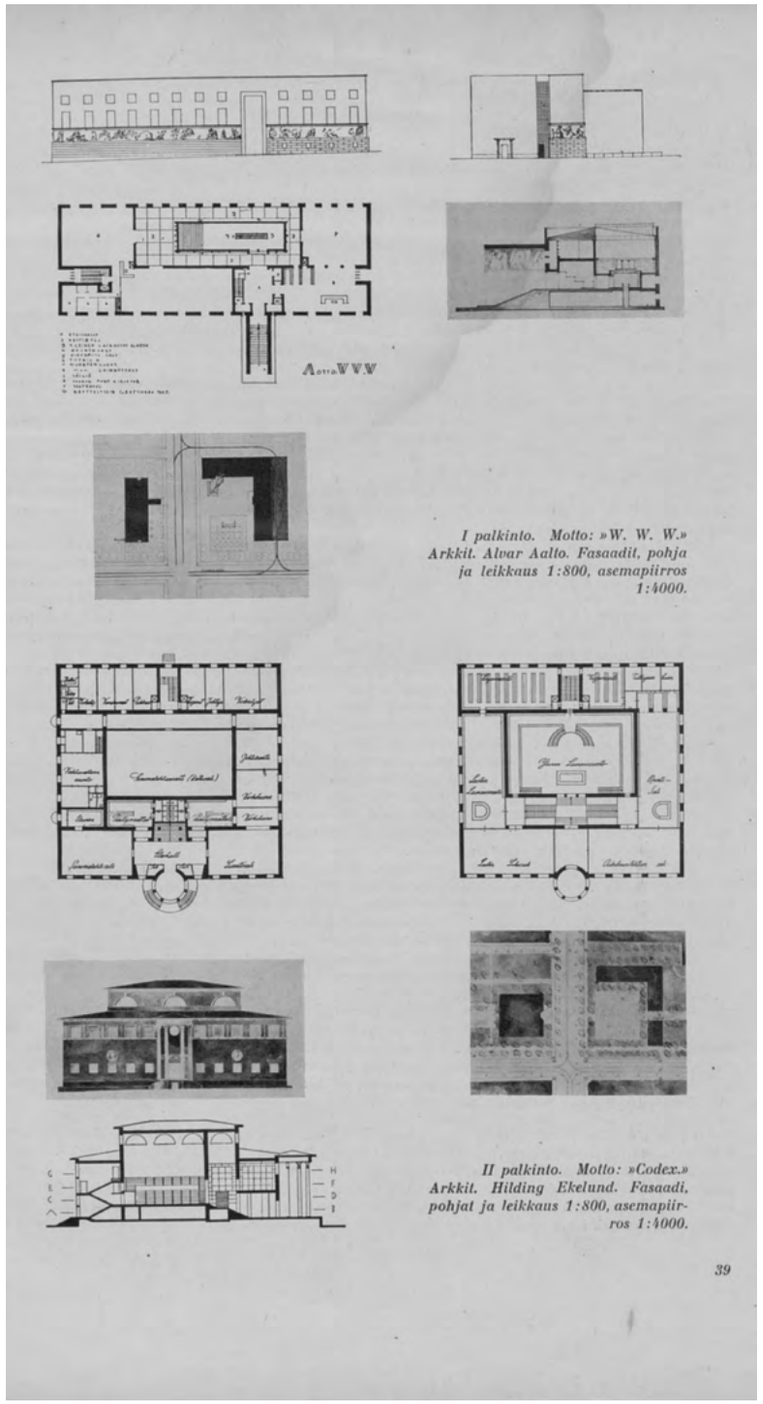


Fig. 55. *Alvar Aalto: Competition entry for the library, 1927 (first prize).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1928 (KK)*

Fig. 56. *Hilding Ekelund: Competition entry for the library, 1927 (second prize).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1928 (KK)*

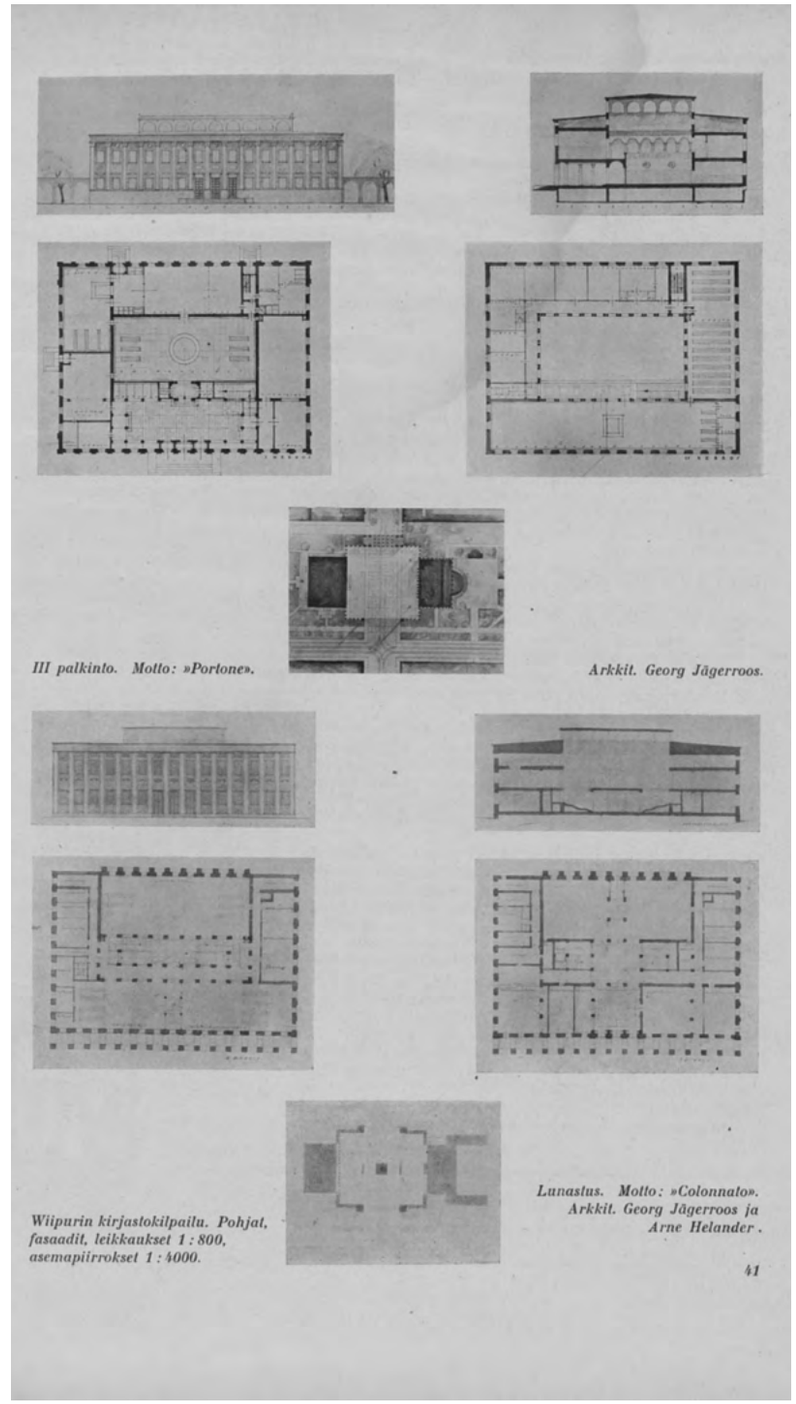


Fig. 57. *Georg Jägeroos: Competition entry for the library, 1927 (third prize).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1928 (KK)*

Fig. 58. *Georg Jägeroos and Arne Helander: Competition entry for the library, 1927 (purchased).* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *3/1928 (KK)*

hall there was access along stairs to the main reading room, the large space in the middle of the building. This library was a symmetrical square volume, with only a round columnated entrance interrupting the shape. Also Ekelund's house of culture was an L-shape, but here the volume was of approximately the same width throughout. One end of the volume was cut separate, creating a smaller building, but there was also a pathway to the park, almost in line with the main entrance of the library on the opposite side of the street. This design did not include any alterations to the route of the trams, cutting between the two buildings along Aleksanterinkatu Street. The jury's view of Ekelund's entry was that in respect to the site plan, it had many of the same benefits as Aalto's. However, the square shape of the building was seen to make the interiors somewhat uninteresting, although it was added that the façades as such had merits. The vestibule was divided in two, due to which it was suspected that this space would be difficult to supervise. The steps in front of the main lending hall were considered to be an unsuccessful solution, but it was suggested that the floor of the hall could be lowered so that there would be no need for steps. Traffic to the children's section also raised criticism, potentially causing disturbance, but surveillance was well organised well in all parts except for the newspaper reading room. Here the librarian Vasenius added that the area of this building was square, each side approximately 35 metres.[398] The positioning of the spaces was conventional, with the ground floor housing the newspaper room, the lecture hall, the club rooms as well as the director's room and the rooms for personnel. On the first floor, there was a rectangular lending hall in the middle, to the right the study halls and to the left the children's section. Notably, in all the 19 entries that the jury reviewed, the aspect most often criticised was the possibility that entering the children's section or the newspaper reading room would cause disturbance to the other library spaces.

Georg Jägeroos received the third prize with his entry ´Portone´. Also in his proposal there was a lantern providing light from above, but the first floor opened as a balcony onto the main hall. In the middle, the high main hall cut through the three floors, each of which opened onto the main hall, which provided light to the floors. In addition to the main entrance, there were three smaller entrances, two at the back; one leading to the caretaker's / personnel door and another one leading to the newspaper reading hall. The third smaller entrance was located on the short façade, leading to the children's section. The main hall could be accessed from all these spaces. Here, the library and the house of culture were of approximately equal size, almost square volumes. The house of culture had a semi-circle shape to the rear, towards a smaller square in the park. In this proposal, the square between the library and the house of culture appeared to close off the street and the tram line.

[398] Vasenius, J. 1927, 198.

The jury concluded that the arch and gate structure delineating the square created in some way a pretentious effect. The façades were calm, though conventional, but the volumes appeared more appropriate than in the previous entry, and architecturally fresh. The entrance hall was regarded as beautiful and well lit. The positioning of the lending hall on the ground level was beneficial, but criticised for requiring an expensive interior glass ceiling. The jury's view was that the hallways on the first floor would need to be closed with glass from the lending hall to avoid sounds being passed on. The youth and children's section was well separated from the rest of the library, but its vestibule cuts the space in two, which was again criticised, and most of all positioning the lavatories of the first floor above the large hall space was found to completely un-successful.

The city also acquired the remaining entry which had been selected among the best four. This was titled 'Colonnato', a shared entry by Georg Jägeroos and Arne Helander. In their design, there was a long row of columns, across the entire main façade. There were also columns inside, delineating the spaces. In the site plan both buildings took up an approximately similar volume, while this time the house of culture had two narrow wings, creating a square toward back of the building. Here the square between the two buildings was also outlined with two gates delineating this strip of Aleksanterinkatu Street. In the middle of the square was marked a place for a monument. Of this entry, the jury made much the same conclusions as of the previous. The columns were criticised as expensive, and likely hindering entry of natural light.

Jägeroos' entry receiving third prize, and Jägeroos's and Helander's joint entry purchased by the city were all regarded as following the monumental idea in positioning two buildings symmetrically opposite each other with a square in between. One with its row of columns and the other having a gate structure confirmed the jury's view that Aalto's and Ekelund's asymmetric designs allowed for more modest and unfeigned realisation. As the library did not require any larger square, and especially since it was not known when, and what kind of, a building will be built opposite it, the jury concluded that the winner of the third prize and the purchased entry were to be left aside.[399] Thus, regardless of the long-discussed need to create a focal point for the city, and to make the library a 'monumental building', the competition jury of the library came to prefer the two entries which allowed for more modest realisation.

The question that emerges is whether Aalto would have known about the project for creating a monumental square for Viipuri, although at the time of that competition in 1912 he was still at school. There remains no direct evidence, but it is very likely that Aalto would have been acquainted with the winning entries, as they had been published in the *Finnish Architectural Review*. Whatever the

[399] Ibid. 198.

case, Aalto's entry for the library, hidden behind a row of trees was anything but monumental. However, while Aalto's design was to still develop 'towards freedom' as Aulis Blomstedt put it, Aalto was already in 1927 acquainted with, for example, the works of Le Corbusier. Direct evidence of this is Aalto's text, 'From Doorstep to a Living Room', which had been published in the *Aitta* periodical in 1926. This was illustrated with a picture of the Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau from 1925 in Paris.[400]

The city´s Building Committee appointed for the project and the competition jury thus proposed that the drawings for the new library building should be commissioned from Aalto, who would also be given the task of designing the square in front of the building – to be realised at a later stage. The librarian Vasenius´s conclusion echoes the city planning architect Meurman's statements: 'This building to be was now provided the best site in the Viipuri urban area alongside Torkkeli Esplanade and Aleksanterinkatu Street, the focal point of all traffic, a place which the citizens associated with the beloved ´idea of the monumental´, i.e. the enhancement of this significant crossing point. Since the competition for the monumental square in 1913, visions for the future have changed, because after these grand plans, some aspects have been solved while others may remain unsolved forever. Thus the competing architects were to design not only a library also the organisation of the intersection, taking into account that on the other side, on the site of the Espilä restaurant, will be a house of culture also housing a park restaurant, which now will only be in the site plan.'[401] This was among the last mentions of the monumental square. For the library competition, the idea of the monumental was condensed to two buildings and a square, turning the idea of a monumental square into a kind of prototype embedded in the library competition requirements. In the later architectural publications, no explanation is given as to why the competition for the library included a square and an outline for a house of culture. In the context of architecture, the locally ´beloved idea of the monumental´ is forgotten. As is known in retrospect, no square and no house of culture were realised.[402]

[400] Aalto, A. 1926. In *Aitta*, the image caption does not reveal which building is in question, only the name of Le Corbusier. Furthermore, Aalto's text can be seen to pay homage to *Vers une Architecture* by Le Corbusier (1923) in its structure and style of argumentation.

[401] Vasenius, J. 1927, 197. An aspect which is mentioned in passing, as this was not any official requirement, was that the house of culture in Viipuri would have housed a 'park restaurant'. This was the 'Espilä' restaurant to which Vasenius refers, which would have been demolished. Among Aalto's sketches between summer of 1927 and 1.10.1927 there is a printed map signed by O.-I. Meurman, where Aalto has drawn the L-shaped house of culture right on top of the Espilä restaurant named in the map. This site plan has been published in Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 15.

[402] Aalto did design a House of Culture for Helsinki at a much later date, 1952–1958. However, there is no direct connection between Aalto's house of culture for Viipuri and the one for Helsinki.

Another relevant question is what other library buildings Aalto would have known. As has been noted, the Building Committee assured the National Library Office that Aalto has knowledge of requirements concerning library buildings, as he had visited Gunnar Asplund's Stockholm City Library, first designed in 1921 and completed in 1928. In the autumn of 1926 Aalto had made a trip to Stockholm, Gothenburg and Copenhagen. In November of the same year he gave an interview for the *Keskisuomalainen* newspaper. Here, he described at length the Woodland Cemetery by Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz, Sven Markeliu's Helsingborg Concert Hall where 'different world views concerning architecture clash', and Asplund's Stockholm City Library, now nearing completion. This library Aalto described as 'simpler in outline than any other Scandinavian product to date'.[403] Then, in March 1927 *Uusi Aura* newspaper published an article where Aalto is mentioned as having just returned from Stockholm, where he had paid a visit to the recently opened City Library, which in many aspects was ground-breaking in terms of Nordic architecture. The reporter pointed out that an additional reason for Aalto to have visited the Stockholm City Library was the recent competition for the Viipuri Library, in which he had received the first prize.[404] A further point of interest in the Viipuri City Library competition is that a number of later architectural writers have concluded that not only Aalto's but also the other awarded entries were evidently inspired by the Stockholm City Library.[405] This is the reference which has been repeated by later authors to such an extent, that the Stockholm City Library has come to represent a kind of summary, covering all that there is to be said about Aalto's knowledge of library designs. This building by Asplund is indeed the only library that Aalto volunteered to name. In architectural publications. the library has been discussed in connection with other building types, but except for the Stockholm City Library, architectural authors have typically not enquired which other library buildings Aalto might have studied or visited.

[403] *Keskisuomalainen* 19.11.1926. In the interview, Aalto mentioned also the general plan of Gothenburg, the new police headquarters in Copenhagen and recent Danish housing, and said he had met with 'Sven Markelin' whose world view Aalto shared. See also Paavilainen, S. 1990, 9.

[404] *Uusi Aura* 3.11.1927. In the article, Aalto described that the main reason to visit Stockholm was to meet certain 'rationalist' architects. The fact that Aalto visited Asplund's Stockholm Library is also confirmed in an article in *Sisä-Suomi* 5.11.1927. News about Asplund having visited Finland, and Aalto having guided him in connection with organising the Turku Fair, was published in *Turun Sanomat* 23.6.1929. Later, *Uusi Aura* 21.11.1929 described that Aalto had returned the previous day from Stockholm, where he had given a speech to the Swedish Association of Architects.

[405] Architectural writers to have noted this are e.g. Kenneth Frampton, Michael Spens and David Pearson.

The first set of drawings – The 1928 design

Approximately a year passed between the competition entry and the first version designed in more detail. Aalto was invited to Viipuri, where after a meeting with the Building Committee, he received the commission for the final drawings in February 1928,[406] after which Aalto presented his drawings on August of the same year.[407] From this stage remains an unsigned and undated set of drawings in pencil. It is likely that these were equivalent with the drawings, which Aalto presented to the Building Committee.[408] In the site plan, the library was still situated by Aleksanterinkatu Street, as it was in the competition entry. The footprint of the library appears essentially the same; rectangular volume with a narrow protruding part for the entrance staircase. The house of culture on the opposite side of Aleksanterinkatu Street changed it shape into a large rectangle with one rounded corner. Even though Aalto´s competition entry had been considered as the ´most modern´ to start with, there were recognisable alterations.[409] Some changes can be interpreted to have been based on the competition jury's criticisms. In his own copy of the *Finnish Architectural Review* 3/1928, Aalto drew on top of his drawings, testing the possibility to raise the roof of the entrance portico and to replace the side wall with what appears to be a glass wall.[410]

In the competition entry, the entrance to the building was through 'a dark tube-like'[411] staircase hall projecting from the main volume, a solution of which the jury was not convinced. In the revised version, Aalto provided natural light to the previously enclosed space by turning the other side wall into glass, made of square glass panes. In addition to this, the entrance hall was raised to the same height as the main part of the building. Alongside the elongated main hall were the children's section and reading rooms, which were two floors in height. From the middle of the main hall, stairs rose up to the main lending section, which opened as a balcony to the top part of the reading rooms around the main space. On the top floor, the office floor's corridor opened partly onto the main hall. Aalto also gave up his original vision of a glass ceiling in the main hall. In its place was

[406] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 21. The precise date was 29.2.1928.

[407] Ibid. 20.

[408] Interpretation of Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 252-253. Notably, this is the main point where there is risk of confusion between which stage is being described. Most accounts do not distinguish between the competition entry and this first stage.

[409] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 253. She describes that '[i]t is already here that the turn from classicism toward functionalism is visible.'

[410] These changes are also discussed in Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 16.

[411] As termed by Pearson, D. (1978, 116).

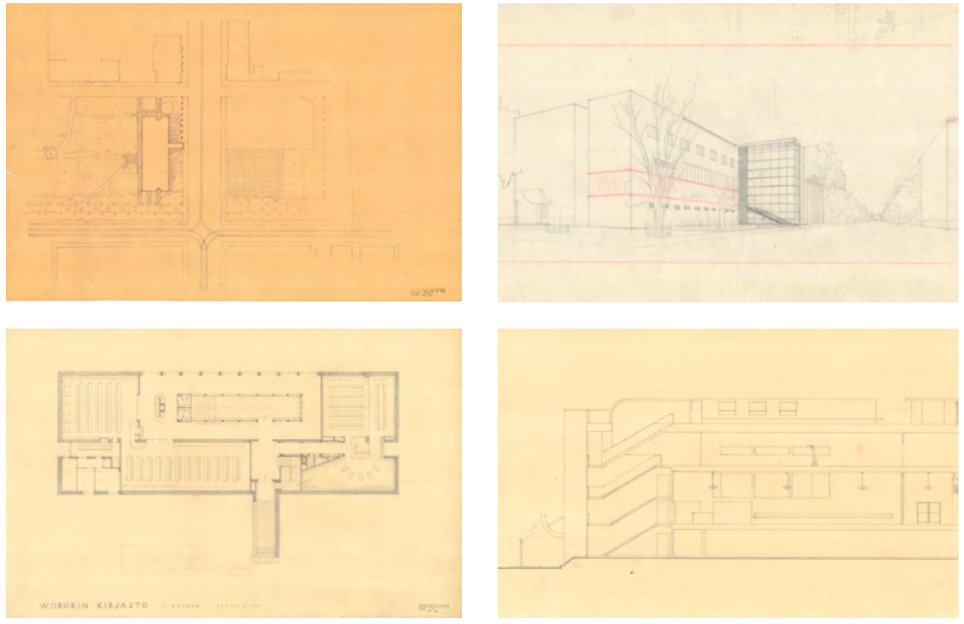


Fig. 59-62. *In 1928 Aalto revised his competition entry. A number of solutions characteristic to the ´new architecture´ appeared: a glass wall, strip windows, a roof terrace, a curving canopy and PH lamps. (AF)*

a flat roof, and light for the main hall entered through long strip-windows located at the rim of the ceiling along the long wall.[412]

However, the changes which have been described by authors writing from the perspective of architecture are those indicative of Aalto's changed thinking. Significant changes appear to be inspired by Le Corbusier.[413] In comparison with the competition entry, the 1928 design had lost its neo-classical characteristics. Namely, the addition of strip windows, Aalto had equipped the entrance of the other far end with a curving concrete canopy, and the entire roof had become demarcated as an outside reading terrace.[414] These solutions had replaced frames around doorways, tall narrow windows, and the frieze running all the way around the building. In addition to the ´functionalist awakening´, to which his travels in

[412] Additional changes were that the shelves of the children's section were rearranged into a fan shape around the lending desk, and the corners of the staircases as well as the librarian's desk in the main hall were rounded. One of the interior walls was set at an angle.

[413] This recalls an interview with Aalto from 1928 in which he told a reporter that all his buildings are made of concrete, with a roof garden on the top. The association with Le Corbusier is noted by Sievänen-Allen, R. 1986, 154. Compare with Heinonen, R.-L. (1978, 245): ´The Turun Sanomat newspaper´s building and Jyväskylä Civil Guards Building design visibly influence the background´.

[414] These aspects are underlined by Heinonen, R.-L. (1986, 253-254), who sees them as clear evidence of Le Corbusier's influence.

Europe contributed, influencing his architectural language, also Aalto's attitudes had changed. He now saw that new, radically different themes could be appropriated for building types which had previously followed traditional forms, such as libraries.[415] At the time, Aalto was working on the Turun Sanomat newspaper's building, and the Jyväskylä Civil Guards building, and it is evident that Aalto's other projects also had an effect on his Viipuri Library design already during the first year.

At this point, the main criticism of Aalto's updated version for the library was that the entrance staircase still remained entirely separate, protruding out of the main volume.[416] It is likely that this solution continued to be criticised because of the stairs that the visitors to the building would have been forced to climb. In Viipuri, one theme that continued throughout the discussions was taking into account accessibility, for the new building to also serve children and the elderly. At the beginning of 1929 Aalto began work on the next version of the library.[417]

Fig 63. *Aalto sketched a curving canopy and a frieze also for the Jyväskylä Civil Guards building. (AF)*

The second set of drawings – The 1929 design

The drawings made between late 1928 and the spring of 1929 convinced the Building Committee, and in May 1929 it was decided to apply for the City Council's approval of the drawings to begin the work without delay.[418] The main set of drawings, dated January 1929, included the most significant changes thus far.[419] The protruding staircase portico had been redesigned according to the Building Committee's suggestions, so that the entryway had been incorporated in the main structure, transforming the volume into an L-shape. The strip windows had been

[415] This also applies to theatres, which Aalto described in association with the new theatre for Turku: *Uusi Aura* 21.4.1928 and 29.9.1928. See also *Tulenkantajat* 3/1929.

[416] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 16.

[417] Sievänen-Allen, R. 1986, 154.

[418] The exact date was 4.5.1929. Described by Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. (1935, 21) and Heinonen, R.-L. (1986, 255). Original drawings Architectural office Aalto, unsigned, undated. AF.

[419] The precise date was 21.1.1929.

replaced with a chain of separate windows, though in drawings dated on July of the same year, strip windows appeared again on the back façade of the building. The roof garden still kept its place, as did the Corbusier-style canopy. An interesting detail, which appeared already in the previous version, was a vine climbing a trellis, situated on the back façade and on other far end façade.[420] There was a large fresco on the interior wall of the entrance staircase, visible to the outside trough the large glasswall. Intriguingly, in the section where the fresco was drawn in more detail, Aalto sketched a person seated, reading,[421] reminiscent of the sketch he had drawn on his own copy of the *Finnish Architectural Review* in which his competition entry was published. Now there were two staircases next to each other, the entrance stairs with their grand glass wall on one side, while on the other side of its enclosed wall was the interior staircase leading upstairs. In the same cross-arm was the children's section, which had now gained more space.[422] In the site plan the library was still on Aleksanterinkatu Street. One corner of the house of culture had been cut off, creating a corresponding volume on the other side of the street as that of the cross-arm of the library. Next to the house of culture was a square delineated by the two buildings, decorated with plants and an equestrian statue. It could be, that Aalto was here experimenting with the idea of a classical piazza where the surroundings of the buildings were taken to be part of the same whole.[423]

The aim was to begin construction of the library by the autumn of 1929, but due to the economic depression, the building project was postponed. To recapitulate, the project was to be included in the Viipuri city budget of 1931, but was postponed even further. As a result of the prolonged process, it was decided that the drawings for the library should still be re-examined due to many locals suspecting whether Aalto´s proposal 'free of all tradition',[424] was appropriate to be built in the historical Torkkeli Park. City planning architect Meurman who played the role of a mediator between different disputing parties, also communicating directly with Aalto, later confessed that at the time he himself did not greatly appreciate this 'new style', nor was he overtly enthusiastic about Aalto´s design

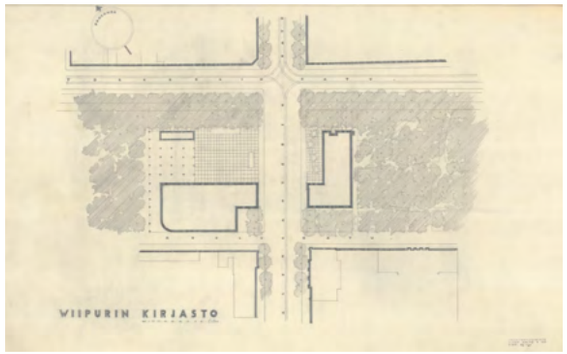
[420] Heinonen, R.-L. 1978, 254; Schildt, G. 1985, 235. Pearson, D. (1979, 112-119) does not distinguish between the second and third design phases but sees that the versions during 1928 and 1929 both represent the same, i.e. second, phase. Heinonen and Schildt on the other hand, see that there were altogether four different versions from three separate design stages after the competition.

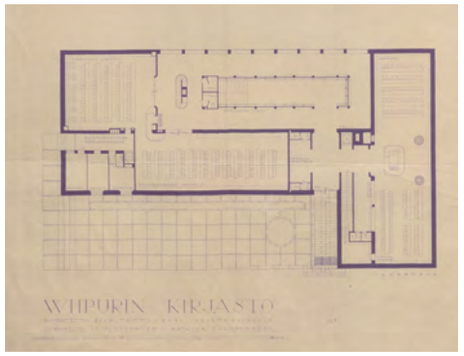
[421] This drawing has been reproduced in Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 18.

[422] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 255.

[423] Heinonen, R.-L. (1986, 254) regards this design as reminiscent of Aalto´s much later designs for cultural and administrative spaces.

[424] Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 21.





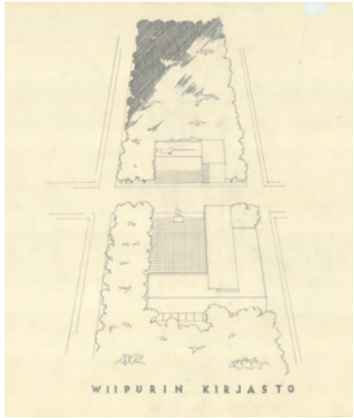


Fig. 64-66. *In 1929 the volume of the library transformed into an L-shape. (AF, NARC)*

for the library.[425] As the proposals this far followed quite close one after the other, this is the point when the project came to stand at a halt for a prolonged period. Thus, from mid-1929 until the execution of the library, beginning during the last part of 1933, Aalto had time to work on other projects, write articles, travel and network with his foreign colleagues – leading to the final transformation of the library's design.

The third set of drawings – The 1933 design

Towards the end of 1933, the heated debate concerning the site of the library was at last coming to an end. In September 1933 it was decided that the library should be built to the east end of Torkkeli Park, along Vaasankatu Street (present-day Suvorovskiy Prospekt).[426] Hence, in October 1933 Aalto was requested to provide new drawings, taking into consideration the new site.[427] The final design was recognisably different from the preceding versions. The building was formed of two rectangular volumes. The location in the park permitted new possibilities in the design. There was entrance from both sides, and the different scale and height volumes were arranged so that it was possible to experience different sides

[425] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 180.

[426] Exact date was 5.9.1933. Meurman, O.-I. 1935, 23 in Ervi, A. Also Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 255. In autumn 1933 the City Council decided that the library should be built to this location suggested by Meurman, to Torkkeli Park´s Vaasankatu Street end, the continuation of Koulukatu Street.

[427] The Building Committee communed again on 5.10.1933 to prepare the project, and Aalto was requested to provide drawings for the new site. Heinonen, R-L. 1986, 255-256.

as equally important as the central volume. At the same time the continuity of the interior, both horizontally and vertically was clearer than it was in the previous versions, where the appropriation of multiple levels and openness was still more secluded into certain parts of the building.[428]

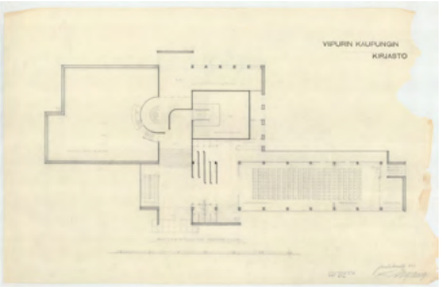
The main entrance was now through the lower rectangular volume. Upon entering to the entrance hall, directly ahead was entrance to the main hall. To the right were large sliding doors, leading to the long rectangular lecture hall, with its undulating ceiling, its one entire wall consisting of a long window facing the park. To the left was the staff-office staircase, encased between two glass walls.[429] In retrospect, this staircase appears to be too grand to be designed for serving mostly the library personnel. However, this solution is more understandable considering how the staircase changed from the original proposal's ´tunnel-like´ narrow volume to receiving light through a glass wall and now to this final concept. In the realised building, viewing the stairs from the inside, it appears almost like an artwork encased between two glass walls both of which are divided by square frames, as if separate of the main volume. These glass walls provide light for the staircase between them, but also into the entire entrance hall. The stairs also lead down to the basement level and up to the corridor where the office spaces are located above the lecture hall. To stretch the interpretation, it is almost as if Aalto wanted to make a statement by turning the stairs into an architectural showpiece after the Building Committee had complained about the library users being forced to use the cumbersome stairs to enter the building.

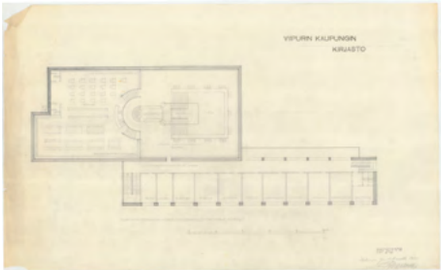
In the larger volume there was a tall main hall, which consisted of three spaces on different levels: the reading hall, at the highest point the librarians' supervision desk and the lending area, and the floor level of the 'book-pit'. As these three parts formed together the main space, this will be referred to as the main hall. Though Aalto had from the beginning aimed to focus the supervision of the space in one point, in the previous sketches there had been a narrow staircase for personnel, and a book lift in connection with the lending desk. In this final design, there was a spiral staircase reserved for the library staff, neatly hidden within the lending desk and passing through all the floor levels.[430] The large glass roof of the competition entry had been transformed into a grid of circular skylights, with a heating system integrated in the ceiling. At this point, the outside terrace on the roof was limited to the small part of the roof above the lecture hall.

[428] Ibid. 256.

[429] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 20.

[430] This idea is expressed in Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 20. Notably, this is from the architectural point of view: this staircase spoken of was for staff only and only partly visible to the visitor, being hidden within the librarian' desk from where it descends, mostly shielded from view. Hence it is not perceptible to outsiders except by consulting drawings.





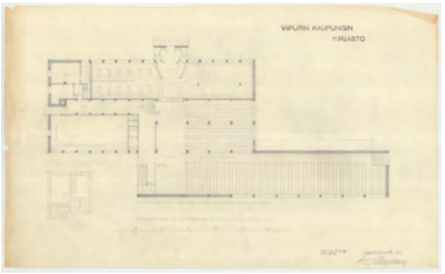


Fig 67-70. *In 1933-1934 Aalto revised the plans for a new site. The volume was divided to two, the smaller opening toward the Torkkeli Park, the larger receiving light through skylights. (AF)*

As the site had changed, all traces of the house of culture along with any form of a square had disappeared from the site plan. In Aalto's site plan, there was an irregular pond drawn some distance from the main entrance. The pond was never realised, although every spring melting snow forms a temporary pond in this very same place.[431] On the other side of the building, the so-called Church Park side towards which the entrance of the children's library faces, a rectangle aligned with the entrance was drawn, marking the place for a statue. The library and the neo-gothic Cathedral were now positioned at 90 degree angle to each other, creating a visible outline for the part of the Church Park within Torkkeli Park. Aalto´s site plan did not include the Cathedral, but his sketch for a statue was clearly thought out with respect to the Finnish Civil War memorial statue outside the Cathedral, which was marked as a square shape accompanied by steps in the site plan. Aalto completed these drawings in December, being approved on 28 December 1933. Work began mid-April 1934 and the library was inaugurated 13 October 1935.[432]

The completed Library – 1935

Some changes still took place after the final version. In other words, there are aspects which evidently differed between the final set of drawings and the completed building. The most readily visible details were changes to the short western façade, where also the doors for personnel's entrance were designed to accord

[431] Ibid. 21.

[432] ´Already on 14.12.1933 Aalto presented new drawings to the Committee, which almost exactly match the realised building.´ Meurman, O.-I. in Ervi, A. 1935, 23. Original drawings signed December 1933, Architect office Aalto. AF.

with the other doors. Also on the western side, in the section housing the children's library, there was only one tall window with square frames puncturing the façade, whereas in the drawing there appeared to be three tall windows standing alongside.[433] In addition, a small statue and title text both drawn on the children's entrance façade were left out from the realised building. This is not remarkable as such, as Aalto was later known for his flexibility, having always been prepared to make changes during construction. In retrospect, it would require extremely detailed knowledge of the existing building to be able to detect changes that were made after the final drawings. Consequently, it is the Soviet/Russian and Finnish architects who have been involved in the restoration project, who know the existing building through their first-hand experience of it. Indeed, many of the changes appear to be associated with technical aspects, or modifications which were not at first visible, but have been recognised as changes only during the restoration process. The restoration will be discussed more closely in the fourth thematic chapter.

The aim of the previous description was to introduce the development of Aalto's design process based on the drawings and sources where this has been described. The architectural publications have explicitly not focused on the function of the building (as a representative of a particular building type), nor on the effect of particular site alternatives on the design, but on the emergence of the final version of the library. This is associated with an 'event' which took place at the same time as the stages of the library's design, namely, what is to be known about Aalto's office at the time. As the focus in so many architectural publications balances between introducing Aalto the architect and his buildings, the role of other persons involved in the projects tends to be left out. However, it also needs to be acknowledged that the exact role of other persons who contributed to the design of the library is for a large part impossible to demonstrate, and all in all sources concerning this remain scarce. Drawings were only very rarely signed by someone else than Aalto. However, there are fragmentary recollections associated with the library project. These individual persons' recollections can be considered to bear certain weight in telling about the period and the working culture in Aalto's office at the time. Thus, next will be discussed what is known about the persons and work at Aalto's office in the context of the Viipuri Library project.

Work in Aalto´s office

In the summer of 1927 the Aalto family moved from Jyväskylä to Turku, and Aalto's office moved along with them. Alvar, Aino and their two children had Turku

[433] This window does not serve the children's library, but the staircase to the book storage facility on the basement level.

as their home town for almost the entire time of the library project until they moved to Helsinki in the late summer of 1933.[434] During the design process of the library, in addition to Alvar and Aino Aalto, altogether some fourteen architects worked in their office for shorter or longer periods.[435] In 1935 upon the building's completion the persons named were Alvar Aalto, Aino Aalto as his assistant, and in addition two office architects Didrik Dahlberg and Aarne Ervi, as well as a number of short-term assistants.[436] Recollections of working in Aalto´s office at the time can be found from two Norwegian architects, Erling Bjaertnaes and Harald Wildhagen who were working there from 1927 until early 1931, while Jonas Cedercreutz remembers the last stages in 1934.[437] Also Hanni Alanen, Aalto´s daughter, has described how the library was part of her childhood, and therefore particularly close to her heart.[438]

Wildhagen and Bjaertnaes had a significant role as assistants in the office during the Turku years. A large number of the office's most important drawings, such as the Southwestern Finland Agricultural Cooperative building, the Jyväskylä Civil Guards building up to competitions for Paimio Sanatorium, Zagreb Hospital and several churches were signed with the initials of one or two of the Norwegians.[439]

[434] Schildt, G. 1985, 19. In Turku, Aalto had first a temporary office at Humalistonkatu 15, and the rest of the family joined him only in the autumn, moving to Rauhankatu 1. When the Southwestern Finland Agricultural Cooperative building at Humalistonkatu 7 was completed, Aalto moved his office to this building in December 1928. Schildt, G. 1985, 19. In Helsinki the Aalto family rented a flat in Mechelininkatu 20 before moving to Riihitie 20 in Munkkiniemi where Aalto designed his own house and office. Schildt, G. 1985, 102.

[435] Between 1935 and 1937, 19 other people worked in the office for longer or shorter periods in addition to Alvar himself, Aino Aalto and Aarne Ervi: 14 architects, two secretaries, one engineer, one draughtsman and one model-maker. Aalto´s biographer Göran Schildt has compiled a list of persons having worked in Aalto´s office between 1923 and 1992. Notably, in later years in particular there was a large of number of visiting international assistants who worked in the office, and records concerning who was employed exactly when are not possible to ascertain fully. See Appendix 5. Missing from the list given in the appendix is Ragnar Ypyä, who worked relatively briefly as Aalto's assistant in 1924–1925, before the library project. Ypyä became the city architect of Viipuri in 1936.

[436] Ervi, A. 1935, 34. In the booklet there is a separate page listing city officials and experts who worked on the building, as well as the head contractor, and companies that provided materials and their expertise. It is also noted that other, unnamed architects had worked for shorter periods with the project.

[437] Heikinheimo, M. (2016, 156-157) names persons who worked on the Paimio Sanatorium: Sipilä, Wiklund, Bjartnaes, Wildhagen, Takala and H.H., whom she believes to be Hugo Harmia, at the time a student of architecture.

[438] Lahti, L. 1997, 20.

[439] Schildt, G. 1986, 41. Wildhagen worked in Aalto´s office until the end of 1930, Bjaertnaes until the summer of 1931. The role of the two Norwegians has been studied by Göran Schildt, who interviewed both of them.

They came into contact with Aalto through Sigvard Furst, another Norwegian architect already working in Finland with Erik Bryggman. First in Turku, Aalto´s only permanent employee was his old 'slave' Teuvo Takala. Later architects Bäckström, Totti Strömberg and Lasse Wiklund joined. Aalto thus welcomed the two experienced Norwegians, replying to their job applications in autumn 1927. 'The only condition was that they should take a close look at Asplund´s library and Skandia cinema on their way in Stockholm, which they conscientiously did.[440] Bjaertnaes began work in December 1927, Wildhagen a little later. Of the people in Aalto´s circles, Bjaertnaes described: 'There's a town planner Sutinen, a building inspector Ahonen and an architect Bryggman here. They're all young lads, good friends of Aalto's and decent, straightforward guys. We have no office hours. We work as long as we feel like it, make a note of the hours, and then leave. You can come at 11 a.m. if you like, but then you can stay until 11 p.m.'[441] Bjaertnaes also recalled how hard work was followed by parties, and how sometimes there was not enough money for pay cheques as the office did not have much income, but for the Norwegians, that did not matter much.

Still in 1934 Aalto´s office was rather small. The staff consisted of Alvar and Aino Aalto, architect Diedrich Dahlberg who had been working for Nobel family in Russia, and Jonas Cedercreutz, who was still a student of architecture. Cedercreutz similarly recalled how the days at Aalto's office didn't begin too early, usually round ten or eleven and accordingly, the days didn't end at any particular time: 'If Alvar was full of enthusiasm, we continued until late at night. The main thing was that the work proceeded' and he continued, Dahlberg and I shared a table in a large room, which was the office. Alvar was working in his own room, from where he popped out from time to time to bring his sketches.'[442]

As to the division of work or the design process of the library. Jonas Cedercreutz recalled an intriguing event, describing the time before the completion of the library: '...it was quite amusing, that during my studies I was at Aalto's office and it was just then that he was designing the Viipuri Library, and as he heard that we have a villa at Terijoki he said, 'Listen, do you think it might be possible I could rent some villa at Terijoki and move the whole office there, it would be so much closer to Viipuri. Well, I of course thought this was great, that the grand chief would sort of move to the place where I wanted to spend my summer and my aunt Martta Cedercreutz, she had an area with two villas and the other one was empty. So the entire family Aalto and Aalto's office moved there and I then cycled every

[440] Ibid. 40.

[441] Ibid.

[442] Cedercreutz, J. 1984, 23.

morning to the office, it was a very gratifying period that summer when the Viipuri Library was designed.'[443]

During the summer, it turned out to be problematic to test the lighting conditions, now that light came into the main hall through the conical shafts, and there was no model workshop in Terijoki. Cedercreutz recalled he had come up with a solution: 'A most difficult task turned out to be the round skylights, as there were 57 of them! I remembered that a whole salesman had boxes with perforated sheets for transporting eggs. I then went to ask who produced these boxes for him. I got an address, and went to negotiate the issue. The person who was producing these offered to help out; 'Just get cardboard and draw the windows in the right places, and we will perforate them for you'. We set to work without delay. First we calculated how many sheets it would take to get the scale and depth of the holes right for the model. We drew the circles, and took them to be perforated. After gluing the sheets together, the roof was put on top of our cardboard model. The model was taken out into the sunlight, in front of our ´office villa´, and positioned to the angle in which the library would be built. Now it was possible to research the effects of sunlight during different times of the day. Alvar thought the result was very convincing. This is how the ´egg box model´ made it possible to create the lighting conditions which received so much attention, and were so highly praised by experts.'[444]

That year the summer was particularly hot, but there was a rush to get the job done. Cedercreutz described how Alvar´s and Aino´s children, Johanna and Hamilkar, wanted to play at the beach, and Aino often had to submit to their insistent demands.[445] Later, Aalto´s daughter, Hanni Alanen described that same summer, explaining how for her, the Viipuri Library remains a very special place: 'I was there a lot. Because there was sand on the construction site, we had our buckets and shovels with us. And Paimio I remember well, because we drove there often, and played there. So after Paimio came the Viipuri Library, and we moved to Helsinki and spent the summer on the Karelian isthmus, at Terijoki. I was seven, and when we went to the construction site, we children came along. That Viipuri was a happy city, even a child could sense that. We had dinners at Espilä [the park restaurant] and stayed in a hotel… It was very exotic, completely different than at Alajärvi, where it was always windy and cold. And when that library

[443] Ibid. 25. Also in a letter to Sven and Viola Markelius, Aino and Alvar Aalto enquired about Viola's planned trip to Finland saying: 'It would be good to know when Viola will be travelling, so we can arrange her stay as well as possible. Could you send a telegraph at least two days before, because it can happen that we are in eastern Finland close to Viipuri, where we currently have a small project which we need to often visit'. Original letter in Swedish. ArkDes archives Stockholm. Also quoted in Rudberg, E. 2005, 27.

[444] Ibid. 26.

[445] Ibid. 23.

Fig. 71. *The Aalto family spent the summer of 1934 at Terijoki on the Karelian Isthmus, making it possible to supervise the construction of the library. (AF)*

was completed, so we were making, mother made it, a large curtain and it was for the children's section, in front of the library space, there was a place for washing hands. I don't know what the material was, nowadays it would be plastic. It had images printed on it. It was made by my mother. Where is it now? I don't know! …Yes, it was like an imaginary flower! The same model was also on a textile sold by Artek. That Viipuri Library was beautiful, in a beautiful place in the park.´[446]

While this can be taken as a humble recollection from childhood, it brings forth an important point: many small aspects point to the fact that Aino and Alvar Aalto were equal partners in their architectural office. This is for example evidenced by the fact that in the agreements on the founding of Artek in 1935, Aino and Alvar state themselves as an equal and joint party, and are mentioned in these documents generally as 'the architects'.[447] In her travel journal from 1935 Aino Aalto proposed for the library rattan-weave tables and wicker chairs, and garden furniture for the upper level of the terrace and the roofs. She also sug-

[446] Hanni Alanen in Lahti, L. 1997, 20. Teija Isohauta (2003) and Jussi Rautsi (personal communication 2017) have expressed their view that Aino had significant responsibility for to the interior of the library. Isohauta, T. (2003, 130) has also suggested that the ´paper basket´ by librarians' desk in the main hall was by Aino Aalto.

[447] After Nils Gustav Hahl perished in World War II, in 1941, Aino Aalto became the managing director of Artek until her death in 1949. Alanen, H. in in Kinnunen, U. (ed). 2004, 8-10.

gested the auditorium door could be lined with black suede or linoleum.[448] The major question, which however remains impossible to answer completely, concerns Aino Aalto's role in designing the library. In addition to the hints from her travel journal, it is known the she designed the curtain for the library's children's section. Later, after establishing the Artek company, she designed fabrics which became available in the company's product line, and Aino is known for example to have been interested in creating the scaled-down children's furniture. It is however more than likely that her contribution to the library project was more extensive than typically implied. When the library opened, the *Karjala* newspaper's reporter pointed out that most of the furnishings are by the building's other architect, Aino Aalto.[449]

The last assistant involved with the library was Aarne Ervi, who later became a successful architect in his own right. Ervi recalls the start of his career in Aalto's office as follows: 'In 1935 it was pretty quiet in Aalto's office – as it was almost everywhere. For several months I was his only assistant.'[450] In summer 1935 Aalto sent Ervi to supervise the last stages of the library's construction in Viipuri. While Ervi was there, the Building Committee commissioned him to edit a book about the library. For Ervi, the library project was challenging but formative, also because he felt that working in Viipuri gave him an understanding of the strata of history.[451] Even though Ervi was working for Alvar and Aino, they were also friends and trust was mutual. There remains a letter from Aino to Alvar in London, written some two weeks after the library's opening: 'Money matters are a bit tricky at the moment, but I have one or two solutions in mind. For instance, Ervi has promised to lend me some money if worst comes to worst, but it wouldn't be much fun.'[452]

Therefore, regardless of the fact that Aalto's office appears to have had no scarcity of work, the entire period of designing the library seems to have been economically more or less difficult. In 1933 there was some temporary economic

[448] Hipeli, M. 2004, 72. This has also been noted by Nina Stritzler-Levine (2017, 298). Renja Suominen-Kokkonen (2007) has researched Aino's role and the Aalto office's interior designs extensively.

[449] *Karjala* 13.10.1935. In this research 'Aalto' is used when referring to Alvar Aalto, while it could well be argued that the library should be spoken of as joint design by Aino and Alvar. For example Mikonranta, K. (in Tuukkanen, P. ed. 2014) has written about Aino and Alvar Aalto's interior designs and their development in time into the standardised Artek furniture.

[450] Ervi, A. 1976, 34.

[451] Johansson, E. et al. 2010, 51-53. See also Ervi, A. 1976, 34. Among later library buildings, Ervi's Töölö Library, opened in 1970 in Helsinki, has been compared to the Viipuri Library. Ervi's library is positioned at the corner of Topeliuksenpuisto Park, with its large curving façade, most of its windows, facing the green park.

[452] Johansson, E. et al., 2010, 51-53. Original letter from Aino Aalto, 29.10.1935. AF.

Fig. 72. *Alvar and Aino Aalto and Aarne Ervi in the terrace hall after the library was completed. (AF)*

relief. An exhibition of Aalto's furniture opened in London on 13 November 1933, which according to Aalto's biographer Göran Schildt was the most important of the exhibitions in regard to Aalto's development. This had become possible through Philip Morton Shand, an architectural critic and writer, whom Aalto had met at the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition, after which the two men had remained in contact. In 1932 Aalto sent images of his new chair model and three-legged stool, about which Shand immediately became enthused promising to make 'a real splash',[453] and indeed Aalto furniture sold well. Aalto had also met Harry and Maire Gullichsen, and thanks to the Gullichsens, Aalto's office received the commission to design the Sunila mill in Kotka, including the housing for workers

[453] Schildt, G. 1985, 103. Shand had written about Turun Sanomat newspaper's building, the Toppila factory and the Paimio Sanatorium for *The Architectural Review* and the *Architects' Journal*, two professional journals for which Shand was the main critic. This event led to the found of the Finmar company, which had inclusive rights to distribute Aalto furniture in the UK. The London exhibition was organised at the famous Fortnum and Mason department store. Schildt's view was that though so masterful in architecture, part of the Aalto office's poor economic situation was due to Aalto's 'scandalous lack of business sense'. Schildt, G. 1985, 105.

and engineers.[454] Maire Gullichsen was also involved in establishing the Artek company in 1935, focusing on selling Aalto furniture. The most famous piece of furniture for the library was the three-legged stool, mentioned by Morton Shand. It has remained in production since then, and is most likely the most recognisable piece of Artek furniture today.

Reception in the context of architecture – Aalto's account of the library and main architectural themes

'When I personally have to solve some architectural problem, I am constantly - indeed, almost without exception - faced with an obstacle difficult to surmount, a kind of 'three in the morning feeling'. The reason seems to be the complicated, heavy burden resulting from the way that architectural design operates with countless, often mutually discordant elements. Social, humanitarian, economic, and technological requirements combined with psychological problems affecting both the individual and the group, the movements and internal friction of both crowds of people and individuals – all this builds up into a tangled web that cannot be straightened out rationally or mechanically. The sheer number of various demands and problems forms a barrier that makes it hard for the basic architectural idea to emerge. This is what I do – sometimes quite instinctively – in such cases. I forget the whole maze of problems for a while, as soon as the feel of the assignment and the innumerable demands it involves have sunk into my subconscious. I then move on to a method of working that is very much like abstract art. I simply draw by instinct, not architectural syntheses, but what are sometimes quite childlike compositions, and in this way, on an abstract basis, the main idea gradually takes shape, a kind of universal substance that helps me to bring the numerous contradictory components into harmony. When I designed the Viipuri City Library (and I had plenty of time, a whole five years), I spent long periods getting my range, as it were, with naive drawings. I drew all kinds of fantastic mountain landscapes, with slopes lit by many suns in different positions, which gradually gave rise to the main idea of the building. The architectural framework of the library comprises several reading and lending areas stepped at different levels, with the administrative and supervisory centre at the peak. My childlike drawings were only indirectly linked with architectural thinking, but they eventually led to an interweaving of the section and ground plan, and to a kind of unity of horizontal and vertical construction.'[455]

[454] Ervi, A. 1976, 34.

[455] Schildt, G. 1997, 107.

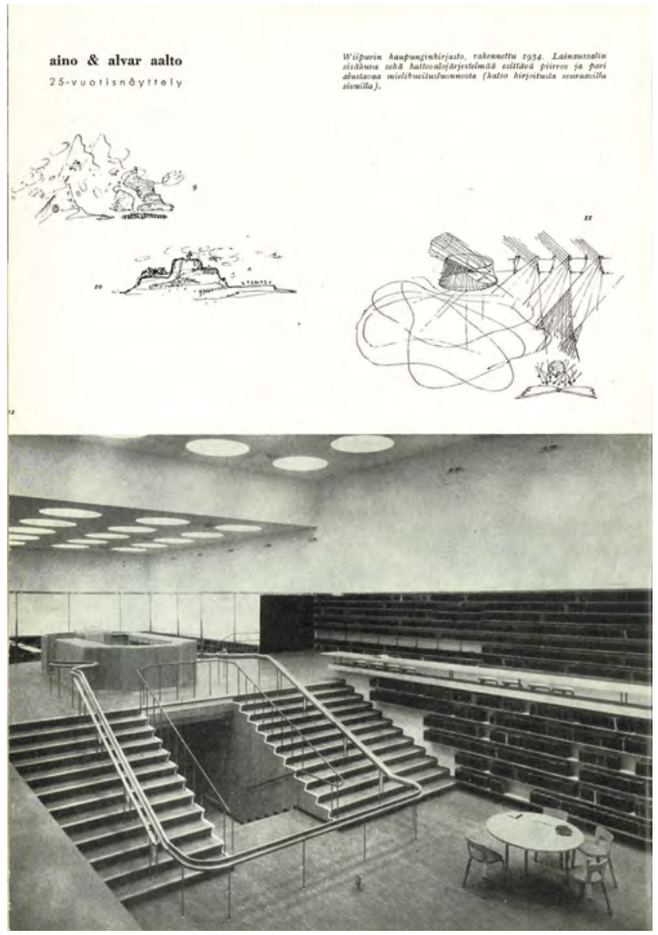


Fig 73. *Aalto described the design process of the library in his article 'The Trout and the Stream', illustrated with sketches of 'fantastic landscapes' and lighting conditions in the main hall.* ***Finnish Architectural Review*** *1-2/1948*

This is among the most often quoted examples of Aalto's writings, as well as one describing the library. It comes from Aalto's text titled 'The Trout and the Stream' originally published under the title 'Architettura e arte concreta' in the Italian journal *Domus* in 1947, and in Finnish under the title 'Taimen ja Tunturipuro' in the *Finnish Architectural Review*,[456] in the following year. Intriguingly, this piece of text has been presented as Aalto's description of how he originally came up with the design concept for the library, yet it was first published some twelve years after the building had been completed. Furthermore, this quote could be, and indeed has been, taken in a more general sense to be illustrative of Aal-

[456] Aalto, A. 1948, 7-10. Except for the early 'Latest Trends in Architecture', where a drawing of the library was added by the reporter (*Uusi Aura* 1.1.1928), the other articles by Aalto where he used the library as an example to describe his thinking and work methods were 'The Humanizing of Architecture', (*The Technology Review* Nov. 1940), and the 'Trout and the Stream' (***Domus*** 223-225/1947; *Finnish Architectural Review* 1-2/1948).

to's artistic working method. The reason for offering this quote at some length is, however, not solely to illustrate how the process of designing the library has been presented as a 'prototypical' example of Aalto's architectural thinking. It also provides a link for introducing the reception of the library in the context of architecture.

The materials bring forth two lines of enquiry to be discussed more closely. First is Aalto's own role in making the library known both in Finland and internationally. As Göran Schildt has put it, the career Aalto was able to create was not a result of happy coincidences; instead Aalto was extremely efficient at marketing himself. This was to the extent that the ´myth´ of Alvar Aalto came to be originated alongside his career.[457] The second issue is the meaning of time. Namely, that certain points in time have remained the ones to be analysed and re-analysed. Architectural publications have typically focused on the design process between 1927 and 1935, and most of all in 1935 when the library was completed.[458]

Aalto's own description originally with the title 'Building-Technical Account' from 1935 was published in slightly different format three times. First, for a limited audience, namely the Viipuri City Council. Second, it was published in the *Viipuri Library 1935*[459] booklet, edited by Aalto's assistant Aarne Ervi. This booklet was commissioned for the opening of the library, and its contents appear to accord with the speeches given at the opening ceremony on October 13th 1935. Aalto also sent this booklet to his foreign colleagues, an aspect discussed later in this chapter. A third version of the same text was published by the *Finnish Architectural Review*. This would have made Aalto's latest work known among his Finnish colleagues. More specifically, the version aimed at the City Council, making decisions about the realisation of the library was accompanied by detailed lists of final costs. The *Viipuri Library 1935* booklet again offers a wider background, containing the accounts of the Viipuri City mayor, who focuses on the donors, Maria and Juho Lallukka. Followed by this were the library director's account of previous libraries in Viipuri, the city planning architect Meurman's summary of all the events associated with determining the site for this new building, Aalto's 'Building-Technical Account', the engineers' description of heating and ventilation technology used in the building, and last, a list of persons involved with the project, including the main constructor. In addition to the texts, approximately

[457] As has been suggested, Aalto actively participated in the reception of his works, adding his personal perspectives. This is noted by Schildt, G. e.g. in 1985, 103.

[458] To add, Aalto´s sketches reproduced multiple times, illustrating how problems of light, air and acoustic elements have been solved in the library appear to have been drawn as illustrations for lectures abroad, after the library's completion in 1935. See Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 23.

[459] The booklet was first printed in 1935, and since the original is now a rarity in Finland, it is likely the first edition was relatively small. However, as the restoration became topical, the original booklet was reprinted in 1997, again only in Finnish.

half of the booklet was taken up by images, the same ones which later become reprinted time and time again, remaining the ones that are still circulating. The black-and-white photographs of the building, taken just before its opening to the public, were by Gustaf Welin, Aalto's preferred photographer at the time. What is noteworthy is that these images were closely supervised by Aalto, carefully framed views that he wanted to be shown. In the booklet these photographs were followed by materials which have not been published since: advertisements of companies that provided all the essential materials from bitumen to doors and windows. For example, Nokia provided the rubber flooring, and Oy Huonekalu- ja Rakennustyötehdas Ab of Turku was responsible of the 'standardised furniture'.[460] Most of the advertisements included images from the library, illustrating the details that the company in question had provided. Thus, the advertisement images were in fact those that offered rarer views, while promoting different companies having participated in creating this building where 'everything was new' as the *Karjala* newspaper's reporter put it.

The *Finnish Architectural Review* published the library in thirteen pages,[461] including sixteen photographs and six drawings of plans and sections, accompanied by full two pages of text by Aalto. In contrast to the other two versions, images now played a major role next to Aalto's text. The sheer space that the *Finnish Architectural Review* dedicated to this building leaves no uncertainty of the significance of the library as an architectural event in Finland. Intriguingly, this article provides an outstanding example of Aalto writing the first reception of his own building, having himself selected also the attached images and drawings.

The above-mentioned contemporary accounts by Aalto were published in Finnish, and have never been translated. In his later writings, Aalto spoke of the library to illustrate some specific point, such as the use of light or his creative thinking process when he begun to conceive of a new project in his mind. However, later publications have characteristically focused on Aalto's articulations as the 'author's voice', and the time that has passed since the completion of the project has not been of particular interest. This applies not only to Aalto's articulations but also to drawings which have been published later. Thus, of the materials concerning the library which Aalto produced, it is these three versions where he described the library, whereas all the rest could rather be interpreted as 'Aalto analysing Aalto', namely Aalto analysing in retrospect his own working methods and the library as his own design. Furthermore, the above is not only descriptive of the Finnish publications, but applicable also to the international reception. What follows is that the division between the domestic and interna-

[460] Ervi, A. (ed.) 1935, 35.

[461] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1935, 145-157.

tional reception of the library is somewhat artificial.[462] The reason is that both in Finland and internationally Aalto has been the main source of information, offering his own account, accompanied by the drawings and images of the library to his colleagues, newspaper reporters, and professional architectural publications.[463] For example, Aalto sent the original 1935 booklet to his Swedish colleague Gunnar Asplund,[464] who thanked Aalto for the publication in a letter in 1936: 'Dear Aalto, Your book about the library has arrived as a stimulation and aperitif. I have to come and see the reality. It is possible that I come with technologists to see your works and to Moscow... Yours truly G. Asplund. Thank you for the book although the language in it is devilish.'[465]

Notably, it is the photographs by Gustaf Welin, originally published in this booklet, and in the *Finnish Architectural Review*,[466] which have been contentiously published as part of the early reception, but also since then.[467] Abroad, the images were first published in March 1936 in *The Architectural Review*,[468] and were subsequently featured in numerous publications around the world. Consequently, these images of the library from the time of its opening have later become 'iconic': 'Welin's photos of the newly completed building created the foundation for the international reputation of the building. The views they present have become icons of the library's golden age'.[469]

[462] An additional issue concerning the early reception of the library is that the general rule seems to be that the reviews remain to be quoted later on the basis of their author having been someone noteworthy, who can still be recalled today. Examples are Sigfried Giedion (1954) in his *Space Time Architecture* and Morton Shand (1936) in an article for *The Architectural Review*.

[463] The list of international publications that have published the library (see Appendix 7), is bound to be incomplete. For example in a letter to Aalto, 15.12.1935 Meurman conveyed a message from a periodical in Warsaw, which requests images of the new library. Meurman told Aalto: 'write in German'. Viipurin kaup.rak.toim. asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavakonttorin kirjediaarit. (1935). MMA.

[464] It is most likely that Aalto sent the same booklet to many of his colleagues, for instance Alfred Roth and Sigfried Giedion who wrote about the library in their books.

[465] Asplund's letter to Aalto 19.1.1936. AF, letter archives. Also quoted in Rudberg, 2005, 19.

[466] In the *Finnish Architectural Review*'s article on the library it was noted that the images are by Welin, and that the picture plates were those from Viipuri City's celebratory publication.

[467] Having originally seen the article about the library in the publication 'Aalto in Seven Houses', with colour images of the library in the condition in which it stood at the time, this was striking as an exception, as a completely different presentation of the same building. Some of the library's deteriorated state can also be found in Michael Spens's *Viipuri Library* book, in which the images are by Jussi Rautsi and Tapani Mustonen. Later, the restoration project changed the situation in respect to colour images having been circulated, and showing the library in its appearance after 1935. This, however, is a matter taken up in the last, fourth chapter.

[468] *The Architectural Review* March 1936.

[469] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 27.

It is obvious Aalto was extremely conscious of how the library was to appear in photographs, and carefully supervised the photographing of the building. An example this is a photograph of the entrance with Aalto's assistant Aarne Ervi on a ladder, holding a branch next to the text 'Viipuri City Library', imprinted in Finnish in copper lettering on the façade of the main entrance. Unfortunately, the branch is shaking as if in windy conditions.[470] As follows, another photograph was taken, this time with the help of an anonymous person holding the branch with a more steady hand. This successful version of the photograph, where it was not revealed that there was a man holding the branch, came to be published on the title page of the 1935 booklet. Other examples illustrative of how Aalto curated the images of the library is a photograph from the front of the building, which was retouched so that the spire of the neo-gothic Cathedral is not visible behind the library. This photograph appears, for example, on the cover of the same *Viipuri City Library* booklet. Thus, while so many citizens of Viipuri had suspected whether it was appropriate to build the new white library next to the Cathedral, Aalto in his turn erased the Cathedral from the architectural images. Alfred Roth's *New Architecture in 20 examples* from 1939 offered an image of the front entrance, but here the camera is positioned so that a tree next to the entrance conveniently covers the spire of the Cathedral. This has remained to be the rule in architectural publications. For example much later, two images of the entrance, one where the spire of the Cathedral was missing, and one where a tree conveniently covered it, were published in Michael Spens's 1994 *Viipuri Library* book.[471]

In sum, in the context of architecture the library has been presented as a product of the design process as evidenced by the drawings. This framing focuses on the time period from 1927 to 1935. The voice of Aalto as the author of the design remains to be presented as the authentic voice, also when the architect has presented his work much later. Last, the carefully curated black and white photographs introduce the iconic views from the moment when the library was completed, before the users were allowed in. Consequently, to stretch the interpretation, a significant part of later architectural reception of the library represents 'eternal original reception'. This, however, underscores the interpretation which follows throughout this research: that while the 'reception of the library' is an ongoing process, it is one that consists of parts and perspectives rather than a smooth linear story.

[470] Petra Ceferin (2002, 13-16) has discussed this.

[471] Spens, M. 1994, 42-43. The hearsay described for example by the employees of the Aalto Foundation was that Aalto could not stand the 'ugly' Cathedral, and that there are images where it seems like there is a cloud covering its spire, while looking more closely, the surface of the photograph is scratched. Images where the spire would be visible are rare. An example is a photo by by the local photographer Eino Partanen, published in Neuvonen, P. (ed.) 2011.

Having introduced Aalto's role in the original reception of the library, it is possible to zoom in closer. Thus, next will be described the main architectural themes that Aalto originally took up, and how they were originally presented and analysed further by later authors. In contrast to the first reception in Viipuri, described in the first chapter where the new innovations and the interiors of the new Library raised attention, there are three recognisable 'architectural themes' with aid of which Aalto described the most important notions associated with the library's design. Later, in the context of architecture, different authors have appropriated these three themes to compare and contrast the library with other buildings by Aalto, as well as other buildings from different countries. This discussion will be followed from the earliest international reception, before the beginning of the World War II in 1939.

Fig 74. *Aarne Ervi holding a branch next to the main entrance for a photograph to be published in the 1935 booklet* ***Viipuri City Library****. (AF)*

The architectural themes – light, acoustics, space

Aalto's 'Building Technical Account', from 1935 is telling of how he originally described the library, while also offering a useful basis for teasing out the architectural themes that the building has later been interpreted to represent. Thus, for each of the three themes will be offered a quote from Aalto's text, followed by a discussion of other buildings and inspirations which have been brought up in the analysis of the library. As Aalto has been published extensively, this discussion will be limited to referencing Finnish authors and experts, substantiated with some of the very first international commentaries. The reason for this is on one hand in that Finnish authors have produced well-informed, and more substantial accounts, which have then been also referenced by foreign authors. On the other hand, this focus makes it possible to continue in the vein of how the library's

domestic reception developed and transformed after the library's opening.

The three themes which ultimately stand out are: first, *light*, second, *acoustics*, and third, *space* or more specifically the spatial concept. These same 'architectural themes' that Aalto developed in the library have been recognised in other buildings both by him (and more widely in his oeuvre), but also in buildings by other architects around the world. This is illustrative of 'architectural landscape', in other words, the material reference points which 'describe' the location of the library in the context of architecture. Furthermore, it is suggested that from the point of view of the architectural landscape, time is not chronological, and geographical distance is not particularly important: what matters is resemblance, a *similarity* that is recognised between the library and another building.

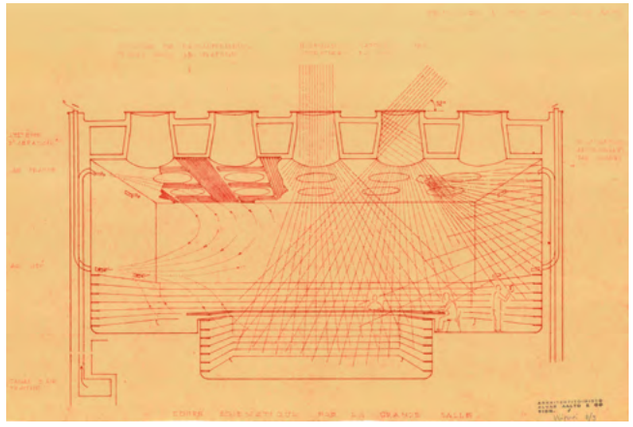


Fig. 75. *Lighting, heating and ventilation study for the main hall. The drawing was made in Aalto´s office for a later publication. (AF)*

Light

'The main library section was built mostly without the use of interior walls, a rectangular shape, with an exceptionally strong wall laid of brick. The ventilation systems circulate in the windowless, 75-cm thick walls. The ceiling consists of one span of 17.6 metres. It is iron-concrete with special crossing formations, fitted thus due to the system of ceiling lights. In the ceiling, there are 57 conical holes (1.80 metres in diameter), which create the skylight system. The main premiss of this lighting system is that the depth of the cones is so deep that 52 degree sunlight cannot freely access it, and the sunlight remains indirect throughout the year. This has made it possible to solve two architectural functions, protecting books from excessive sunlight, and creating such eye-hygienic general lighting conditions, that reading in the main hall *despite the position between the book and the person, will always remain free of shadows and reflections.'* [472]

[472] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1935, 152. Aalto used the term '*ylävalaistusjärjestelmä*'. Italics in the original, the punctuation follows the original Finnish version. In *Rovaniemi* 23.11.1929 Aalto described also his lighting design for Kemijärvi Church as 'eye-hygienic'. This can be interpreted to mean indirect light, protected by shades.

Aalto further mentions that a central problem in designing a library was that of the human eye. He maintained that a library can be well devised and functional technically even if this problem has not been resolved, but that it is not architecturally complete if the main human-related problem of reading a book has not been taken into account.[473]

Aalto's biographer Göran Schildt and architect, professor Simo Paavilainen[474] have both compared the relationship between Aalto's competition entry and the final version, specifically the ceiling of the main hall. In the original entry Aalto proposed a glass ceiling for the entire room, and in the realised building, there was a ceiling with 57 conical holes. In Schildt's view, in the final version Aalto returned to the original idea of the glass ceiling, with the essential difference that through use of the conical light shafts Aalto achieved a solution that made it possible to divert sunlight and to avoid problems snow might have caused in winter.[475] Paavilainen, in turn, has emphasised the importance of the play between the real and illusory exterior and interior spaces in the library's design process.[476] In the original design the entrance protruding from the main volume was, according to Paavilainen, a 'must' for Aalto: it was the link between the outside and the lending hall in the centre of the building. In addition to this, the rectangular building could not have been penetrated by a staircase, as this would have split the interior.[477] In other words, one would have entered from the outside, along the dark staircase to the lending hall full of light. During the design process, it was not only the ceiling of the lending hall, but also other windows which tell of Aalto testing different solutions. Paavilainen considers that Aalto's reworked designs of 1928 and 1929 appeared to lack 'both an idea and a guiding principle', when he was still seeking a balance between different ideas, as illustrated by the strip windows referring to functionalism while the proportions of the building still remained classicist.[478]

Aalto's use of light during the design process can in fact be broken down to three specific points on which later authors have focused. First, the entrance staircase was between solid walls, then the eastern side was changed to a glass wall, and in the final version the stairs were encased between two square-pane glass walls. Second, the addition of strip windows in 1928 can be seen to be indicative of Aalto's turn towards 'new architecture', while there also remained classicist characteristics. Third are the stages of the roof design, transforming from a glass ceiling, to the plans for a roof terrace to the realised version in which the library received its famous 57 conical lights. The ceiling with its conical lights is so striking as a design element, that this has undoubtedly received most attention in respect to Aalto's use of light in the library.

[473] Ibid. Also quoted by Niskanen, A. 2017, 184-185.

[474] Paavilainen, S. 1990, 9-19.

[475] Schildt, G. 1985, 336; also Norvasuo, M. 2009, 47.

[476] Paavilainen, S. 1990, 14; also Norvasuo, M. 2009, 47.

[477] Paavilainen, S. 1990, 13.

[478] According to Paavilainen, S. (1990, 16) it was only when Aalto discovered the dynamic principle of composition between building volumes that completed the library so significant in functionalism. 'The staticness of classicism had been eliminated'.

The question, which has been raised multiple times is where Aalto might have gotten the idea for light coming from the ceiling? The original version's glass ceiling was no by means a new innovation, but had been used for instance in museums and banks. Examples from Finland would be for example the Ateneum, the present-day Finnish National Gallery, by Theodor Höijer, completed in 1887 and the Bank of Finland by Ludwig Bohnstedt, completed in 1883[479] Drawing on this, it is in fact not quite clear why the competition jury had unconditionally decided that a glass ceiling would not be a viable solution due to the Finnish climate. It appears the conical skylights appeared only at a very late stage in the design process. In the version of the library made between 1928–1929, the idea of a glass ceiling was replaced with windows at the rim of the wall.[480] This brings to mind the Tapani standard apartment building, in Turku for which Aalto drew windows reaching across the entire non-supportive façade in 1927. Intriguingly, this discussion brings forth two very different notions concerning the windows, supporting Simo Paavilainen's interpretation that Aalto was still searching for a guiding principle and balancing between different ideas. On the one hand, light coming from the rim of the wall recalls Asplund's Stockholm City Library. On the other hand, around the mid-1920s the strip window had come to be recognised as a theme characteristic of modern architecture.

A further question to be raised is where Aalto might have drawn inspiration for the round light shafts. Like the glass ceiling, also use of round shafts to provide light to an interior was not a new innovation. An example is Kunsthalle Hel-

[479] Glass ceilings can be found in particular from Finnish bank buildings from the last part of 1800s and early 1900s. Examples are the above-mentioned Bank of Finland (L. Bohnstedt 1883), but also the main offices of the Yhdyspankki bank (G. Nyström 1898), the Privatbanken bank (L. Sonck & V. Jung 1904), the Suomen Kauppapankki bank (U. Ullberg 1912) and the Liittopankki bank (P.E. Blomstedt 1929). The glass ceiling was typically used to provide light for the banking hall, though not in direct contact with the outside. It is possible that Aalto's flat glass ceiling, which based on the drawings appears not to have any additional structure covering it, would explain the jury suspecting this design solution. I wish to thank architect Katariina Ockenström for information concerning early Finnish bank buildings. Personal exchange 2017.

[480] In the drawing of the façade, the windows appear as strip windows. However the load-bearing structure and the exterior wall were not separated as they were in the Turun Sanomat newspaper building. Norvasuo, M. 2009, 46-47. Norvasuo also references the Suomen Biografi cinema and the competition for the Columbus lighthouse in Santo Domingo in his discussion on Aalto's use of the round shape as a motif.

sinki, by Hilding Ekelund and Jarl Eklund. This building, opened in 1928, has a round skylight above the main entrance stairway. Indeed, the round shaft as such has been interpreted as a theme found in numerous buildings at the time, representing both functionalism and classicism. Consequently, it would be difficult to ascertain any specific influence for Aalto. Potential points of inspiration however have been proposed. As an example, a building Alvar and Aino Aalto visited is Le Corbusier's Villa Stein-de Monzie in Garches, France. In the summer of 1928 the Aaltos travelled to Amsterdam and Paris, and there is a photograph taken by Aino of Alvar Aalto in front of Villa Stein. In this building, there is at least one large conical shaft.[481] Another international example could be the Paris Pigalle Theatre by Charles Sicles, Just and Blum. This theatre was completed in 1929, and has an entry canopy with lamps inserted in round shafts, creating an effect reminiscent of the conical light shafts in the ceiling of the library.[482] Aalto is known to have visited Paris around the time when the theatre was completed, and as it was widely published in architectural journals, it is likely that Aalto would have been acquainted with this building.

Of Aalto's own works, the Turun Sanomat newspaper building and the Paimio Sanatorium stand out as the most relevant comparison points with the library. This is due to these projects overlapping that of the library, but also because these large and ambitious projects are illustrative of new solutions and overall as examples of Aalto's 'new architecture'. In the Turun Sanomat newspaper building there are three light shafts at the back of the basement-level printing hall, providing natural light for this underground space.[483] In this project, two important elements made their first appearance in January 1929: the round skylights and the asymmetrical, 'organic' capitals of the columns in the printing hall.[484] The shafts also appear in the Paimio Sanatorium, where the visitor encounters four light shafts in the ceiling of the entrance hall. In the entrance halls of the Paimio Sanatorium and the library Aalto also used the same lighting fixtures of his own design, creating a further association between the spaces.

The aspect which makes the library different is that it is easier to find examples where one, or a few light shafts were used. However, the library is the first of Aalto's buildings where through use of 57 conical skylights, in Aalto's terms

[481] Schildt, G. 1985, 55-57. It is also known that Aalto had requested Alfred Roth, who worked in Le Corbusier's office, to send pictures of le Corbusier's latest works, most of all of the house in Garches, completed in 1927. See also Suominen-Kokkonen, R. 2007.

[482] *Byggekunst* 1929, 141. See also Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 258.

[483] Schildt, G. 1994, 135-136. Slightly more complicated solutions for roof lighting can be found in Aalto´s competition entries for the Vierumäki Sports Institute in 1930 and for the University of Helsinki annex in 1931.

[484] Schildt, G. 1994, 136.

'suns' across the ceiling, it was possible to provide even light into a large space free of shadows and glare.[485] Thus, in the realised library, there are no windows, but under the 57 'suns' the feel of the space is almost as if one were outside, thus creating a much better effect than a glass ceiling could ever have provided.[486] In describing the library, Aalto spoke of 'eye-hygienic aspects'. In an article from 1929 titled 'Building hygiene – an architectural real factor', Aalto described in detail that democratisation changed how both cities and individual buildings are used, and in association with this, the importance of public spaces as libraries or hospitals as collective institutions of his time. To illustrate his points, has attached a picture of Poul Henningsen's table-lamp, a 'light-hygienic standard lamp', in which it was not possible to separate functionality and art.[487]

Once again, like in the case of the windows, also the use of the light shafts can be divided into roughly two very different types. On the one hand, when multiple shafts are used in a tall space, spread across an entire ceiling, light becomes diffused evenly, creating a shadow free space. On the other hand, the light shafts can appear separately, in which case they provide light for the space below. Examples of both can be found in buildings by Aalto. In 1936, soon after the library was completed, Aalto designed the Finnish Pavilion for the Paris World Fair with 30 conical light shafts.[488] The competition was a triumph for Aalto, as he won both first and second prize. His winning entry titled 'Le bois est en marche' featured an irregular chain of volumes joined together in a kind of collage. Two of the halls were more spacious and reminiscent of the library's main hall; a room with a sunken centre section with barrel-shaped skylights.[489] In 1937 Aalto participated

[485] These notions have been put forth by Markku Norvasuo, who published in his dissertation in 2009. Norvasuo offers a detailed discussion of the issue, suggesting that although the conical light shaft did not have direct connection with Poul Henningsen's PH-lamp, Aalto had gone through variations of similar lamella structures, leading to a version where all that remained was the conical round shape. Norvasuo also notes that Aalto's hand-drawn images illustrating the distribution of natural and artificial light, and fresh air were only made for the 1936 ***The** Architectural Review* publication, and were thus not part of the original design process itself, serving instead a rhetorical purpose. Nevertheless, the drawings tell of Aalto's thinking.

[486] At the time, upon the library's opening, the design attracted attention, and was for example described in the *Karjala* newspaper 13.10.1935. This has been analysed by Norvasuo, M. 2009, 112.

[487] Aalto, A. 23.2.1929. The other image is of a roof terrace, with the caption 'André Lurcat: Roof used as a terrace. Quite humane and beautiful roof. Simple and good construction.'

[488] This is discussed by Norvasuo, M. 2009, 113-114.

[489] Schildt, G. 1994, 173. Schildt also makes a note of Aalto's entry which won the second prize, 'tsit tsit pum'. Here Aalto created a floor which consisted of sinking series of terraces, and that the impact of the interior was accentuated by a balcony with a curving front near ceiling height, a forerunner of the famous 'Northern Lights Wall' which Aalto designed for the New York World's Fair pavilion two years later.

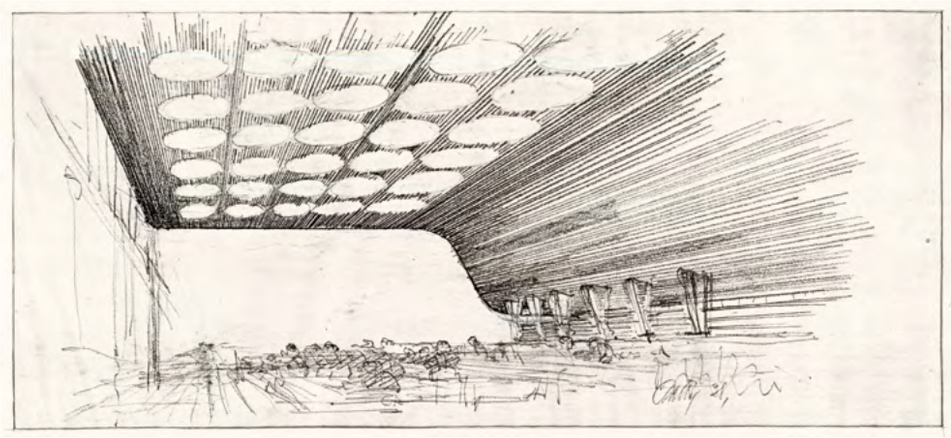


Fig. 76. *In the University of Helsinki Library competition in 1937, Aalto combined the ideas of conical skylights and acoustic wooden ceiling. (AF)*

in the competition for the extension of the University of Helsinki Library.[490] In Aalto's entry there was a three-storey tall main hall, which received light through 4 x 13 conical light shafts. For the second round for this competition Aalto submitted two alternatives, A and B. Alternative A had even more light shafts, 5 x 14.[491] What is most interesting in this version is that '[t]his alternative showed a highly dramatic reading room, with a wooden ceiling pierced by thirty round 'barrel skylights' in the manner of the Viipuri Library and curving down from the whole length of the interior wall.'[492] These examples are illustrative of how Aalto immediately created varied versions of this same theme in his other projects. All in all, the use of light shafts and different variations of the simultaneous use of

[490] Competition entry for University of Helsinki Library extension. Aalto won the second prize in the first competition in October 1937. The organisers announced a runoff competition for the authors of six best entries, deadline 1 May 1938. In both rounds, Aarne Ervi who had worked as Aalto's assistant, won the first prize. Schildt, G. 1994, 114. Ervi was also Aalto's assistant in the competition for the Paris World Fair pavilion. This might have given inspiration to Ervi's entry for the University of Helsinki Library extension.

[491] Norvasuo, M. 2009, 120-121. The Viipuri Library has also been compared to Aalto's competition entry for the Tallinn Art Museum from 1937. In this design there was an atrium-type courtyard for outside exhibitions, while the interiors would have received light through conical light shafts. Aalto did not win the competition, but intriguingly, in 1938 his Tallinn competition entry was included in the '*Book of Inventions*' ['*Keksintöjen kirja*'], edited by Hilding Ekelund, in a chapter presenting museums. Here, the round skylight was introduced as an exemplary solution.

[492] This design was omitted in the second alternative. Schildt, G. 1994, 114. Whereas this entry was not realised, a notable realised building with round light shafts is the Rautatalo building (1951–1955), where Aalto's original design would have had a covered courtyard extending from first floor to the seventh, top storey, with five travertine-faced gallery levels suspended between them. Finally Aalto had to settle for two gallery levels, but even so, the effect that the skylights provide is reminiscent of the Viipuri Library. Schildt, G. 1994, 138-139.

electric and natural light alongside each other is something that intrigued Aalto throughout his career.

The other, very different, way of appropriating the light shaft is when there is only one of them, or at most few, in which case the shaft 'highlights' something, rather than diffusing light all over the space.[493] An example that has already been mentioned is the Paimio Sanatorium's entrance hall. However, while the library is known for its 57 conical light shafts of the main hall, there is indeed a space with a single light shaft, exemplary of the effect this solution can provide. This is the fifty-eighth, separate conical shaft in the library. In the entrance hall there is a nook located opposite the cloakroom, positioned between the lecture hall and the washrooms. This space was originally furnished with two chairs and a table, receiving light from a single light shaft above. In contrast to the main hall, in this small nook the ceiling is so low that the conical skylight reveals its true scale. This small space can be interpreted in multiple ways: as a comparison point revealing the scale, a symbolic connection between this nook and the main hall, as a sequence typical of classicism, and even as a reference to Asplund's Scandia cinema's (1923) small vestibule, or simply as an illustration that a single round shaft can be used independently.[494] In the library, to anyone entering this nook the effect of the light shaft can hardly go unnoticed: the entrance hall is lit with electrical light, and the natural light which enters the space through the entrance doors and two windows between which the staircase is encased. In contrast, in the small nook, the sensation is almost as if one was under an immense round 'halo' of white light, making the rest of the entrance hall seem dimly lit even on a cloudy day.[495]

This interpretation raises the idea of play between dark and light spaces, which also, for example, Paavilainen discussed in his analysis. However, in search for possible reference points there are other structures than cultural buildings where this effect has most recognisably been appropriated, viz. sacred spaces. An example from Aalto's works are the plans for funeral chapel for Jyväskylä. In fact, in also this design the first 1925 version was classicist and had a glass

[493] For example in Aalto's own house in Munkkiniemi, Helsinki (1934–1936) the smaller spaces upstairs, such as the bathroom and dressing room receive light through skylights. Norvasuo, M. 2009, 126. In the Sunila factory area, in the sauna and post-office buildings (1937) a row of small light shafts provides light for the corridor. In the Etelä-Kymi housing complex (1938–1939) three-storey housing blocks have one light shaft to provide light to the stairwell.

[494] Norvasuo, M. 2009, 115.

[495] This notion brings forth the variation between low and high space, and dim and bright light is something that defines the experience. Entering the library from the park, the entrance hall appears dimly lit, regardless of the time of day. One then moves to the stairs towards the main hall, where the ceiling is at its lowest on the landing. Then, entering the main hall the light is once again like it was outside, or due to the multiple suns of conical shafts, even brighter.

Fig. 77. *The entrance hall nook with a single skylight. On the ceiling are lighting fixtures Aalto had designed first for the Paimio Sanatorium. (AF)*

ceiling. In the revised project in 1930, the building was given a more functionalist appearance. The new plans showed a forecourt, narrowing towards the main entrance of the rectangular building. Above the catafalque was a round skylight, which has been interpreted to be inspired by Asplund's 1918 Woodland Chapel near Stockholm.[496] Intriguingly, in Viipuri, there was an impressive example of the use of single conical light, also benefitting from the play between darkness and light, a structure realised after the library. This was the Viipuri funeral chapel cum mortuary, completed in 1939. The design is by Ragnar Ypyä[497] who was one of Aalto's very first employees in 1924–1925. This was a structure dug into a rel-

[496] Schildt, G. 1994, 59. However, the chapel was realised according to a design by P.E. Blomstedt. Of Aalto's works this chapel is admittedly not the best example of variating between light and darkness, but is most of all revealing of Aalto's use of a single round light shaft to create a special atmosphere.

[497] Ragnar Amandus Ypyä (1900–1980) was the Viipuri city architect from 1936, after Uno Ullberg. He married Martta Martikainen-Ypyä (1904–1992). Like Alvar and Aino Aalto, also the Ypyä couple are known for their collaborative works produced in their joint architectural office.

atively narrow hill formation, with only one straight main façade visible. The main hall within was lit by a single conical skylight, positioned just above the catafalque where the casket would lie.[498]

Last, in respect to the use of light, there is one more line of analysis most architectural authors have noted in describing not only the library but most of Aalto's buildings. This is the use of natural and electric light alongside each other. In the library, there were the conical shafts, and in between them on the ceiling were integrated highly discreet metal shutters directing light towards the white interior walls. In the eyes of the *Karjala* newspaper's reporter, these metal shutters resembled the wings of small aeroplanes.[499] However, there are later examples where an electric lamp was positioned outside, right above the conical shaft, creating the effect that it becomes indistinguishable whether the light descending from above is natural or not.[500] In fact, the very design of the conical shafts works very effectively in deceiving the senses: in the main hall, the shafts provide completely even lighting conditions, and the shafts are so deep that it is difficult to try to get a glimpse of the sky. Therefore, before becoming accustomed to the space, it can seem quite surprising that the entire space is lit most of the time with only natural light. To push the idea of the light shafts as 'lamps', indeed before coming up with this solution, Aalto had drawn lamps for the main hall. He was intrigued by Poul Henningsen's studies of lighting, which were published for instance in the *Kritisk Revy* periodical.[501] The earliest evidence of Aalto´s interest are probably the Henningsen lamps that he used in a number of his buildings.[502] These lamps also appeared in the drawings for the library's first and second stages.[503]

[498] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1942, 17-20. The image brings to mind Aalto's morgue for the Paimio Sanatorium (1932), where there is an elongated, ellipsoid shaft. This is not the only conical skylight, but also other spaces receive light in this manner. Notably, the shafts are separate, one providing light for one space.

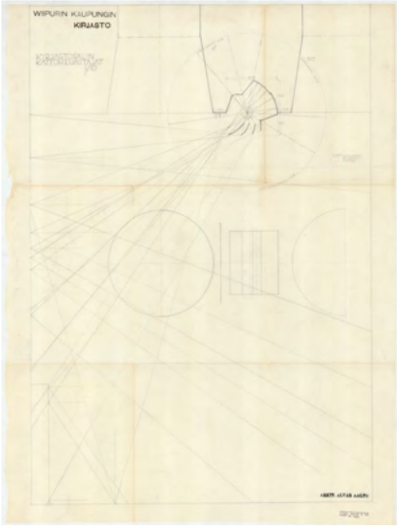
[499] *Karjala* 13.10.1935.

[500] Later examples are the Baker House (1946–1949) in Cambridge, Mass., the Rautatalo (1951–1955) and Enso Gutzeit (1959–1962) buildings in Helsinki. Pekka Korvenmaa (2003, 120) has interpreted that electric light integrated to the light shafts is an 'extension of natural light'. In Viipuri though, there was electric light integrated to the ceiling, but not in the conical shafts.

[501] Henningsen, P. 1926, 60-82, and 1927, 67-102.

[502] Aalto used the PH lamps in Muurame Church and the Turku Finnish City Theatre. E.g. discussed by Pearson, D. 1978, 52-53.

[503] Norvasuo, M. (2009, 110) discusses Aalto's interest in the PH lights. There are two aspects which stand out as fruitful notions for understanding better what Aalto might have been aiming at with designing the ceiling and using conical shafts. These are the idea that the shafts are 'lamps', (or as Aalto has said 'suns') and that in unison with this, Aalto closely studied the shape of the spaces where he developed the concept of light descending from the ceiling. These ideas are well summarised by Norvasuo, who also considers the relationship between light and the shape of the spaces, thus with an association harking back to the vaulted ceilings of churches.



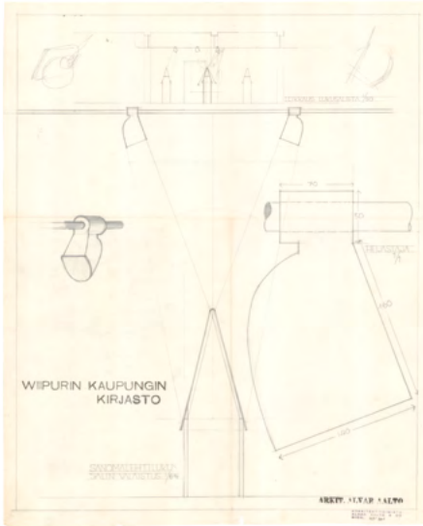


Fig. 78-79. *Detail drawings for the lighting fixtures in the main hall and the newspaper reading hall draw attention to Aalto's interest in directing light. (AF)*

Indeed, at the time when Aalto was working on the library, the question of lighting conditions was internationally topical among architects and engineers. The engineer Helge Kjäldman wrote a long article for the *Finnish Architectural Review* in 1927 about technical requirements in relation to lighting, and presented different types of lights for a variety of contexts.[504] Notably, it is pointed out here that bell-shaped lampshades positioned evenly, within appropriate distance from each other can be used to create even, glare-free lighting conditions. Aalto made similar drawings for the Turun Sanomat newspaper building's lights, including 'reflection studies'.[505] In early 1928, Aalto studied lighting closely also for the Suomen Biografi cinema.[506] This project seems to have provided him with a topic, as he wrote an article titled 'Rational Cinema', published in the Danish journal *Kritisk Revy.*[507] According to the article, the show's technical and physical constructions were inherent part of the architecture of the theatre. In this

[504] Kjäldman, H. 1927, 36-42. Aino Aalto's brother, Aku Marsio was an electric engineer, working for the Helsinki Electricity Company. He has also been referred to as the person who 'electrified Finland'. Thus, Aku Marsio is a person to have more than likely shared ideas and knowledge with Alvar Aalto. I want to thank Renja Suominen-Kokkonen for pointing out this connection.

[505] Original drawings AF Drawing Archives.

[506] Original drawings dated 6.3. and 6.6. 1928, Architect office Aalto. AF Drawing Archives.

[507] Aalto, A. 1928, 66. See also Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 259. In Aalto´s view this also applied to traditional theatres, where light becomes a 'psychologically enhanced problem'. Moreover, in this project Aalto studied not only light, but also acoustics was an essential aspect Aalto considered in context of the movie theatre.

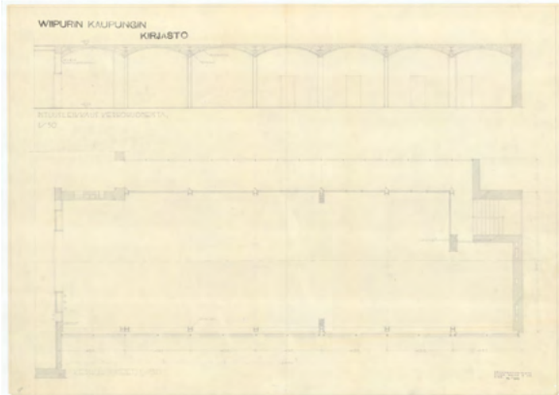
case, too, Aalto stated that the goal was to convey the impression of a single space, but this time the solution was a system of shielding screens, to create an entire non-reflecting space.[508] Thus, this design was all about creating ideal kind of darkness, so that the audience could see the film without any other source of light disturbing the experience. This is in fact most telling of both Aalto's ideas concerning light, but also in regard to other design solutions that he repeated in number of his works: technical solutions were each time tuned for a particular purpose, and based on the function of the space, either to enhance or play down the human senses.

In sum, these selected examples introduced here are representative of the way light, most specifically the use of the 57 conical light shafts in a single space, has been contextualised by architectural authors through proposing possible inspirations and comparing the library to Aalto's other works. What the over-arching focus appears to be in the context of architecture, is what specific design solutions 'do' with light: the 57 light shafts create a shadow-free space, and the single shaft enhances the experiential difference between light and dim, creating effects of blurring the division between natural and electric light, inside and outside, and this way, very effectively speaking to the central 'problem of the human eye' as Aalto put it.

Acoustics

'The wing with the club rooms and offices is of reinforced concrete. Here the acoustic structure is most of all of wood. The ceiling of the festivities hall is covered with wave-shaped (approximately 58 m^2) lamellas, the purpose of which is to spread sound, most of all of spoken voices, in such way that the area of the hall would be acoustically equal. In accordance with the nature of the events in the hall I have had as the premise, that for example general discussions would be just as important as individual speeches. Due to this, and unlike for instance in concert halls, the acoustic construction was resolved so that the point of origin point of sound is arbitrary, i.e. that any point in the space (of a certain average level) should be ideal as both the sending and reception point. I understand acoustic questions as most of all physiological and psychological questions,

[508] Published in English in Schildt, G. 1997, 66-71. In *Turun Sanomat* 6.7.1929, 'Two day long breakfast at four restaurants' [Kaksi päivää aamiaista neljässä ravintolassa] Aalto told the newspaper reporter how he had seen a 'speaking-film' in Stockholm,'The Jazz Singer' starring Al Jolson (1927). Aalto's view was that sound films would develop in their own direction and that unlike ordinary (silent) films, they are more like theatre on film. The title of the article comes from Aalto having told that he had a two-day breakfast in four restaurants with Gunnar Asplund, as this trip was for leisure.



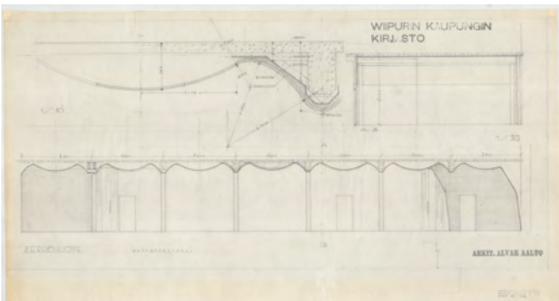


Fig 80-81. *The acoustic ceiling of the lectures hall developed from segmental vaults to an undulating surface. (AF)*

where purely mechanical solutions do not fulfil the requirements.'[509]

According to Aalto, the socially active part of the building was focused on ´literary propaganda´ and ´societal education´, and following this logic opened towards the outside. If in the other part of the building the main premiss was the human eye, here, Aalto says, it was an acoustically pleasant atmosphere. Indeed, acoustics is an architectural theme which later authors have taken up without fail.[510] However, it could be easily missed that what Aalto referred to as the socially active part, was in fact a specific space: the lecture hall, to which Aalto referred to in the above quote as the club rooms, pointing to the dual function of the same space.[511] Even further, the analysis of acoustics in the library is evoked by one specific design solution: the undulating ceiling of the lecture hall.

In 1936, Morton Shand wrote: 'The outstanding feature of the lecture room… is the curiously undulating profile of its acoustic timber ceiling that has a surface area of no less than 58 square metres. Some 30.000 knotless strips of red Karelian pinewood, cut from a tract of dead forest, went to the making of this false roof. The specific object for which these gracefully recurrent Baroque curves were so laboriously constructed was to design a hall for debates, in which the speakers

[509] Aalto's original description in the *Finnish Architectural Review* 1935, 152.

[510] The most telling example of this is that in his book *Space, Time and Architecture* in the chapter dedicated to Aalto, Sigfried Giedion (1954, 578) entitled the entire section concerning the library 'The Undulating Wall'.

[511] It was possible to divide the lecture hall into smaller 'club rooms', with aid of folding partition walls. This also explains the real purpose for doors on the inside wall, leading to a corridor. Normally the public would use only the large doorway from the entrance hall. However, this explains why the terms 'club rooms' and lecture hall can be found to be confusing, as both refer to the same space. The rooms above the lecture hall are for the staff, having served from the very beginning different library administration purposes.

might rise anywhere in the floor, be interrupted here and there from the opposite side, and called to order from one end of it, having equal all-round audibility. The prototype for this, the English House of Commons, with its notoriously defective acoustic properties, could only offer a cautionary example. The architect of the Viipuri Library claims that after years of experiment he has been able to construct a debating-chamber in it which has proved 99 per cent acoustically perfect – by which is meant that any point on its floor, and some seven feet above it, is equally good for the transmission and reception of even the faintest sounds from every other point of the hall.'[512]

The undulating ceiling had its own preliminary versions, though notably in the library this very special design appears only in the last set of Aalto's drawings. In the drawings of 1928–29 there were no hints of the undulating ceiling. However, in February 1929 the *Uusi Aura* newspaper's reporter had met Aalto, and wrote: '…We exchanged courtesies. In association with the Vallila Church competition, he had invented as a 'by-product' an acoustic hall, where one can hear the faintest whisper in any place in the hall. The whole thing can be arranged with a type of ceiling solution, which, developed sufficiently, can be applied to any type of space. How might it work in a school? He had solved the design of Vallila Church by specifically focusing on acoustics, and defying traditional forms of our churches. But in church buildings great exceptions are not accepted.'[513] The initial, undated, sketches for the library's lecture hall illustrate that Aalto first tried out symmetric semi-circles, and in each half of the semi-circle would have been a reflecting surface. This led to the curved shape transforming into an undulating line. However, as was the case with the conical light shafts, also in the case of the undulating ceiling it is difficult to pinpoint any evident inspiration. A possible reference is architect Yrjö Blomstedt´s handicrafts building from 1905 for the Jyväskylä Teacher Training Institute. There, Blomstedt used in two of the lecture halls a curving ceiling of wooden panelling, probably for acoustic reasons.[514]

The reference points outside of Finland stress most of all the acoustic motivation. The form of the ceiling of the Salle Pleyel[515] in Paris has been suggested as a potential foreign inspiration for the library's undulating ceiling. Completed in 1927, this concert hall was based on engineer Gustave Lyon's principles, where

[512] Shand, M. 1936, 110. This article includes floor plans, sections, photographs accompanying the description. To my knowledge, Shand is the only person to have referred to the British House of Commons in association with the library.

[513] *Uusi Aura* 6.2.1929.

[514] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 261-262. It is known that Blomstedt´s research of East Karelian vernacular architecture inspired him in his own works.

[515] The Salle Playel, Paris, was originally built in 1839 and reconstructed by Gustave Lyon in 1925–1927. http://www.annales.org/archives/x/lyon.html Accessed May 2015.

the acoustic concept relied on the use of a curving ceiling to spread sound evenly across the space. Although it seems that the Salle Playel was not acoustically as successful as had been hoped, it nevertheless influenced later cinemas and concert halls.[516] In 1926–27 Aalto made several sketches for the Palais des Nations competition in Geneva, but no complete entry or detailed plan has survived.[517] Nonetheless, this could have had significance later on, because the sketches for the meeting hall were evidently inspired by the theatres of Antiquity. In Aalto's sketches, the centre of the building was occupied by a vast assembly hall in the form of a Greek theatre. Here, light entered through a colonnade, which rose like that of a classical temple above the flat roof, with a view of the surrounding Alps.[518] Intriguingly, Le Corbusier also made an entry for this competition, where together with Gustaf Lyon they developed further the acoustical ideas of the Salle Playel. Also their proposal was associated with the concept of theatres of Antiquity. Although there is not much resemblance in appearance, according to Le Corbusier, acoustic principles created a connection with Antiquity, asserting that it was possible for the person sitting furthest away from the stage to hear perfectly because there was no ceiling.[519]

It can be interpreted that both in creating the ceiling filled with the light shafts, and similarly in designing the undulating ceiling for the lecture hall, Aalto turned the ceiling into a kind of natural element: though different in appearance, both spaces play with the idea of creating an illusion of being outside. In the main hall the solution is in service of light, in the lecture hall, of acoustics. A third project that Aalto must have known is the Helsingborg Concert Hall, opened in 1932 and designed by Sven Markelius, who was Aalto's close friend and colleague. In this project, Gustaf Lyon was again consulted for the acoustics. Unlike in the Salle Playel and the Palais des Nations, the main hall was a rectangular box, but above the stage there was an acoustic canopy constructed of concrete lamellas.

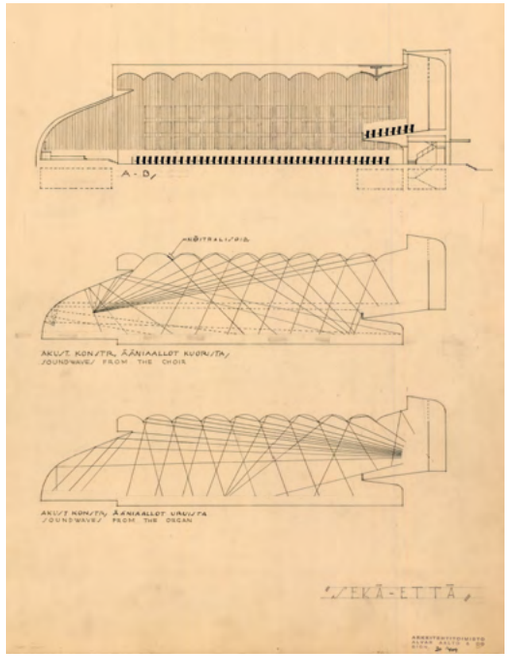
To consider Aalto's own projects, also the acoustic ceiling is something that can be recognised as an architectural theme Aalto studied in number of his projects. During the time he was designing the library, Aalto had participated in two

[516] Norvasuo, M. 2009, 69, 255.

[517] Schildt, G. 1994, 127-128.

[518] Schildt, G. (1994, 127) references here Aalto's Liittopankki bank competition entry for Helsinki from 1926. Here Aalto toyed with ideas of a classical temple and a court with natural lighting. P.E. Blomstedt won the competition, based on which the building was realised. Schildt, G. 1994, 135.

[519] Le Corbusier (1928, 108) discussed acoustics in detail in his work *Une Maison – un Palais*, where he also presented his ideas on the strip window. See also Norvasuo, M. 2009, 68. Norvasuo, M. (2009, 66.) has pointed out that like Le Corbusier, Aalto had studied the shape of the ceiling in Vallila Church with use of a drawing illustrating the shape of the ceiling, radial lines crisscrossing the space, reminiscent of a drawing by Le Corbusier. The Salle Playel and Le Corbusier's competition entry were published in 1927 in the Swedish periodical *Byggmästaren.*



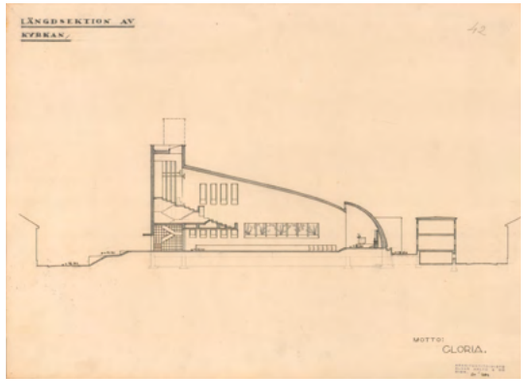


Fig. 82-83. *Aalto studied ideal acoustics in the competition entries for the Vallila Church in 1929 and the Tehtaanpuisto Church in 1930. (AF)*

important competitions where the ceiling served acoustic purposes: in 1929 was the Vallila Church competition and in spring 1930 the competition for Vierumäki Sport's Institute.[520] Most evidently Aalto developed the idea of an acoustic ceiling in his entry for the Tehtaanpuisto Church competition, which closed in November 1930. In addition, there was the University of Helsinki extension competition in 1931.[521] The competition entry for Vallila Church, has been seen to have drawn acoustic inspiration from the Salle Playel in Paris, which Aalto would have likely known through Le Corbusier. In Vallila Church, the entire space directs sound from the altar, while in Tehtaanpuisto the ceiling was its own element, separate from the rest of the space, curving down to the floor behind the altar, in a way reminiscent of the library's lecture hall. In Tehtaanpuisto Church, the ceiling consists of identical segmented parts, similar to Aalto's preliminary sketches for the ceiling of the library's lecture hall.

In addition to these competition entries which have been interpreted as precedents of the undulating ceiling, there are two types of structures illustrative of how Aalto had worked with curving wooden surfaces during his early career.

[520] Norvasuo, M. 2009, 64. Altogether this appears to be the point in time when Aalto came up with several new design ideas.

[521] This is discussed by Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 260-261. Aalto made an entry for the extension of the University of Helsinki in 1931, and in 1937, an entry for the extension to the University of Helsinki Library – the two of which are not to be confused.

These are church restorations and bandstands, referred to in Finnish as 'singing stages'. During the 1920s, Aalto was responsible of more than ten restorations of wooden churches, originally built during the 1700s and 1800s.[522] One of these was the restoration of Korpilahti Church[523] in 1926. This church had wide wooden vaults, uniting in the large main cupola in the middle.[524] However, it is not solely the churches Aalto knew closely due to having planned their restoration work. In Finland, churches still have a seminal role today as part of the country's architectural history, and also in Aalto's case, other wooden churches could be seen as a possible influence, with which Aalto would have most likely become acquainted as a student of architecture. Among the finest examples are the churches of Keuruu, Petäjävesi and Pihlajavesi, located near Jyväskylä.[525] While church restorations are not usually emphasised as part of Aalto's 'oeuvre', i.e. not representing Aalto's own works, it seems evident that a close study of the use of wood and ways in which the relationship between ceiling and wall was resolved in these wooden structures must have affected Aalto's thinking.[526]

The other type of structure which is closely associated with the ideas of acoustics and curving surfaces are the bandstands. These were first realisations where Aalto used a wooden structure as an acoustic element.[527] Yet, similarly to the church restorations, the bandstands do not represent notable works and thus have been rarely mentioned in discussions of Aalto's works. In 1922 Aalto, as a recently graduated architect, received a commission to design most of the

[522] See appendix 5 for Aalto's church restorations. After Göran Schildt (1994, 39-41).

[523] Korpilahti Church was originally designed by Carlo Francesco Bassi in 1825–1826. Aalto´s drawings dated October 1926, AF.

[524] Aalto opened the octagonal tower to the church nave allowing light to enter. This restoration is illustrative of his having closely studied acoustics as well as lighting. Heinonen, R.L. (1986, 261) discusses this. Aalto´s restoration experience and probable influence from wooden churches seems most convincing, but to my knowledge, Heinonen is the only one to have expressed this idea in a publication.

[525] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 262.

[526] *Sisä-Suomi* 12.7.1925. Here Aalto made a note of knowing for example Petäjävesi Church, and how in Viitasaari Church for which he was planning the renovation, one aim was to renew the cupolas and to improve the acoustic. Aalto was in fact commissioned to design the Petäjävesi Church restoration in 1927, but he did not have the time to do this work. *Sisä-Suomi* 8.11.1927 and 29.11.1927. Aalto praised the beauty of wooden churches also in his article ´Our Old and New Churches´. *Iltalehti* 14.12.1921, translated in English in Schildt, G. 1997, 35-37.

[527] Also for example, the stage for the Seinäjoki Civil Guards building remained an accompanying structure that was never realised. Even in the design for the library's site plan, when the house of culture was still to be included, in addition to a statue, Aalto had sketched a 'singing stage' to the square. Thus, it is not possible to know how many stage constructions Aalto would have designed, as they appear as sketched ideas at some point in several projects.

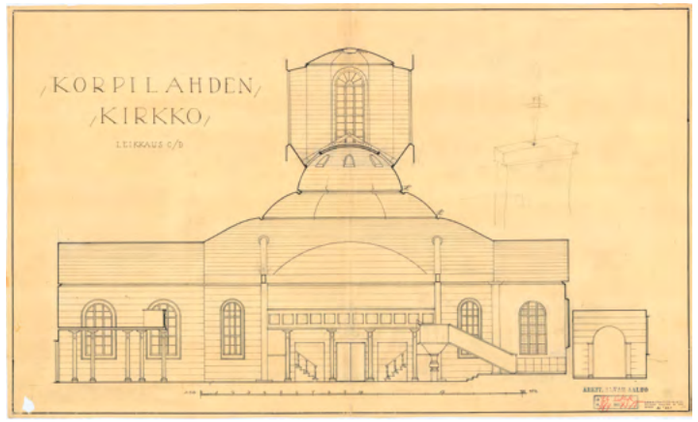


Fig. 84-85. *Aalto studied the qualities of wooden paneling also in the renovation of Korpilahti Church in 1926–27 and the bandstand for the Tampere Trade Fair in 1922. (AF)*

pavilions for the Second National Trade Fair in Tampere.[528] As part of this, Aalto designed a sea-shell shaped bandstand. A bandstand was also part the Seinäjoki Civil Guards building, a project which began in 1924 and was completed five years later. The bandstand was rounded at the back, and it had a baldachin-like projecting roof. It is, however, uncertain if it was ever built.[529] Then, in 1929 Alvar Aalto and his friend and colleague Erik Bryggman were commissioned to design the Turku 700th Anniversary Exhibition, where Aalto also displayed his very first

[528] The fair was held in Tampere from 21 to 30 June 1922. Schildt, G. 1994, 299. Interviews with Aalto were published for example in *Iltalehti* 26.5.1922 and *Aamulehti* 26.6.1922.

[529] Schildt, G. 1994, 100. Interestingly, Schildt has dedicated a separate note to this bandstand, while the main project is presented on its own. V.3.5. bandstand for Seinäjoki Civil Guards building. Drawings of the project, AF. Also in 1924 Aalto designed the architectural setting for the Jyväskylä Song Festival. It is not known for sure, but presumably also this design would have included a bandstand. Schildt, G. 1994, 100.

bent-wood furniture.[530] This event has been referred to as the first conscious 'manifesto, to promote functionalist architecture in Finland´.[531] For this exhibition, Aalto designed a bandstand with an organically curving backdrop, accompanied by a stepped terrace in front of it.[532] These bandstands are associated with the fact that the undulating ceiling in the library was in many ways 'out of place'; a wooden structure within this 'white box', an undulating ceiling in a building where all other ceilings have smooth white finish and clean-cut corners. Thus, to push the interpretation, the undulating ceiling of the library's lecture hall could in fact be perceived as a kind variation of the bandstands: the undulating ceiling was quite literally hung above the audience in the long rectangular hall, reaching down at the short end wall behind the point where the speaker/performer would stand. Furthermore, in analysing Aalto's career in its entirety, the common theme across his works is that he quite evidently 'quoted himself'. In other words, Aalto typically varied architectural themes that he had studied for his earlier projects, to be taken up in a later work in a reinterpreted form. As follows, it can be deducted that the bandstands and church restorations represent projects where Aalto carefully thought through ideas concerning the use of wood, curving shapes and acoustics,[533] which consequently became part of his 'toolkit' of accumulating knowledge and design ideas.

To offer examples of other architects' projects for which the library's undulating ceiling might have given inspiration, there are in particular two interiors which have been close in time as well as geographically near. First is the Hotel Seurahuone in Sortavala. There, after an architectural competition organised in 1937, Erkki Huttunen designed a hall with a descending ceiling, constructed of strips of wood.[534] The second interior design is an undulating ceiling canopy, made for a bandstand in a restaurant in Viipuri by Martta Martikainen-Ypyä and Ragnar

[530] Schildt, G. 1994, 299.

[531] http://www.mfa.fi/arkkitehtiesittely?apid=3124 Accessed Jan.2017

[532] Schildt, G. 1994, 102. Schildt also notes the Alppiharju open-air theatre in Helsinki, which would have included four irregularly curving screens. The sketches were dated in 1935. Norvasuo, M. (2009, 69) again suggests that the Turku bandstand lamella shape could have drawn its inspiration from Gustave Lyon.

[533] It has been suspected, however, whether the undulating ceiling of the library's lecture hall really has an acoustic function at all and whether Aalto most of all wanted to give a 'scientific' explanation for this design. Professor Nils Erik Wickberg has expressed the view that Aalto was not particularly musical, and hence, the undulating ceiling of the lecture hall is more about form than function. Lahti,L. 1997, 71.

[534] The Hotel Seurahuone at Sortavala was originally designed by Onni Tarjanne in 1909, but was essentially rebuilt according to Erkki Huttunen's plans in 1938. This is when an auditorium with 550 seats was added. Jokinen, T. 1993, 74-78; *Finnish Architectural Review* 6/1941, 81-87. A description and images of the building can be found at: http://www.sotahistoriallisetkohteet.fi/app/sights/view/-/id/127 Accessed Jan. 2017.

Ypyä. Part of the Restaurant Munkki dining hall had an undulating ceiling, and in particular the separate 'canopy' is reminiscent of the ceiling of the library's lecture hall.[535] While this was a design which can be understood to have drawn inspiration from the library, it indeed enforces the interpretation that the undulating ceiling can be perceived in fact as a separate structure within the library's rectangular lecture hall.

Drawing from the materials discussing the lecture hall's undulating ceiling, two very different themes emerge: on the one hand that of acoustics and on the other hand the use of the undulating line. Accordingly, both can and have been followed up separately in analyses of Aalto's works. In 1957 the Church of the Three Crosses near Imatra was completed where the concrete walls and ceilings create various curved and arched forms, of which also an acoustic model survives.[536] Yet, what has come to be Aalto's 'trademark' is the undulating line as its own independent theme.[537] Therefore, it is the library's undulating ceiling where both the idea of an acoustic design and the undulating line are simultaneously present, while in most of Aalto's works, there were other types of acoustic solutions, and the undulating line was appropriated elsewhere, for vast range of different purposes. For example, if in the Viipuri Library Aalto motivated the undulating ceiling with its acoustic qualities, a few years later, in 1938 the 'Forest Pavilion' for the Agricultural Exhibition in Lapua was a structure with undulating, softly curving walls; a structure with no corners. In reality, while the form of this pavilion appeared to be free, the drawings reveal that the walls were constructed with use of straight surfaces alternating with semi-circular segments, having a standard radius of 200 cm. Similarly, the library's ceiling appeared to be 'free-form', while in fact it was based on perfectly regular repetition.[538] Thus, the Forest Pavilion's walls and the library's undulating ceiling both created an illusion of free form, while in reality both were put together from regular parts.

In 1939 Aalto designed the Finnish Pavilion for the New York World's Fair. Here, Finland could not afford its own pavilion, but the architect was left with a rectangular space within a large exhibition hall, where several small nations had

[535] The Restaurant Munkki, Viipuri, Mustainveljestenkatu 16. *Finnish Architectural Review* 1942, 27-28. In the same restaurant was also a curtain by Martta Martikainen-Ypyä, which covered the entire window wall. Although the design of the fabric was very different, it recalls Aino Aalto's curtain in the children's library in being an almost structural element. Also published in the same issue was the As OY Kullervo 9, housing block in Viipuri by the same architects. There was an undulating screen made of strips of wood, functioning as a low element separating the entrance way and the living room. *Finnish Architectural Review* 1942, 26.

[536] Schildt, G. 1994, 52.

[537] Pelkonen, E.-L. (2009, 1-11) discusses Aalto's inspirations from Finnish nature; the aurora borealis, Finnish lakes, and the importance of forests as part of the notion of national identity.

[538] Schildt, G. 1994, 175.

their space. Aalto placed in the space a high, forward leaning wall with a wavy form, and a free form balcony on the other wall, thus transforming a boxy room into a confrontation of two dramatic façades.[539] One more famous 'function' for the undulating shape can be found in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Senior Dormitory, also known as Baker House, realised between 1946 and 1949.[540] Here, Aalto considered it psychologically inappropriate that the students' rooms would offer a view of the cars driving by, and thus came up with a design which allowed as many rooms as possible to face the sun, with a view of the river. The solution was to give the house a meandering, serpentine form, increasing the length of the façade and producing oblique views.[541]

In sum, the discussions concerning the undulating ceiling are illustrative of the fact that this form is a theme that Aalto varied for multiple purposes. It can be found in the library in the ceiling, giving shape to an entire pavilion, to offer more wall surface and create drama in a boxy exhibition room. Indeed, when one begins to think where the undulating form can be found in Aalto's works, there is no end to potential examples where it appears as realised in very different scales and in different materials. Beyond architecture, among the best known items designed by Alvar Aalto is the undulating, free-form Savoy vase, the so-called Aalto vase from 1936, which can be found in innumerable Finnish homes and public spaces even today. Thus, the undulating form is flexible; it does not follow any one assigned function.

Space under one ceiling

'The core of the library, with its lending hall and reading areas, is united so that the entire main part is one grand hall, where the appropriation of varying floor levels has made it possible to divide the interior. Similarly, the use of different heights makes supervision more effective, aided by the solution that the supervision point is partly higher than the spaces used by the public.'[542]

[539] Ibid. Later, this undulating, literally imposing wall has been described as reminiscent of the Northern lights. Schildt points out that here Aalto was able to realise an idea he had toyed with when designing Villa Mairea's hall-like living room. Another version of the story is that Aalto had been looking for a solution to create wall surface into the boxy space. He had then put a piece of thin cardboard into the model he had as an aid. The result was that in a restricted space, the cardboard was forced to take an undulating shape. Rautsi, J. personal communication 2017.

[540] Aalto had been appointed research fellow at the institute in 1940, and in 1946 he was commissioned to design a student dormitory next to the busy shoreline drive along the Charles River. The building was inaugurated in June 1949. Schildt, G. 1994, 216-217.

[541] Ibid.

[542] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1935, 152.

In his 1935 description of the library, Aalto also wrote that there were two parts to consider in the library project: 'the library in its different sections', and the part, which was 'active in society'. By the 'active' part he referred to the lecture hall cum club rooms, the space with its undulating ceiling discussed above. In describing the different sections, Aalto speaks of the large main library hall supervised from the librarians' desk at the highest point in the middle, while the space was divided into three floor levels, all under one ceiling. The floor levels marked the three functions of each section: first the reading room, second the lending hall and third the 'sunken area', which came to be called the 'book pit', where foreign literature was originally shelved. This large space was possible to access from two directions. At the far end of the entrance hall were a few stairs, which led to doors to the left and to the right. The door to the left leading to the reading hall, the door to the right leading to the book pit, from where the wooden rail continued to the highest level, with the lending area and the librarians' desk. Narrow stairs from the other side of the librarians' desk led again to the reading room, making it possible to move between all three sections without needing to exit again. This main hall consisting of the three sections is the space where in Aalto's words the public and the books met. Due to this, the nature of the mid-part of the building is conserving and enclosed from the outside.[543] What is striking in this space is that while there are notable differences between the level of the floor between these three sections, this entire space is united into one, all under one ceiling. There are no windows to the outside, and instead the entire main hall receives light through the 57 conical light shafts.

In regard to the spatial concept, there are three lines of interpretation which surface from architectural authors' analyses of this space. The first one speaks to the notion of how the space is experienced, specifically with reference to the materials and colours; the second one is the idea of 'continuous space'; and third are interpretations which describe the space as a landscape. The original newspaper articles are examples of descriptions of how the space was experienced. In the first chapter, it was noted that Gustaf Strengell's and Nils Gustav Hahl's first articles stand out in that their accounts represent professional reception, and indeed went further than solely aiming at describing what the interiors looked like. Strengell's review of the library was evidently positive, while he also offered some very elegantly formulated critique. In his view, Aalto's artistry had become excessive in places, recalling Japanese tea-ceremony cha-no-yu:

'A Swedish critic made recently, in the context of an exhibition of furnished apartments in Stockholm, an observation which he articulated in the following manner: Functionalism has begun to blossom. This expression comes to mind of its own accord when walking in the new library building in Viipuri. In our

[543] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1935, 145-157.

architecture Alvar Aalto is not only the sharpest thinker of the modernist circle, but its most sensitive interpreter. The Viipuri Library offers numerous indications of how much his building design is defined by artistic and not only utilitarian motives. Unfortunately, here and there the effect is one of artistry; certain details are so extremely refined that they bring to mind Japanese cha-no-yu. Mentioning Japan here is no coincidence. The interiors in the building have in many ways an obvious Japanese streak, associated with a light and bright colour scheme, which gives the rooms not only their delightful spaciousness, but also their scent. The Japanese influence shows itself especially in the choice of only light wood species – birch, oak, common beach – in panels and furniture and even more clearly in the ways the smooth surfaces are treated: they are in the Japanese way mostly not treated at all, but left "natural", which is quite pleasing to the eye and lovely and pleasant to touch, although from the practical point of view perhaps less well thought through. Also here in Aalto's latest work, the new tendency blossoms. In [this building] Functionalism flirts with Madame Chrysanthème.'[544]

Secondly, the arrangement of the main hall has been analysed as a sophisticated ´continuous space´, as the space continues upwards, at different levels and in different directions vertically. Continuous space had been previously present in Aalto's designs from the mid-1920s and in his own references to a Pompeian house.[545] As an example, a library was included in Aalto's competition entry for the Finnish Parliament House in Helsinki in 1923–1924. The large library had shelves on nine landings in the form of a curbed theatre cavea. It also had a reading room running through it, open to three stories, and lit with clerestory windows. This solution left the surveillance desk in the middle of the long wall, down where the stage might be.[546]

As possible reference points for the continuous space, also foreign examples have been brought up. Vincent Scully has followed the development of the idea for a continuous space from the American Shingle Style to Frank Lloyd Wright´s

[544] Strengell, G. 1935. Also Schildt, G. (1985, 114) references Strengell, but only speaks of the association between use of wood and Japanese architecture.

[545] Best known example of this is Aalto's article 'From Doorstep to Living Room' (Schildt, G. 1997, 49-55), originally published in Finnish in a 1926 sample number of *Aitta* periodical.

[546] Schildt, G. 1994, 127. Competition for the Finnish Parliament House was from September 1923 to June 1924. Aalto submitted entry titled 'Flagello', but did not receive a prize. Drawings of the project, AF. The winning, realised design is by J.S. Sirén. Heinonen, R.-L. (1986, 260) describes: ´In this design there was a high space lit from the rim of the wall and ceiling and shelving were used to create a stair-like construction, arranged symmetrically around the space, creating a space in the manner of an angular amphitheatre.´

prairie houses,[547] through which the concept then culminated in the De Stijl movement and Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion from 1929. Wright´s prairie houses characteristically have a hearth as a focal element, around which all the main spaces are arranged. In the library the focal point is the librarians' surveillance point, around which spaces opens all around at different levels. Alternatively in some contexts, the library's surveillance point has been compared to a ship's bridge – a paragon of functionalism.[548] The entire main hall is closed from the outside as there are no windows, only the conical light shafts in the ceiling. Thus, contrary to designs by Wright and Mies – as well as many of Aalto´s own designs – in the library the main volume remains solid, and does not connect the interior and exterior spaces.[549] With regard to Aalto's own description of the two sides to the library project; on the one hand an enclosed, quiet space and on the other hand one that is 'active in society', it becomes understandable that Aalto wanted to make the difference evident through the main hall being enclosed, the lecture hall having a window reaching the length of the long wall and facing the park.

Furthermore, it has been proposed that the asymmetrical arrangement of the volumes can be associated with designs from 1922–1923 by the Dutch architects Theo van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren.[550] Possible Soviet period comparison points are Kasimir Malevich's workers' club project from 1926, and Aleksandr Nikolsky´s plans for a club building from 1927. To add, the competition for the Lenin Library in Moscow had been resolved in 1928, a year after the competition for the Viipuri Library. Though the Lenin Library is many times larger than the Viipuri Library, and as such not directly comparable, also among the Lenin Library competition entries were similar arrangements of volumes, spaces that continued through different levels. Aleksandr, Leonid and Viktor Vesnin´s winning entry is

[547] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 260; Scully, V. 1960, 119-122. Here, it worth noting that while Wright was known in Europe since the publication of the Wasmuth Portfolio in 1910, it is difficult to find references to Wright's works in Finland, preceding the end of the 1930s.

[548] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 257.

[549] This interpretation is presented by Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 260.

[550] The architect and urban planner Cornelis van Eesteren (1897–1988) was the chairman of the CIAM, in which Aalto was an active member. The Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg (1883–1947) is best known as the founder and leader of De Stijl. http://static.nai.nl/regie_e/manifestation/eesteren_e.html Accessed Dec. 2016.

the best-known of these.[551] However, Aalto himself made no reference to any of these examples, and there is no evidence that he was aware of them at the time of the library's design process.

The third line of interpretation has underlined the interior space of the library as a landscape. Here the 'framing idea' to which all the technical and design solutions fit is that from the outside the library is a 'white box' while inside it there is a landscape. In the main hall, there are several routes to take. Therefore, while the librarians can have a view from the supervision point, 'from the top of the hill' in the main hall, the common visitor only sees the section where he/she is currently at. While the library is relatively compact, Aalto created with the use of different floor levels and doors/openings a complete landscape furnished with books, plants and users of the building. To push the interpretation once again, the library is like a mystery box, a rectangular volume in the green Torkkeli Park, the interior revealing a kind of skilfully designed landscape with several paths to take, a hill in the centre of the main hall, lit with 57 suns.[552]

Examples of this type of interpretation have been presented by Simo Paavilainen, an expert on 1920s Nordic Classicism, in associating the library with Ancient Greek temples. He analyses that the asymmetry and exceptional location of the Hall of the Carytiads along the long, silent side of the Erechtheum on the Acropolis in Athens might well have given Aalto the idea for the asymmetric position of the stairway for the library's competition entry, making the arrangement of the lending space reminiscent of the inner space of this temple. The other is the temple of Apollo at Didyma, so wide that the cella was originally left uncovered. At one end of the cella there was a broad flight of steps leading up to where the answers of the oracle were left. Thinking of this, the control desk of the library acquires a slightly comical effect. At the opposite end of the Didyma temple's cella was a small temple for the god's image. At this point Aalto had placed steps

[551] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 256. Also Kirmo Mikkola (1981) has written about Aalto's knowledge of Soviet reference points. The contacts and possible influences between Finnish and Soviet architects represents an entire issue of its own. However, many Finnish architects, such as Aalto, have expressed the view that from Finland gaining independence in 1917 to the beginning of the WW II there would have been extremely little exchange, with Finnish architects even being completely in the dark about more recent architecture on the Soviet side. This has been discussed in a number of the interviews with Finnish architects, in practice before WW II. Interviews of the Finnish Architectural Society. MFA library archives. However, in 1932 both Aalto and his friend, Swiss architect Hans Schmidt wrote about Soviet urban planning for *Granskaren* pediodical and the *Finnish Architectural Review*. Raija-Liisa Heinonen has written a most informative article where she has mapped out international architectural journals that would have been available in Finland between the 1920s and 1940s. Manuscript in the MFA library archives.

[552] Also Paavilainen, S. (1990, 13) has stressed the effect of the library's core: 'When one stepped through this doorway, it was as if going outside - daylight poured through the huge glass roof covering the whole room. It was as if the narrow rectangular space was roofless… Suddenly the visitor was surrounded by books.´

to the crypt of the book storage area. It can be only speculated whether these affinities were conscious or unwitting.[553]

In fact, what appears to happen with the third line of analysis is that the differences between the three architectural themes of light, acoustics and space begin to blur. As the presented examples show, the themes overlap and enmesh when the library and some other building are being compared. In particular, Swedish examples which have been offered as comparison points to the library are illustrative of this. The Swedish buildings also carry additional relevance because Aalto was a Swedish-speaker himself, and is known to have had close contacts with his colleagues, such as Gunnar Asplund and Sven Markelius. A building which has evoked many comparisons with the library is the Helsingborg Concert Hall by Markelius. The results of this competition had been announced in the spring of 1926, and this building was opened in 1932. Paavilainen views that Aalto was most likely enchanted by the huge portal in Markelius's winning entry, where a colourful, brightly lit doorway has the effect of a temple-like portal. In the library's competition entry with the protruding entrance, Aalto however put the building in the background, leaving only the entrance hall visible through the trees.[554] Like in the library, in this concert hall it is not immediately evident which route to take, and the visitor has several alternative 'paths' to choose from. The upper lobby is like a building within a building: 'That is to say the innermost house – the temple – converts the surrounding interior space into a 'virtual' open air space.'[555] What is noteworthy here, is that Aalto and Markelius were both working on their own projects while they remained in contact and exchanged ideas, both moving from a classicist design towards functionalism during the process.[556]

Paavilainen has also described Viipuri Library from the competition to the final version, recognising a close resemblance to Gunnar Asplund's Stockholm City Library. Paavilainen described how in the library's 1928 version where there still were the protruding entrance and glass ceiling in the lending hall '[t]he staircase offered library visitors a fine preparation for transition to the world of books, the hall of knowledge – and a 'neckland' to outside reality. After a dignified ascent without landings one passed through a narrow doorway into a cubic-shaped lobby. The journey from the outside had been through ever more murky,

[553] Paavilainen, S. 1990, 16.

[554] Paavilainen, S. (1990, 15.) notes that there had been fierce competition between Aalto and P.E. Blomstedt over the Jyväskylä Civil Guards building in the spring of 1926. In Blomstedt's second, purchased entry titled 'Mars' there was a temple gable furnished with a huge portal, reminiscent of that by Markelius. Thus, the direction between influences is not clear. The awarded entries were published in *Keskisuomalainen* 4.6.1926.

[555] Blomstedt, S. 17.9.2007.

[556] Rudberg, E. 2005, 28.

enclosed spaces. The culmination was achieved in the high-ceilinged lobby.'[557] A similar arrangement was to be found in Asplund's Skandia cinema, which has been discussed already earlier. In this building the dark green nocturnal space of the lower foyer was a powerfully illuminated white temple with red portals. In Scandia cinema there were several doorways to the auditorium, while Aalto exaggerated the solution with having only one doorway. Architect Severi Blomstedt has summarised that '...Asplund had consciously sought the atmosphere of an open-air piazza at night. The Scandia theatre could have been a set for a film by the Italian movie director Fellini! This open-air theme was not applied only in Viipuri Library but also in Aalto's many other later projects.'[558] However, in the library, under the conical lights it is eternal day in contrast to Asplund's magical night stage of the Scandia cinema.

In sum, the architectural concepts appropriating different floor levels within a single space, 'diffusing' the ceilings to create an effect as if one were outside, and the play between lighter and darker, taller and lower spaces, all these together create the experience of the 'core of the library, with its lending hall and reading areas, [which] are united so that the entire main part is one grand hall.'[559] Furthermore, this more detailed discussion on the development of the architectural themes of light, acoustics and space, makes it interesting to revisit Aalto's 1948 description of how he spent a long time establishing his perspective when designing the library.[560] The single and likely most often circulated drawing of the library is not a plan, section or other drawing from the design process, but instead Aalto's sketch of a 'fantastic landscape' which he explained to have drawn to conceive of the design concept: '[I drew] all kinds of fantastic mountain landscapes, with slopes lit by many suns in different positions, which gradually gave rise to the main idea of the building. The architectural framework of the library comprises several reading and lending areas stepped at different levels, with the administrative and supervisory centre at the peak. My childlike drawings were only indirectly linked with architectural thinking, but they eventually led to an interweaving of the section and ground plan, and to a kind of unity of horizontal and vertical construction.'[561] It however seems most likely that this drawing for a fantastic landscape was drawn only in retrospect, perhaps around 1947 when Aalto wrote the article 'The Trout and the Stream', quoted here. However, it is most likely that this drawing and this article carry an echo in later authors' interpretations where

[557] Paavilainen, S. 1990, 12.

[558] Blomstedt, S. 17.9.2007.

[559] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1935, 152.

[560] Schildt, G. 1997, 108.

[561] Ibid.

the library has been described as a landscape. Thus, once more, Aalto's 'author's voice' can be heard in the background of later analysis.

To conclude the discussion on the three architectural themes of light, acoustics and space, two aspects are worth making explicit. First, the buildings and specific reference points that later authors have described in connection with the library, are as a rule cited on the basis of resemblance. In other words, there is significant lack of evidence concerning which buildings Aalto might have known, not to mention what truly influenced him. Intriguingly, what this discussion has brought forth are in a sense the most evident comparison points, which nevertheless have not been particularly highlighted in existing writings concerning the library. These are the Swedish buildings, as this is the country that Aalto most frequently visited, and where he had several friends. This closeness in contacts is indeed easy to understand, as Swedish is the other official language in Finland, and was also Aalto's mother tongue. Regrettably it appears that a significant part of the exchange remains unrecorded, as direct references to the library remain scarce. Neither the Aalto Foundation archives, nor the ArkDes archives in Stockholm revealed any new letters which would have substantiated the exchanges relevant to the library. The other aspect worth making explicit is how the architectural authors have focused so forcibly on the design concepts that all attention has been directed to two themes: firstly, the undulating ceiling and the acoustics of the lecture hall, secondly, on the main hall with its landscape-like three-level floorspace under one ceiling, lit with the 57 conical shafts. The result is that only the publications with the library as the sole topic have mentioned the other spaces. The newspaper hall and the children's section with their own entrances, not to mention the entrance hall, or the secondary spaces in the library are as a rule left uncommented.

The un-noted segments of the design

Before moving on to the international reception, it is relevant to make a note of what the context of architecture has left un-noted. There are likely to be more, but three aspects stand out as having been worthy of recognising. The first is that in Aalto's original 1935 description he proposed that there were three elements to the design: Having defined the lecture hall's importance as a socially active site where the 'human ear' has the primary role, and the main library halls being enclosed and 'preserving' in nature, responding to requirements of human eye, there is a third element to the project: 'The above psychological division is united by the web of routes inside, architecturally the third main factor. The main entrance is at the crossing point of several paths in the park, access to the newspaper hall is directly from the street, the entrance and the entire children's section is to the west, from the playground area one floor level lower than the

main hall. The main entrance is dual, leading both to the library and the lecture hall.'[562] Explicitly, in 1935 Aalto described how the changing sites were an essential aspect in respect to the shape that the realised library took. Furthermore, as this quote illustrates, Aalto evidently thought of the building as a continuation of the site, a kind of 'node' where the paths in the park met.

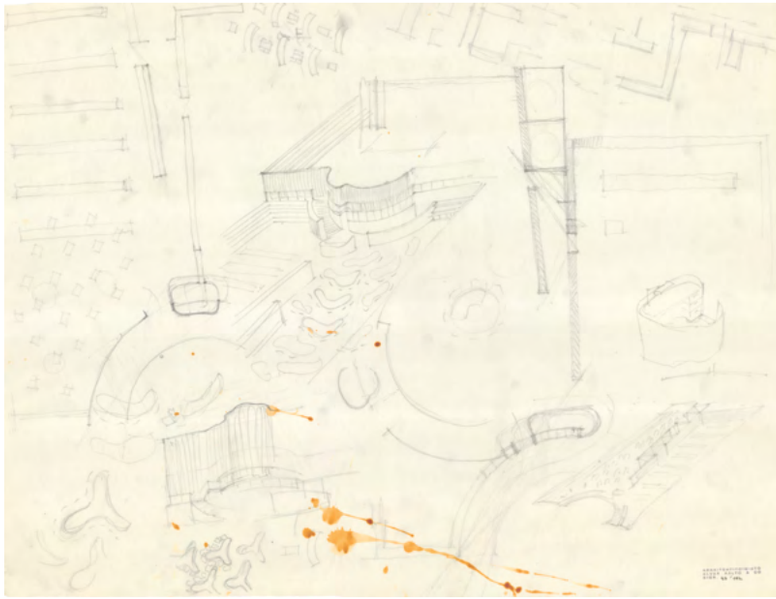


Fig. 86. *An undated sketch from the library's design process. In the middle is the curtain dividing the reading and lending halls. (AF)*

The second design solution which has not been picked up in descriptions of the main hall, containing the three floor levels, is that the space can be visually cut into two, with use of curtains located at the highest level, by the librarians' supervision point. These curtains do not reach the ceiling, but are hung on a curved rail between the librarians' desk and the reading hall below, still existing today. These curtains represent a design, which, like the undulating ceiling, appeared only in the last set of drawings. To offer an example from Aalto's own works, a project overlapping with the design process of the library, is the *Aitta* magazine's competition for 'affordable summer houses' from1928. This competition had two series, both of which Aalto won with his entries titled 'Konsoli' and 'Merry go round'. 'Merry go round' presented a round building on a hill, with a small round courtyard in the middle. This drawing for a cottage draws attention to what appear to be curtains to the sides of the entry of the courtyard. One can deduct the idea was that it would be possible to use these curtains to close the round courtyard

[562] Ervi, A. 1935, 28.

out of view from the outside, and into a full enclosed circle.[563] The art historian Renja Suominen-Kokkonen has underlined that it was Aino Marsio-Aalto who was most intrigued by the technical qualities of furniture and different types of textiles, present in so many buildings designed by Aino and Alvar Aalto.[564] In 1930 Alvar Aalto was appointed the chief architect of the Minimum Apartment Exhibition organised at Kunsthalle Helsinki. The exhibition included displays of wall hangings and curtains by Aino Aalto.[565] Yet, it is an international reference, which is reminiscent of the library's curving curtain-rail, floating in the air. In 1927 Lilly Reich and Mies van der Rohe designed Velvet and Silk Café as part of the Women's Fashion Exhibition in Berlin. This design introduced a space created with long curtains hanging from curved railings, creating intimate spaces within the large hall where the exhibition was set up.[566]

The third design solution, which has become an emblem of an 'Aaltoesque' library, is the sunken area, referred to as the book-pit. In the library's earlier versions there was a straight staircase leading to the main hall, up until the last set of drawings, where something happens: the stairs lead first to a square area, the book-pit, and by turning 180 degrees, the visitor can continue up a next flight of stairs, leading to the librarians' desk at the highest point. The book-pit is part of the entrance way, as well as an independent area in the 'landscape' of the library. The curiosity here is that for this design, it is difficult to come up with reference points where this kind of solution would be present, whether in libraries or other building types. Later, the book-pit becomes an 'Aaltoesque theme', recognisable in his later libraries. To name two, in the National Pensions Institute library in Helsinki, completed in 1956, there is a kind of compact version of the Viipuri Library's book-pit and lending area. A later building designed specifically as a library is the Rovaniemi City Library opened in 1966, boasts of an entire three book-pits positioned in a fan-shaped hall.[567] Thus, in Viipuri, where the earliest book-pit appears, Aalto seems to have 'compressed' the previously long stairs

[563] The winning proposals were also published by the *Aitta* periodical as separate small book titled *Halpoja Kesäasuntoja* [*Inexpensive summer housing*] in 1928.

[564] Aino Aalto's fascination for textiles is evidenced in a travel notebook of hers. AF. Among other notes, there are three separate mentions of Otti Berger who was a fabric designer, and a teacher at the Bauhaus. Renja Suominen-Kokkonen (2014) also notes that Aino Aalto was interested in Berger's fabric patterns, and this travel notebook contains the address of Berger's atelier in Berlin.

[565] Standertskjöld, E. 1992, 80. The original booklet published for the exhibition was titled *Pienasunto?*.

[566] http://www.hiddenarchitecture.net/2016/11/velvet-and-silk-cafe.html and https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2714?locale=en Accessed Jan 2017.

[567] See appendix 5 for a list of library spaces designed at Aalto's office.

into a square shape creating a solution of aesthetic interest, while the functional explanation is to give the main hall more shelf space.[568]

Upon the opening of the Viipuri Library in October 1935, Aalto was already internationally known, most of all because of the Paimio Sanatorium, which had been completed two years earlier. However, it can be argued these earlier projects added to Aalto's fame, and this way also to interest in the library. Furthermore, it appears that a number of other projects, whether competition entries or realised buildings, are illustrative of Aalto's turn from classicist architecture towards functionalism at the time he was designing the library. This is evidenced in the way architectural authors create context: in the preceding discussion on the three architectural themes, the library has been described in relation to Aalto's works, but also compared with other Finnish and foreign buildings. As a rule, the comparisons are made on the basis of formal resemblance between the buildings.

Nevertheless, this does raise the question of what then would be special about the library. Drawing from the analysis of Finnish and foreign architectural writers, one aspect emerges above all else: time. The library's design process explicitly took place at a time when important changes were taking place in both Aalto's thinking and in the area of new architecture internationally. However, soon after the library, Aalto moved on to realise completely different kinds of projects, and became interested in the use of free form, the use of wood, and later more varied ways to use brick. Also internationally the time window of new architecture was closing towards the end of the 1930s, marked by the beginning of World War II. Consequently, the library became a project which has been analysed to synthesise the architectural ideas of its time. This is illustrated by numerous later writers emphasising the library's role as a building which brought together a range of design solutions reflecting the turn from classicism to functionalism.[569] In respect to Aalto's oeuvre, the final version of the library has been interpreted as a synthesis of his consideration of space, light and acoustics which due to the long design process had time to evolve into the refined building. Göran Schildt has evaluated the library´s position in Aalto´s oeuvre, asserting that it was even more significant than the Paimio Sanatorium. Here was the condensation point of Aalto´s functionalism, while at the same time, the library is indicative of Aalto´s mature, more personal architecture.[570]

[568] There are many libraries in Finland, in which one could recognise potential references to the Viipuri Library and other libraries by Aalto's office. To name two examples, in the Helsinki region in the Roihuvuori district's library (Claus Tandefelt 1958), and the Tikkurila Library (Eija and Olli Saijonmaa 1957) there is a book-pit, with counter running around its edges, a recognisably 'Aaltoesque' library theme.

[569] As Philip Morton Shand (1936), Göran Schildt (1986) and Raija-Liisa Heinonen (1986).

[570] Rauske, E. 1998, 29.

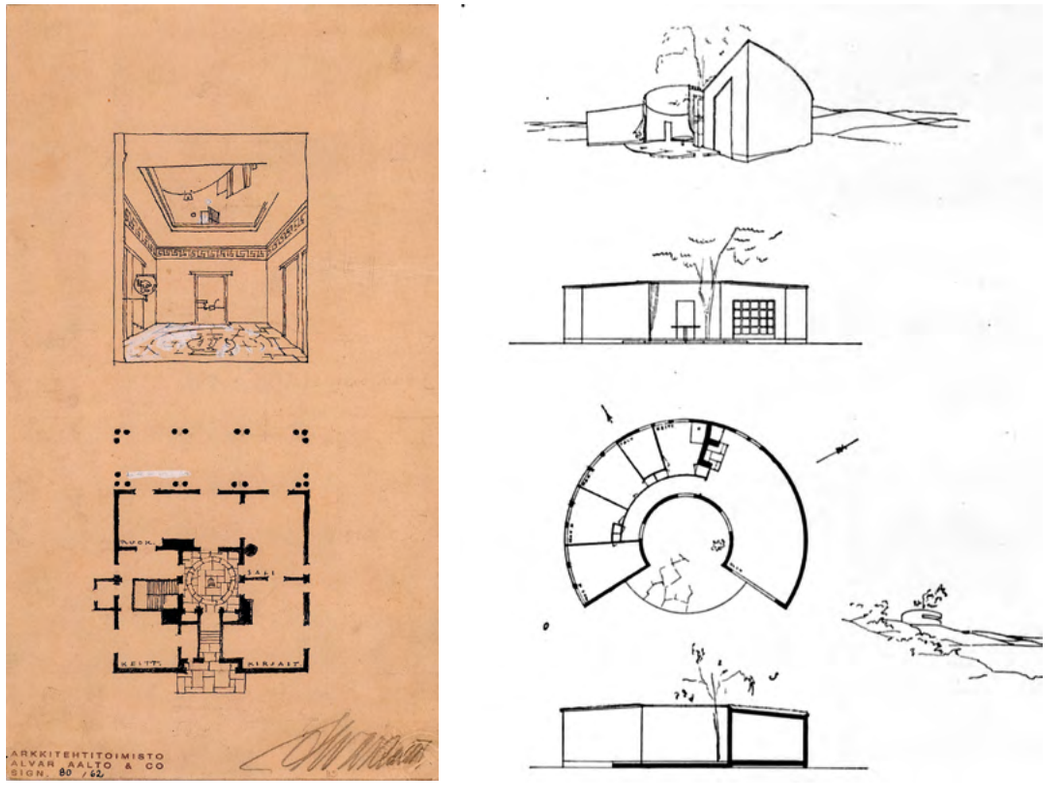


Fig. 87-88. *Both the project for Casa Väinö Aalto from 1925 and the competition entry ´Merry-go-round´ from 1928 were based on the idea of a hall as a open air space. (AF)*

Altogether, it appears noteworthy that while the realisation of the library took so long, Aalto was free to work on the design, receiving news on continued postponements from the Viipuri city planning architect Meurman. The city of Viipuri as the commissioning party of this important public building appears to have intervened with the actual design curiously little, only offering views in the few meetings when Aalto arrived to Viipuri to present his revised drawings. In the city, the economic issues, the site question and the appearance of the building dominated the discussions. In contrast, in the case of the Paimio Sanatorium, the commissioners of this large and economically taxing effort had a lot of opinions to share, having for example intervened in dimensions, such as the width of the corridors.[571] Therefore, for most of the time between 1927 and 1935 Aalto was left to do his own work – for an outstandingly important building project in the

[571] Heikinheimo, M. (2016, 297-302) discusses the involvement of the commissioning party and the continued requests for changes and adjustments with the Paimio Sanatorium project.

young independent Finnish nation, for its second largest city, and for one of the first library buildings built specifically for its purpose.

David Pearson again has summarised that 'Many features that are responsible for Viipuri's importance as a heroic example of modern architecture seem, from the evidence, to be present only in his final version of the design. It appears to have advanced to a far more modern position in terms of architectural theory than any of the buildings from the Turku period. In fact, the final design was begun as the last of these buildings, the Paimio Sanatorium, was being completed.'[572] According to Morton Shand, Aalto had expressed how the prolonged design period made it possible to develop the library design into 'the first job he has ever had time to finish properly´.[573] Thus, it seems Aalto had time to develop a number of ideas and refine them, potentially to an extent like in no other project during his career. Subsequently, the library comes to be presented as a ´pure example of functionalism´, even though during the last stage Aalto turns his other designs away from functionalism.[574] Now, Aalto had created ´the most progressive library in the world´.[575]

International reception

Overall, the international reception came about slightly more slowly than the domestic reaction which took note of the library immediately upon its opening. The international reception can be divided to two types of professional materials: periodicals and books. First periodicals that featured the library in 1936 were *the Architect's Journal* and *The Architectural Review* both published in the United Kingdom, and *Casabella,* and *Rassegna di Architettura* of Italy. Later came the Danish journal *Arkitekten* in 1939 and the Swiss journal *Werk* in 1940.[576] Of these, most of all the article written by Philip Morton Shand for *The Architectural Review*, but also the one published in *Werk* offer more lengthy accounts in which the author's voice can be heard.

Three early books emerge as particularly interesting. They are illustrative of Aalto emerging as an internationally recognised architect, but also make it possible to set both Aalto and the library into a wider context of international networks in the period. In 1938, three years after the library's completion, the Museum

[572] Pearson, D. 1978, 122.

[573] Shand, M. 1936, 110.

[574] Heinonen, R.-L. 1986, 262.

[575] Rauske, E. 1998, 29.

[576] See Appendix 3. Furthermore, as still many international periodicals are not available in digital form, it is not possible to draw up any complete list.

of Modern Art (MoMA), New York organised an exhibition titled 'Furniture and Architecture - Alvar Aalto' dedicated solely to Aalto, exhibiting photographs and plans of the Paimio Sanatorium, the Viipuri Library, the Turun Sanomat newspaper building and the Turku City Theatre, as well as furniture. This invitation was a direct consequence of the 1937 Paris World Fair pavilion, which disseminated knowledge of Aalto also to the wider international public.[577] The MoMA exhibition was accompanied by a small book under the same name, according to Aalto's biographer Göran Schildt 'the first book published solely on Aalto.'[578] The book referenced the exhibition on the ´International style´ six years earlier, which introduced works of architects such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, among others.[579] Now, it was stated that since then younger men have joined the established leaders in the field of architecture, 'among these, none is more important than Aalto'. In the MoMA book, Simon Breines described the library: 'It is characteristic of Aalto´s buildings that they 'read' clearly even to the layman. The library is a highly complex design, but the elements are so well arranged that their relationship and purpose are made apparent immediately.'[580] This was followed by a description of how from the librarians' commanding central position it was possible to control all three sections; the circulation desk and loans section, the lower level reference and study section, and the children's reading room.

While this publication with its images is an extremely interesting 'first book on Aalto', this particular quote from Breines is likely to have started the chain of later authors misconceiving the relationship between the spaces in this highly complex design. Namely, the point which most evidently reveals that a particular author has not visited the library, is that the children's library – as also the newspaper reading room – are totally separate from the main hall. The reason for misunderstanding that the children's library would be visible from the librarians' 'central position', is that from within the librarians' desk area, there is an extremely narrow, steep cork-screw staircase leading down all the way to the basement level. Below the librarians' desk, on the same floor level as the main hall's reading area is a small office space, reserved for the librarians. It has a window through which it is possible to see to the children's section, most of all towards its entrance doors on the Church Park side of the building. Nevertheless, the combination of this exhibition, the book, and the contacts that Aalto made during his first trips to the United States were most important in establishing his reputation in the

[577] Schildt, G. 1985, 167.

[578] Ibid.

[579] Breines S. 1938, 3.

[580] Ibid. 9.

English-speaking world, but also leading to being invited to give talks at American universities and other events, and even receiving commissions for work.[581]

The year 1938 seems to have been the year of a breakthrough for Aalto, as in addition to MoMA, also the Swiss architect Alfred Roth was working on his book *The New Architecture Presented in 20 Examples 1930–1940*.[582] In his book, Roth selected the library as one of 20 buildings which would show the way to the future. Aalto had met Alfred Roth already in 1928 during a visit to Paris, when Roth was working at Le Corbusier's office.[583] Unfortunately, Roth´s publication came out in 1939, at the beginning of World War II, which led to many orders being cancelled. This is a probable explanation as to why this publication praised as the 'most valuable book ever written on architecture'[584] has been so scarcely referenced. In his book, Roth meticulously introduced each of the 20 buildings, offering the same information: the main facts about the architect/s, a description the building, where Roth brought forth what was new and noteworthy in each specific case, and considerations of spatial planning, technical aspects, economic factors, aesthetics, accompanied by plans, sections and images. All this was presented in English, French and German. Roth's work, describing the details of the library and its location indeed remains one of the most concise and accurate introductions of the building to date. This gives reason to reflect on the importance of 'who knows whom'. It is possible that the library would not have been included in Roth's book, if Aalto and Roth had not happened to meet in Paris earlier. It can be argued, however, that for each of the 20 buildings, Roth had one or another motivation to select the buildings to be published in his book. More importantly, Roth has evidently been informed of multiplicity of details concerning the library, which especially at the time would not have been readily available. Therefore, the explanation needs to be that he has received information directly from Aalto, or from someone in his office, who had been working on the library project.

A reference to Roth's book can be found in the third significant publication[585], Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture The growth of a new tradition*

[581] E.g. the Baker House (1949) and the Kaufmann Rooms (1964) in New York. See also Berger, L. (2015).

[582] Roth, A. [1939] 1975. I want to thank professor Kenneth Frampton for pointing out Roth's book to me at the Avery Library, Columbia University.

[583] Schildt, G. 1985, 56.

[584] Original verdict of the RIBA, in *The New Architecture* 1975.

[585] In the 1954 edition, on page 579 it is noted: 'For a complete description see Alfred Roth, The new Architecture (Zurich, 1940), pp 181-194.' Notably, Roth and Giedion were closely acquainted, both being among the key figures of Modern Movement in Switzerland.

([1941] 1949)[586], a book among the most widely disseminated works on history of architecture. Giedion and Aalto had met and become friends at the second CIAM meeting in Frankfurt in 1929. Description of Aalto's works includes a section titled 'The Undulating Wall', where Giedion presented the Viipuri Library, the Finnish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair and the Baker House in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The library has its undulating ceiling, the New York Pavilion the undulating interior wall, and the Baker House an undulating exterior wall. Whereas the MoMA exhibition focused on making Aalto's architecture and furniture known, and Roth gave a meticulous account of the library in the chapter dedicated solely to this building, Giedion brought the library into the wider cultural context. It is worth noting that Giedion's book was first based on lectures and seminars that he had given at Harvard University. Hence, while this book was first published in 1941, the part introducing Aalto was added only to the enlarged edition in 1949 – to the same chapter where Giedion discussed the new conception of space, cubism, futurism, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and finally Aalto.[587] Thus, Giedion quite appropriately stated that his interest is concentrated on the growth of the new tradition in architecture, and to arrive at a true and complete understanding, he selected from the vast body of available historical material only relatively few facts. Consequently, as a single book, *Space, Time and Architecture* is the one to position Aalto, his career and the library into the networks of changing conceptions within history and the 'new tradition' of architecture. Giedion stated in italics: '*History is not a compilation of facts, but an insight into a moving process of life*.'[588] In doing so, Giedion interpreted also Aalto in relation to his contemporary context, beyond being strictly limited to architecture. Illustrative of this is a note concerning the library: 'Alvar Aalto is, like Le Corbusier,[589] one of the few architects who in our times has tried anew to attack the vaulting problem in a way peculiar to this period. In the intimate hall of the Viipuri Library the irrational curves of the ceiling glide through space like the serpentine lines of a Miró painting.'[590]

[586] Giedion, S. 1954. Giedion worked on the book in 1940, and the first edition came out in March 1941. After this there were seven new printings, until in November 1949 came the eight, enlarged edition, with part on Aalto. Giedion still added and made some changes, including the part on Aalto, for the tenth enlarged printing, published in January 1954. Several reprints have been published since.

[587] Mary McLeod (personal communication 2015) has pointed out that in this sense potential criticism as to why Giedion had neglected to include Aalto originally is somewhat unjust.

[588] Giedion, S. 1954, vi. Foreword to the First edition.

[589] Giedion, S. (1954, 579) notes here: 'E.g. Le Corbusier's original plan for the large assembly hall of the United Nations building (New York 1947), which linked ceiling, wall and floor by consecutive yet segmented parts.´

[590] Ibid.

An additional interest in referencing Giedion is the fact that he added the part introducing Aalto to the book in 1949, in other words after World War II. In association with this, describing the library, Giedion concluded: 'One of the few buildings in which Aalto could freely express himself… damaged in the first Russo-Finnish war, and almost razed to the ground in the following conflict.'[591] After Giedion, for instance the architectural writer Reyner Banham repeated that Aalto´s ´..status as a legend was confirmed when one of his finest early works was destroyed in the Russo-Finnish war, before the rest of the world had been able to get a proper look at it´[592] This is a theme which carries wider consequences, which will be discussed in more detail in the third thematic chapter focusing on the time period of World War II.

The archetypical Aalto library

While the library has been referenced as the 'archetypical Aalto library',[593] the questions concerning both inspirations for Aalto when he was designing the library and the library's influence on other buildings since its opening, remain open for discussion. Here, additional levels of complexity are accumulated to 'library space' as a concept. Indeed, it appears even those authors who begin from discussing library spaces, soon tend to slip to describing resembling design solutions in Aalto's, or other architects' buildings. In this line of analysis, resemblance in design is primary, and geographical distance, or time between the realisation of specific buildings stands out as secondary. Thus, the object of discussion is quite literally the parts for which the library is known, while the library as a building type eludes any encompassing definition. A seminal part of the library's role is its meaning as an early work by Aalto, after which the most recognisable themes became repeated and redeveloped in his other buildings. For example, it has been described how as the first, and undoubtedly most famous library by Aalto, Viipuri has become 'the archetypal Aalto library', a marriage between the Priene Bouletrion and the Stockholm City Library, a model of Nordic classicism. After Viipuri, Aalto continued to work on reminiscent design ideas in the University of Helsinki Library extension in 1937, the Avesta town centre in 1944 and the Imatra cultural centre in 1949, all appropriating the concept of a closed cube lit by skylights, with a sunken area below which in Aalto's office came to be called the 'book pit'.[594] Also the Rautatalo building in Helsinki has as its centre a light court,

[591] Ibid. 578.

[592] Banham, R. 1962, 126.

[593] Isohauta, T. 2009, 29.

[594] Ibid.

lit with conical shafts.[595] Authors writing about Aalto and his works continue to hinge upon the conical skylights, the sunken area and the undulating form in striving to describe the essence of Aalto's oeuvre. Therefore, like the earlier discussion on Aalto's projects during the design process of the library indicated, in fact all of his buildings could be analysed in terms of closer or lesser resemblance to the library.

As follows, as a building type, Aalto's libraries are slippery, eluding any precise pure definition. It has been estimated that Aalto's works include 19 library projects, ten of which were realised.[596] Among the best known are the Seinäjoki City Library, the Rovaniemi City Library, and the Mount Angel Abbey Library in Oregon, USA. However, these library buildings were designed twenty to thirty years later than the Viipuri Library, towards the end of Aalto's career. As follows, one or more of the solutions having first made their appearance in the Viipuri Library can be recognised to be present in these later designs, but in a reinterpreted form, or having become combined with other new developments, such as the fan-shaped plan. In other words, the question arises whether works realised closer in time, such as the Paimio Sanatorium or the Turun Sanomat newspaper building are more akin to the Viipuri Library than other library buildings by Aalto. Another complexity arises from the issue of scale. The National Pensions Institute's library in Helsinki brings together several of the themes realised in a compact form.[597] Yet, this library is only a small part of a large building complex, designed to serve the personnel of this institution. Thus, while the main architectural themes are present in this space, strictly speaking this is neither a library building, nor a public library.

In fact, writings where a library space by Aalto is noted can be collapsed into three categories: first separate library buildings, second, libraries as part of a building/building complex and third, pushing the interpretation, private library interiors.[598] Analysed from this point of view, the definition comes to be space designed for books and reading, rather than being analogous with the library

[595] Schildt, G. 1994, 138.

[596] Isohauta, T. (ed.) 2000, 15.

[597] Another fitting example of a condensed library is the library in the Nordic House in Reykjavik, Iceland 1964–1969. Schildt, G. 1994, 116.

[598] The more lavish private library/study rooms can be found in La Maison Carré in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, France 1956–1959. Schildt, G. 1994, 201. Here, upon entering the library from the direction of the entrance hall, one first enters a 'balcony' across one wall of the space, from this perspective turning the rest of the room to a kind of 'book pit'. Other examples are e.g. engineers' and managers' housing for the Enso-Gutzeit company in Summa 1959–1960 has a 'library', as does Villa Skeppet, which Aalto designed for Göran Schildt in 1969–1970.

institution.[599] This harks back to the interpretation made earlier that the Viipuri Library can actually be interpreted as housing three very different kinds of library spaces, in addition to which there is the lecture hall as the 'fourth public space'. Yet, as a rule, later writings about the library leave out the children's section and the newspaper reading room. At best, their existence is noted, but they are not described in any way. Thinking of these two 'miniature libraries' on their own, the interior of the children's library recalls the library at Säynätsalo,[600] which is only part of the town hall designed by Aalto. In fact, the Säynätsalo Library in its whole recalls the children's section of the Viipuri Library.

While it is difficult to strictly delineate what can be qualified as a proper library by Aalto, it is worth reflecting on possible examples which have received inspiration from the Viipuri Library. In Viipuri, the newspaper room is a rectangular, compact space with its own entrance. Except for the stands for visitors to read newspapers standing up, there were no attractive solutions, which would have drawn attention. The newspaper reading room had its own opening hours, and it was not necessary to leave one's coat: it was for working men who did not necessarily afford to buy the daily paper. The separation of functions in the library brings to mind another library, Töölö Library from 1970,[601] in Helsinki. This building was designed by Aarne Ervi, who had been Aalto's assistant during the final stages of the Viipuri Library project. The Töölö Library is similarly positioned at the corner of a park, Topeliuksenpuisto, and the site issue caused long debate. This library has a large curving window, with reading balconies facing the park, thus being very different from the Viipuri Library's enclosed main hall. In Töölö, the children's section and the newspaper room on the ground floor have their own entrances from the outside, but also to the entrance hall with access to the other floors. Still in the 1970s the newspaper room had its own opening hours, allowing the public to read the day's newspapers before going to work. The children's section has on its floor a conical shape with glass, providing light to the story-room at the basement level below. In this library, a contemporary design which received attention a was a kind of 'book-pit', transformed for the purpose of listening to music in a section dedicated for housing music records.

An intriguing later international example is the Lamont Library completed in 1949, by Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch & Abbott on the Harvard University campus. David Fixler describes the Lamont Library as an 'understated though demonstrably contemporary response to its brick Georgian context that also takes considerable cues in massing and detail from Aalto's own 1932 library for Viipuri, Finland (now Russia), the first great library of the Modern Movement'.[602] Intriguingly, Aalto designed an interior space for this building: the Woodberry Poetry Room in 1947–1949.[603] While the main façade of the Lamont Library bears evident resemblance to the Viipuri Library, and Aalto was involved with the project, the connection between the two libraries has been rarely noted.

Finally, it is the specific design solutions which continue to sustain the library's international fame also as a 'key library building'. In 2013, MoMA organised an exhibition titled *'Henri Labrouste: Structure Brought to Light'*, in the introduction to which it is described how Labrouste's two magisterial glass-and-iron reading rooms in Paris, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève (1838–1850) and the Bibliothèque Nationale (1859–1875), gave form to the idea of the modern library as a temple of knowledge and as a space for contemplation.[604] This exhibition presented later significant library buildings, which could be seen to pay homage to Labrouste's libraries. Among them was the Viipuri Library.

At the beginning of World War II, the library disappeared from the foreign architectural literature. As mentioned above, many orders of Alfred Roth's book were cancelled. But something even more drastic happened. A number of international publications begun to disseminate the information that the library had been destroyed in the war. Architect and architectural writer Michael Spens has pointed out that the library had not been written out of the present by the Soviet authorities, but by the most distinguished Western architectural historians.[605]

[599] Aalto's 'spaces for books' could also include a single example, a fourth case: the Academic Bookstore in Helsinki (1961–1969). Schildt, G. 1994, 170.

[600] Isohauta, T. (ed.) 2000, 15.

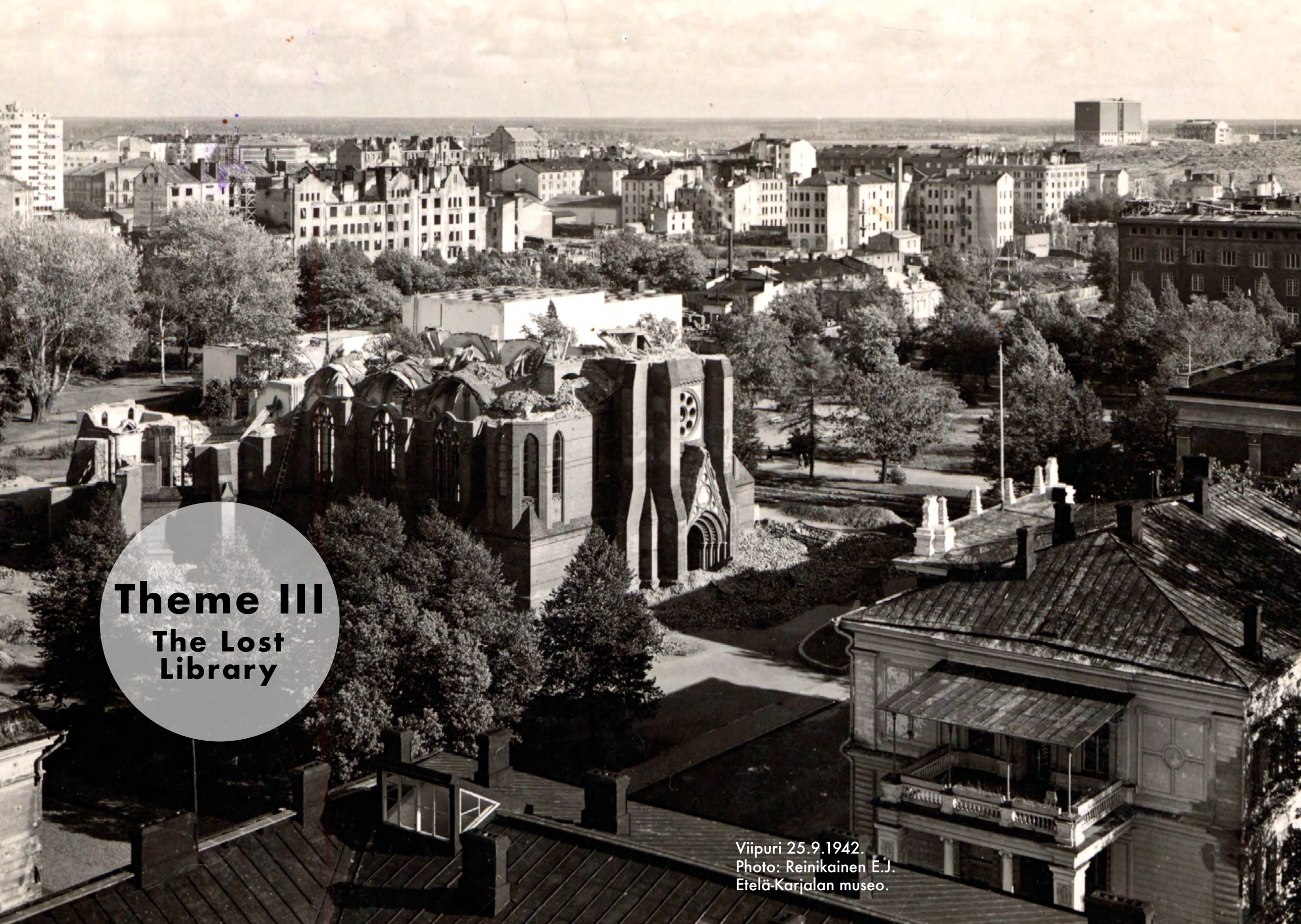
[601] A brief history of the library is given at: http://www.helmet.fi/fi-FI/Kirjastot_ja_palvelut/Toolon_kirjasto/Palvelut/Kirjaston_historiaa(1950) Accessed Jan. 2017.

[602] Fixler, D. 2007, 58-79. Another person who has written about this building and Aalto's poetry room in it is Kari Jormakka in Anderson, S. Fenske, G. David Fixler, D. eds. 2012, 251-260.

[603] In Lamont there is an interior window, which very much resembles that in the librarians' office with view down to the children's section below. Similar window solution can also be found in the Paimio Sanatorium, where it is positioned above the main dining hall. For further discussion on Lamont Library and the Woodberry Poetry Room see Berger L. 2015, 30-42.

[604] Henri Labrouste: Structure Brought to Light. March 10-June 24, 2013. https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1295?locale=en Accessed Dec 2016.

[605] Spens, M. 1994, 10.



Theme III
The Lost Library

Viipuri 25.9.1942.
Photo: Reinikainen E.J.
Etelä-Karjalan museo.

THEME III

The Lost Library

In which the library is lost in the war. While Finland was not occupied and did not lose its independence, in 1944 the city of Viipuri along with the wider area referred to as 'lost Karelia' were annexed by the Soviet Union. This chapter focuses on the small-scale events during the interim periods, less on the large historical events of World War II and international politics.

This chapter starts from the beginning of World War II in 1939. Between 1940 and 1941, the city and the library were conquered by the Soviets, who made plans for the future of the area, and took the library into use. Towards the end of 1941 and until the summer of 1944 Finns returned to Viipuri. This time, the same architects who had been involved in creating the cityscape of Viipuri before the war, made plans for the reconstruction and most of all, for the Viipuri of the future.

When Finns returned to Viipuri, the immediate surroundings of the library were altered: the park next to the library was transformed into a cemetery, and what used to be the secondary side of the building became a site for a variety of public events. The result is that the site of the library became the heart of the city, this time through its use. In Finnish histories of the war, the loss of Viipuri remains a traumatic event.

After Viipuri and ceded Karelia became part of the Soviet Union the meanings associated with the area, the city and the library changed. The totality of the historical severance is noteworthy. Finns evacuated every last person, while the Soviets moving in were brought in from far away, to ensure that there would be no unwanted contacts across the border. The third thematic chapter ends with the Soviets, Finns and the international community each creating their separate strands of interpretation. The local Soviet people had the physical city to reconstruct and make plans for, Finns had the evacuated documents concerning the city, while international architectural writers begun to disseminate the misconception that the city and the library had disappeared, having been destroyed in the war.

Ceded and Lost Karelia

Viipuri city architect Ragnar Ypyä[1] described how during the years before the war the city of Viipuri had a significant role as a developer. According to Ypyä, he was involved with the design of approximately 140,000 m³ of different kinds of municipal buildings between 1936 and 1939.[2] Most significant were the Women's´ Hospital, a primary school at Uuras, the Viipuri Business College, as well as some buildings completed just before the war, or near completion: the mortuary cum chapel, the Juteini school for 1,000 students, the Papula mental hospital and many others. In spring 1940, the plan was to begin construction of a so-called half-municipal housing project. However, all this came to a halt when the Winter War began in November 1939, resulting in large areas being ceded to the Soviet Union. Although the city of Viipuri was heavily bombed during the Winter War, there was only minor damage to the library towards the end of the war, and thus, this building survived in fairly good condition under the circumstances.

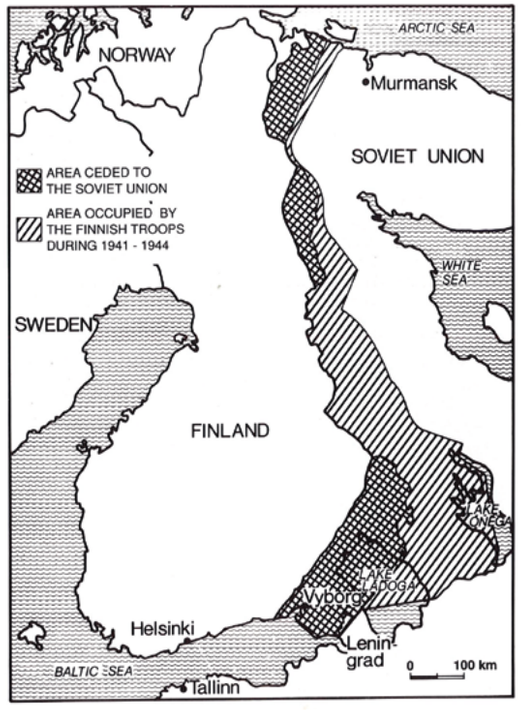


Fig. 89. *Map of Finnish-Soviet borders 1941–1944. (Paasi, A. 1996, 111)*

The events relevant to the library will be introduced chronologically. As World War II sets the context, the events are characterised by the importance of precise dates, even times of the day, marking the beginning or end of a certain sub-event under the umbrella of the time period of World War II. Furthermore, in order to outline the chronology of the events, these can be analysed as falling into two categories. First, there are the periods of active warfare, namely the 105 days of Winter War of 30.11.1939–13.3.1940 and the Continuation War from 25.6.1941 to 19.9.1944. During the Continuation War, there are three notable events referred to with their own titles. The beginning of the Continuation War is marked by a period of active warfare, referred to as the Finnish offensive against the USSR in 26.6.1941–8.12.1941. This is followed by a period during which Finns recaptured the Karelian Isthmus, along with it, the city of Viipuri. Finally, the Red Army's 'great offensive' begun on 9.6.1944, ending with the armistice of 4.9.1944, when Finland lost the area again. The events of World War II can be seen to end in 1947, with the Paris Peace Treaty, sealing the annexation of the ceded areas to the Soviet Union. In the Finnish context, this peace treaty finalises the loss of the ceded areas, leading to the creation of the concept of 'lost Karelia'. Here, war history is introduced in extremely condensed form, because it was in the periods between the active fighting that the library was taken to use, and both Finns and Soviets did their best to restore the city, also making plans for the future.

[1] After Uno Ullberg left the position of city architect, Ragnar Amandus Ypyä took up the post on 15.6.1936, up until the Winter War, when he was assigned to continue until 23.2.1940. Ypyä briefly kept his own office in Helsinki, until he was ordered in 1941 first as an architect to the National Board of Public Buildings and in the same year to the Finnish Army. During the Continuation War he was again the city architect of Viipuri and moved to Helsinki in 1944. Meurman, O.-I. 1977, 96.

[2] *Finnish Architectural Review* 1941, 128-131.

The 105 days of the Winter War 30.11.1939–13.3.1940

It has been analysed that between 1939 and 1945, Finland's place between East and West was never more visible or endangered; indeed many other small countries in that position lost their independence during these years.[3] The Viipuri Library had opened in October 1935, and after four short years, the Winter War began in 1939 within the longer period of World War II. The war began as the Soviet Union invaded Finland after unsuccessful negotiations concerning the exchange of territory between the two countries.[4] Finland had evacuation plans in case of war for the wider Viipuri area that had been outlined in 1917 and revised in 1934. The purpose was to evacuate cattle, grain, personal possessions and population in the event of war.[5] Soviet aircraft appeared in the morning sky over Viipuri on 30 November 1939. The plan was to evacuate most of the inhabitants at the beginning of December, though in the early stages of the war Viipuri was not among the primary targets. However, as the war endured, Viipuri's situation changed. Helsinki, the capital of Finland was bombed six times and Viipuri 64 times during the Winter War. After the so-called Sunday of Destruction on 18 February 1940, Viipuri achieved the unfortunate distinction of becoming the 'most bombed city in world history'.[6] While the evacuation of the population had

[3] Fingerroos, O. 2008, 113.

[4] Ibid. 237.

[5] Kämäräinen, J. 2010, 179.

[6] Hietanen, S. 2007, 29.

taken place before this, this day marks the end of all life in Viipuri. It was estimated that 80% of the city's buildings were destroyed.[7]

The Winter War ended on 13 March 1940 at 11 a.m. Finnish time. Though most of Viipuri was being defended by the Finnish troops, the Moscow Peace Treaty stipulated that Viipuri was to become part of the Soviet Union. On that same day at 3:15 p.m. the Finnish flag was taken down from the tower of Viipuri Castle. In the peace treaty, Finland lost the Karelian Isthmus and over 86,000 persons needed to leave their home at Viipuri, with altogether 420,000 Karelians leaving their homes and farms. The Finns retreated in stages, with both the Finnish troops and the civilians withdrawing to the Finnish side of the border, the last ones making their exit on 16 March 1940. Notably, Viipuri was emptied of its inhabitants totally, as the Finnish strategy was to evacuate everyone. This event marked Finland losing approximately 10 % of its land area, a large part of the Karelian region and the northern Salla area. Hanko Peninsula was leased to the USSR as a military base.[8]

'The Viipuri Library under Bolshevik rule' 13.3.1940–26.6.1941

After 105 days of war, the national borders changed for the first time in the sequence of moving borders between Finland and the Soviet Union during World War II. Between 1940 and 1941, in other words between the Winter War and the Continuation War, Viipuri along with the ceded Karelian area became part of the Soviet Union. For slightly over a year, the city and the library were taken into use by the Soviet inhabitants. Being positioned in the border zone of the Soviet Union made Vyborg[9] important in view of defending the entire Karelian Isthmus. In association with this, the villages and cities in the ceded area needed to be populated with new inhabitants whom the Soviet administration regarded to be trustworthy. It was estimated that solely the rebuilding of industrial facilities required 12,000 workers in 1940, and reconstructing the city to the pre-war level would require the input of altogether 67,000 workers.[10] In the early stage, a significant portion of the inhabitants arriving in Soviet Vyborg were military officers and soldiers. In addition, persons with skills relevant to building and industries moved

[7] Lankinen, J. ´Suomalainen Viipuri 1935–1944´. http://www.virtuaaliviipuri.tamk.fi/fi/story/7 Accessed Dec 2016.

[8] Fingerroos, O. 2008, 237.

[9] When the city and the area were part of USSR, and are part of Russia.

[10] Shikalov, Y, and Hämynen, T. 2013, 38.

to the city.[11] This group included experts of different fields, arriving most of all from Leningrad. Some of them moved to Vyborg voluntarily, while some were ordered to move there to build the new Soviet Vyborg. Last, also rural incomers were transferred to the city, in particular from villages in Belarus and Ukraine. The local newspaper *Viipurski Bolševik* published several stories describing how the new inhabitants brought farm animals with them, even chopping firewood in the apartments.[12] Thus, the mixture of the new population ranged from educated city dwellers to persons from rural areas, who had barely seen a larger city in their lifetime.[13] In May 1940, Vyborg begun to be governed as part of the Soviet Union, and was given a temporary city committee. Specialist committees were formed later, for example, for finance, education, health care, housing and commerce, but also for sports, art and architecture. Regardless of the multi-sided governance, the beginnings of Soviet Vyborg were disordered.[14]

In respect to rebuilding, lack of information had very direct consequences. While the Moscow Peace treaty included a protocol stipulating that when the military was retreating, both sides agreed to organise necessary meetings at sites which were being transferred to the other side of the border, to ensure that these cities and sites would not be destroyed. However, this protocol was published too late, as both the Finnish civilians as well as the military had retreated from Viipuri. Different types of documents and other material had been burned in large amounts. Consequently, the Soviets begun from a zero point: 'The new governors of the city hardly knew what they had received, as they had no information from Finns. The previous inhabitants had destroyed and taken away the archives, and all possible documents and drawings. Lack of information was so great, that first the Russian experts needed to rely on old tourist guides from the Tsarist period, and old phone books, which had been found lying around in deserted buildings were used to attempt to construe an understanding of the amount of population which had been evacuated to the Finnish side of the border.'[15] Simultaneously, due to its proximity to Leningrad, Vyborg was of both economic and military importance, and was classified among the conquered sites to be inspected as soon as possible.

The combination of the new inhabitants not knowing about the past of the city and the attitudes concerning what Soviet Vyborg should look like explains number of things that took place in the cityscape that exceeded the practical

[11] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 248.

[12] *Viipurski Bolševik* 28.5.1941; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 246.

[13] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 42.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid. 31.

need to restore. The Cathedral by Dippell which had stood next to the library is likely the most often referenced building which was decided to be demolished. It had been hit in an air raid, but it would still have been possible to restore it. The bells, organ, and paintings were removed. The Monument for the Finnish Civil War which had stood next to the Cathedral disappeared, as did all the gravestones of the cemetery next to the library.[16] The statue of Mikael Agricola,[17] which had stood next to the Cathedral, close to the library was dismantled and buried in the ground.

As part of the Soviet Union, all possible Finnish language signs, and street names were changed to Russian soon after the Moscow Peace Treaty of March 1940.[18] The street signs however needed to be changed soon again, as in July 1940 Viipuri became officially part of the newly established Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic. For example the local Russian-language newspaper using the Finnish spelling of the city's name, *Viipurski Bolševik*[19] published news of the necessary decision to have all street names and signs both in Finnish and Russian by October of the same year.[20] This project was associated with the aim to promote the Finnish language, and indeed, also the city officials were encouraged to study Finnish, as this was the other official language in the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Republic. However, in Vyborg and the surrounding areas this project had little results, as the new inhabitants had their roots far away from any Finnish-Karelian populations.[21] As has been noted, the Finnish strategy was to evacuate its population entirely, and the inhabitants moving to Soviet Vyborg were essentially non-Finnish speakers. This is further reflected in recollections concerning books which had remained in private homes. For example a regiment commander's son, Boris Titov remembered that there was a relatively large library in their apartment, but the books were all in a foreign language. Early on, Finnish books were burned in the fireplaces, or thrown away without interest in their potential value. It was however relatively soon that the Soviet literary specialists realised that there might be real treasures among the books which had remained in Vyborg.

[16] http://www.188800.ru/history/petrova Accessed Dec.2017; Shikalov, Y and Hämynen,T. 2013, 49.

[17] The statue of Mikael Agricola, erected in 1908 is by the sculptor Emil Wikström. Agricola was the first to translate the Bible, and at least nine other books into Finnish language. He is known as the 'father of the written Finnish language'. Agricola (1510–1557) was buried under the Old Cathedral in Viipuri.

[18] *Vyborg* 27.4.2007; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 245.

[19] In 1940, there were two local newspapers: *Viipurski Bolševik* and *Vyborski Vodnik.* Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 61. During the Continuation War, there were still Finnish advertisements remaining. Hence, how categorically all the Finnish signs were taken down in 1940, is not clear.

[20] *Viipurski Bolševik* 29.10.1940; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 245.

[21] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen,T. 2013, 55.

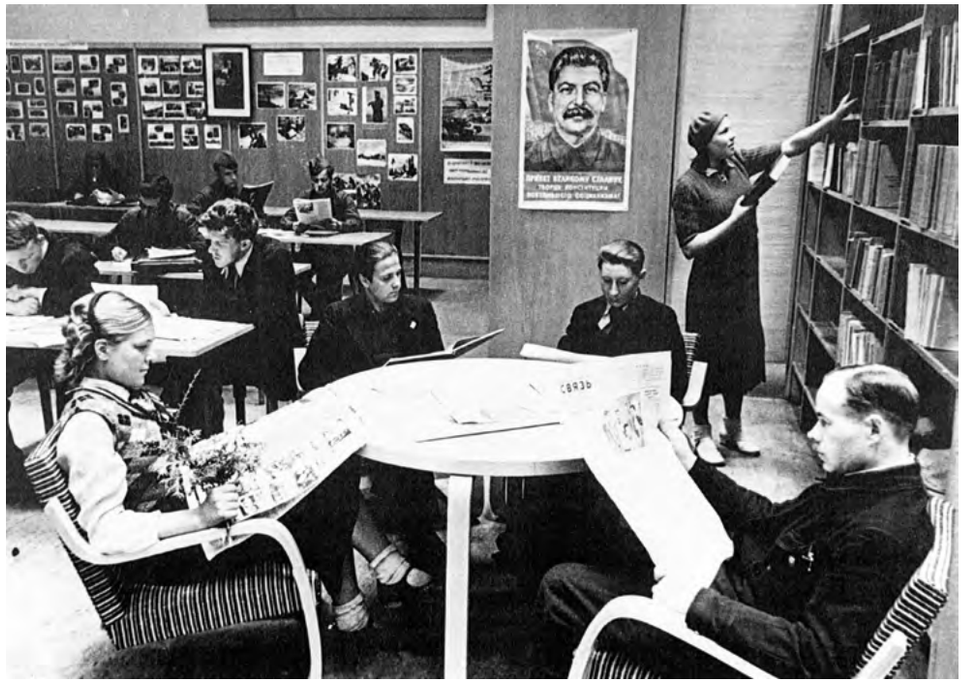


Fig.90. *A photograph from 1940–1941 evidences that the library was in use during the first Soviet period. (AF)*

Thus, in May 1940, the temporary city government forbade 'destroying books, burning or throwing them away'. The directors of the apartment buildings were ordered to gather immediately all books, and hand them over to the book storage facility set up in the city.[22] This was the library designed by Aalto.

At the same time, on the Finnish side, the specialist library periodical *Kirjastolehti* published news over the concern for the Viipuri Library and what had happened to other libraries in ceded Karelia. 'It is not yet fully known how many libraries were destroyed in the bombings. After the peace treaty, hundreds of libraries remained outside the borders of Finland, the most notable of them the Viipuri City Library, the building of which was most modern in our country'[23] The library supervisors from the different municipalities informed of the war losses in the 'area of libraries'. Altogether 370 libraries remained in the ceded area. Among these were the Viipuri City Library and its branch libraries, the Sortavala and Käkisalmi City Libraries, and Hanko City Library. Of the lost libraries, 354 were in the Province of Viipuri. Only very small number of books was evacuated, and many smaller library collections are known to have burned before the

[22] *Vyborg*, 3.8.2007, 27.4.2007; Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 65.

[23] *Kirjastolehti* 1940, 44, 73-76.

peace negotiations. The aspect that is underscored again was that '[t]he most significant loss, however, was Finland´s most modern library building, the Viipuri City Library and its collections'.[24] At this point, it seems long forgotten that the National Library Office had criticised how the best experts with knowledge of the latest international libraries and closest understanding of the specific needs associated with designing a library building had been essentially ignored in designing the library. In addition, here it is made explicit how the library was the core within a network of libraries; it was not only the closest branch libraries, but in the province there had been vast network of smaller libraries.

Fig. 91. *The Round Tower building filled with books in September 1941. (SA-kuva)*

Meanwhile, in Vyborg the researchers K. Pykke and V. Ljublinski were studying and cataloguing the books which had remained in the library, and were being brought there. The new director of the library was Nikolai Nikolski, an expert on Fenno-Ugric peoples. The most valuable books were sent to Leningrad, and others to the University Library of Petrozavodsk, and the Karelo-Finnish research centre and the Finnish theatre there.[25] The doors of the library were opened to the Soviet citizens in May 1940. Three weeks later it was named as the general library of the Karelo-Finnish Republic. Along with its reading rooms, the library boasted of researchers' cabinets focusing on the themes of Marxism-Leninism, history of the Communist Party, and history of Karelo-Finnish peoples, among others. Events were organised in the lecture hall, for example meetings with famous persons such as the author Novikov-Priboi.[26] All books which were regarded to be unsuited to Soviet citizens, were gathered in storage, and Russian language books were brought in from Leningrad and Petrozavodsk, although some had also been found from the local apartments. In this way, a collection of some 100,000 books was accumulated, and indeed the library became a popular place, where both

[24] Ibid. 103.

[25] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 66; *Vehi Vyborskoj istorii* 2005, 192; Tikka et al. 2002, 19.

[26] Tikka, B. et al. 2002, 29.

military personnel and civilians came to read books, papers and spend time.[27] The library director Nikolai Nikolski appears to have been a true friend of books, as he made sure that books were preserved, regardless of the language of the publication. Thus, when Finns returned to Viipuri, an order was found from the library, where it was stipulated that the Finnish language publications were to be preserved in the Round Tower building. This is also where large number of books were found, in relatively good condition. Walter Appelqvist, who was the library director when the Finns returned for the period between 1941–1944, praised his Soviet colleague for his dedicated work.[28] Intriguingly, it is Appelqvist's article titled 'The Viipuri Library under Bolshevik rule',[29] which draws on materials left behind by the Soviet librarians in 1941, remaining the most detailed account of the organisation and running of the library as part of the Soviet library system.[30]

The Viipuri City Library under Bolshevik rule

> *Among the rare happy surprises in recovered Viipuri was the City Library. The building remains relatively intact, and at first glance the book stacks appeared to be as before, even in their own places. In addition, new publications had appeared, Russian-language books printed in Bolshevik Russia. Only a closer look revealed that also changes had taken place, other than just the addition of Russian-language books. Before moving on to describe what I have learned during 15 months in the Karelian area returned to Finland of the Russian patronage in the Viipuri Library, I want to shortly consider some Russian actions in book and library issues in the area ceded in the Moscow Peace Treaty. I have heard many Finns speculating that Russians destroyed a large amount of literature that Finns left behind in the ceded area. This, however, is not the case. Based on my observations and some pieces of concrete evidence I can assure you that the Russians have not intentionally destroyed literature Finns left behind. The fact that many valuable private libraries, and parts of many school and institute libraries*

[27] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 66.

[28] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 66; *Vyborg* 27.5.2010.

[29] This a presentation written by the librarian Walter Appelqvist (1943, 110-117) for the specialist event 'Library Days', organised in the Viipuri Library in 1943 and published in *Kirjastolehti* in the same year.

[30] The differences in library systems of different countries is a topic of its own, but perhaps most notable is that it is not just foreign Finnish books which were not shown, not to mention loaned out to the Soviet inhabitants, but that the 'open shelf system' was not something commonly in use in the Soviet libraries. The Viipuri Library, in turn, was so evidently designed with the bookshelves along the walls that it is difficult to imagine how it might be possible to restrict public access to books.

were not destroyed in the war but have since disappeared under the Bolshevik rule, does not mean that the collections were destroyed. There are more credible explanations.

As their first task the Bolsheviks assigned to take responsibility of book issues naturally took libraries and books confiscated from private homes into the possession of the state. In Vyborg, the assemblage point for books from private homes was the Round Tower building. I have found in the Viipuri Library a document where it is ordered that all literature and papers with writing that the Finns left behind are to be taken to the Round Tower. In the same document is noted that it is forbidden to re-use these materials. For the gathering operation were assigned persons with the mandate of an official certificate. The importance of this gathering operation is evident also in that the Vyborg Library director has written to the NKVD operative department, requesting aid for collecting books from the railway personnel's buildings. It was strictly forbidden to have Finnish literature in private possession.

This also applied to the librarians, based on fireman Formin denouncing on 13 December 1940 the second-class librarian Kutyjeff, who is claimed to have taken home some books without permission. In an inspection, forbidden literature was found in Kutyjeff´s home, the Russian periodical 'Niva´ from 1902, books of poetry books by the Finns Valakorpi and Lehtonen, etc. The denouncer demanded punishment for Kutyjeff, but the documents do not reveal what happened then. However, it seems Kutyjeff has been dismissed from his position, as in a list of the library staff from a while later, his name is nowhere to be found.

Another significant event in the ceded area was the large operation of moving books, which at first seems irrational, but at closer inspection is part of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republics´ library organisation. The premises of this organisation seem to have been as follows: in the capital, Petrozavodsk, there was the main library, where also the Republic's library office was established, following the model of Moscow´s library office of the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The other large library is in Vyborg, which would also be some kind of main library for Finnish literature (as there were resources for creating this with aid of materials Finns had left behind. The intention was also to move Finnish literature from Sortavala as well as four Finnish language library collections in St Petersburg and one in Petrozavodsk, all to Vyborg.

Having Vyborg in their possession, Russians, loyal to their ways, begun to change the city, and destroying what appeared to be indicative of bourgeois society: the only church which had survived was taken into new use as a cinema, the Cathedral hit in an air-raid was demolished, private apartments were divided up into smaller ones, and small apartments were made even smaller with use of dividing walls to achieve the communist ideal also in this sector.

One of the rare institutions which remained in function in its old building was the City Library. Even more, the new inhabitants were most content, even impressed and thrilled by the library building. It appears that they ran out of superlatives to praise and describe how amazing it was. So the library director writes in one of his letters to the Moscow library office's director, that this library is one of the best library buildings of the entire world. However, he continues: 'It is fully furnished, but shelves are empty because there is little Soviet literature in the city. The number of inhabitants grows by day and we receive quite justified requests to obtain Soviet literature. We hope that the Leningrad bookshop institutions take into account our aims, and help us to satisfy needs of the inhabitants of Soviet Vyborg.´

Similar thoughts are reflected in a text discussing the rebuilding of Vyborg, of which an excerpt is quoted here: 'The Republic's state library is to be included among the top ten libraries of the world based on its collections. The collection comprises some 350,000 items which are well preserved, and these have been added to with books collected from private apartments. The white Finns have left behind little Russian literature, and half that little is good for public use. More valuable are the publications in the library, written in almost all European languages.´

Thus all was well, except of the need for literature appropriate for the Soviet citizen. But even this came to be resolved, as the library director Nikolsky appears to have been both vigorous and diligent and did not leave the matter unfinished. As an example, I want to tell of the following event from the library. After it had been found impossible to get the heating of the library working, regardless of experts from Leningrad having inspected it, Nikolsky arranged the modern cables integrated in the ceiling to be uncovered, and having studied the system, managed to get the heating working again. Similar vigour is evident in his obtaining material for his library. The State Public Library – this was the official name – in Vyborg received in 1940 the right for free copies of newly published books. It is not clear how comprehensive this right has been, as many letters reveal how free copies, or rather, obligatory copies have been simultaneously free and subject to a fee. In many of the letters Nikolsky points out that the obligatory copies are not received regularly. Books are also received as gifts to the library.

I add here one more translation from Nikolsky´s letter to the director of the Petrozavodsk Library:

´We have received two book shipments from you. – I want to express my gratitude for your skilful replenishment of our library. Receiving your shipments has been a moment of jubilation, because the only place from where

we can acquire novels and children´s literature is your repository. Naturally the small amount we have received from you cannot fulfil the hunger for books among the workers of Soviet Vyborg, but even the crumbs which fall from your city´s table in Petrozavodsk, are received here with great joy. I want to remind you that our library is the only one in the city, and currently the number of Vyborg's´ inhabitants is close to what it was at the beginning of 1939. We have also opened a special children's library, which now has nearly 1,000 permanent readers, while the stacks have only some two to three hundred items.'

It also appears that exchange and loans between libraries had been unorganised.

However, while the library received books and was adding to the collection, it also needed to hand over books and fill other libraries' collections. And indeed it did have stacks of duplicates from which to provide for other libraries, of which there was no lack. Already in 1940 the State Finnish Theatre in Petrozavodsk sent a substantial list of requests to the Vyborg Library. It requested literature from the following areas: 1) All classical and modern plays, of all peoples and times, 2) Theatre history, actors' memoirs and biographies. 3) Ethnographic and iconographic materials, cultural history, history of customs, architecture and costume histories 4) Opera and ballet, plastic arts, 5) Folk dances and folk songs 6) Histories of fine arts. The request is dated 11 July and already on the 15th, the theatre confirms having received 171 items.

To return to the Vyborg Library, one has to give recognition to the enemy colleague Nikolsky as a library director. In a short while he made his library appropriate for the Communist public, created exchange relationships between libraries, obtained rights for free copies and transferred aside all the inappropriate materials remaining from the Finns. Especially I would like to acknowledge what his and the library's index- bibliographic department have done. A few examples:

The management of the Hovinmaa paper factory requests information from Finnish sources regarding reasons why the factory discontinued. (The factory had closed in 1938.) The library spent thirty hours to locate information going through newspapers and periodicals, finding the needed answers, ordering a translation of the main article found, and sending this as well as a bill for 120 roubles to the factory directors.

This suffices regarding the library's services. I now move to the organisation of the library. I have found a list of employees on 12.3.1941, and this is the only source at the time for finding information on this issue.

The library had 6 sections, a bibliographic and information department, a reading room, a lending hall, a pioneers' and school students' hall, an

indexing office and an administration department. There were 27 public servants in addition to the library director. The posts were as follows: Bibliographic and information department: director, bibliographer, two first class librarians. Large reading room: director, one first class and three second class librarians. The Pioneers' and students' hall: director, one first and one second class librarian. Indexing office: director, three first and two-second class librarians, as well as a vestibule guard. Administration: accountant, finance manager and secretary. There was also a maintenance staff of ten persons, namely a heating mechanic, a mechanic, a plumber, three persons responsible for heating, three cleaners, and a caretaker. The daily working times was 9 hours, with half an hour for meals, and the controllers made sure that no tardiness or failure to arrive at work remained unpunished.

Last I shall return to the issue taken up at the beginning: why so many of the libraries of private persons and institutions have disappeared. A partial answer to this is already included in the answer concerning the handing over of duplicates to other libraries, but there is a factor more important than this.

It is known that the Russians begun to evacuate Vyborg immediately after the beginning of the war between Germany and the USSR. The evacuation plans had been thought out earlier, and among the papers found in the library was also a document concerning the evacuation of the library´s collections. Based on handwriting, this plan, marked as top secret, seems to have been written by Nikolsky, and it has been addressed to Commissar Lehtinen. According to the plan, evacuation of books will be divided to two stages:

1. The most valuable maps of Finland and Scandinavia, 100 kg
2. Publications of Finnish and Scandinavian scholarly societies, 2,000

First stage:
3. Books printed in the 17th and 18th centuries, 1,000
4. Selection of extremely valuable items, 500
5. Finnish doctoral theses from the 1700s, 50

Second stage:
1. Finnish and Scandinavian periodicals and newspapers from between 1933 and 1939 of military importance, 6,000 kg
2. Valuable Western European periodical collections 1,000
3. Selection of valuable items 500

There is no reason to suspect that this plan would not have been executed. On the contrary, it is likely that Nikolsky as an industrious man carried out this plan in even larger scale than stated in the document.[31]

After Petrozavodsk, Vyborg was the second largest city of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic, which consisted of most of ceded Karelia, together with the earlier Autonomous Karelian Socialist Republic. By the end of 1940, the population of the city was already 38,000.[32] While Vyborg was presented as the industrial centre of the Republic, it was acknowledged that the restoration work of 1940 had been done without proper plans, and without supervision.[33] Nevertheless, the visions reached far beyond the mere restoration of the city. In January 1941 *Viipurski Bolševik* announced that 'the Communist party and the government have assigned to us a considerably important task: To raise Vyborg among the best cultural cities in the Soviet Union'[34] However, few months later the borders moved again, and along with this, the entire population of Vyborg changed.

The beginning of the Continuation War and the Finnish reconquest of Viipuri 25.6.1941–29.8.1941

After Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Finland was drawn into a war against the USSR once again and became involved in the so-called Continuation War on 25 June 1941.[35] While the threat of war had prevailed on the western border of the Soviet Union, Stalin had not regarded it to be likely. The consequence was that the invasion of the German army came as a total surprise to the Soviet inhabitants, who heard the news on the radio.[36] Further, the local newspapers made no mention of the evacuation of the Soviet population, which, however, took place efficiently throughout the summer. Many of the evacuees recalled that there was no sense of panic, and that the evacuation took place quickly, and many believed that they would be coming back within a few weeks. One woman, for example, remembered having taken only the keys to her home with her. The direction of the trains was the same for all: via Leningrad towards the east, to Kirov, Udmurtia, Tataria or the Volga area, typically to rural kolkhozes. The alarming rumour that Vyborg had been left to the enemy was forbidden to be discussed publicly. Finnish troops had taken over the city of Sortavala, and Leningrad was nearly surrounded by German forces. As also Vyborg was at risk of becoming surrounded, the Red Army left the city without any real battle.[37] On 29 August 1941 the Finnish troops took over Viipuri from the Red Army, which had burned a significant part of the city during its retreat, following Stalin's orders. Two days after returning to the city, the Finns organised a victory parade in Torkel Knutsson Square.

[31] Appelqvist, W. 1943, 110-117.

[32] Vasiljev, M. 1958, 67; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 246.

[33] *Viipurski Bolševik* 7.1.1941, 11.1.1941; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 246.

[34] *Viipurski Bolševik* 18.1.1941; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 245.

[35] Fingerroos, O. 2008, 237.

[36] Shikalov, Y and Hämynen, T. 2013, 70.

After reconquering Viipuri, the Finnish army continued to where the border had been before the Winter War. Finland however did not agree to Germany's request to participate the siege of Leningrad. Thus, the fighting on the Karelian isthmus ceased until the summer of 1944. However, on the northern side of Lake Lagoda the Finnish army proceeded far beyond the old border to areas of Eastern Karelia which had never been part of Finland.[38] The first Finnish inhabitants were allowed to return to the city in October. From the point of view of the returning Finns, many more would have wanted to return to Viipuri and the recaptured Karelian area than were allowed. This was because for only so many there was no housing to return to. A criterion to be allowed to return was to be able make oneself useful there, for example by having skills in construction.

The monumental plans of Finnish architects to rebuild Viipuri 29.8.1941–20.6.1944

The other notable event in the sequence of the borders moving during World War II was the period when Viipuri and the area of the ceded Karelia were recaptured by Finland for approximately three years. The two professional groups that produced materials noting the Viipuri Library and providing relevant contextualisation are again library experts and architects. The specialist library periodical *Kirjastolehti* published a lengthy report stating that in regard to libraries, the most urgent question was how they could begin to function again in Karelia which has again become part of Finland. During the Winter War many libraries were destroyed, and after the Moscow Peace Treaty the evacuation of the area had been too urgent to salvage heavy boxes full of books. Upon returning to Karelia, libraries were nowhere to be found. The only exception was the Viipuri City Library, with most of its collections still in the building, which was still standing. In the large piles of books that Russians had gathered in Viipuri, were books from

[37] Ibid. 73-75.

[38] There were also plans for 'Greater Finland', and to attach a larger part of the Karelian area to Finland. Paasi, A. (1996, 185-191) discusses the Finnish propaganda and visions of 'forthcoming Finland'.

the area of the province of Viipuri, the city of Sortavala, schools and other institutions. However, books from the numerous rural libraries were nowhere to found, assumed to have been either destroyed, or transported elsewhere to unknown destinies. Thus, it is concluded that as nearly all the old libraries were lost, libraries needed to be established literally from the ground.[39]

This, however, allowed the Finnish library professionals to take up a project that had been prevailing for a long while: that the Viipuri Library would be made the central provincial library, to serve as the centre of the Karelian area. It was thus decided that this was the time, due to the unprecedented need for a provincial library to compensate for the loss of so many libraries, while in the current situation this would be also the only economically viable solution.[40] It was further explained that this was logical also because most of the needed books had already been gathered to the Viipuri City Library. State funding was thus applied for turning the library into a provincial library.[41]

For the Finnish architects involved, the main project came to be planning for rebuilding of Viipuri. Consequently, interest lied elsewhere than in the library's architectural importance. Like earlier in the debate concerning the site of the library, it is also this period between 1941 and 1944 that the library was perceived primarily as part of the cityscape of Viipuri. The outstanding difference to the earlier situation being the need to deal with the destruction caused by war. After Finnish troops took over Viipuri in last days of August 1941, the city government of Viipuri wrote a letter to Marshal Mannerheim[42] dated on 4 September 1941. They proposed that Karjalankatu street in the centre of Viipuri was to be renamed Mannerheimintie Street. This street created a large intersection with Torkkelinkatu Street, and it is stated that this crossing marked the most vibrant channels in the city, 'a sign' under which life in Viipuri is to be revived. Indeed, this was the crossing point that had been envisioned to be the location of the monumental square in the architectural competition of 1912 and in the 1927 competition for the library. Mannerheim expressed his gratitude for the gesture, wishing that this city so close to his heart would gain new energy, elevating it out of the night of darkness to even greater prosperity.[43] The renaming of Karjalankatu Street was the first concrete event to launch the Finnish plans for developing the city to be even better than it had been before the war.

[39] *Kirjastolehti* 1943, 73.

[40] Ibid. 74.

[41] Kannila, H. 1943, 75. Helle Kannila is the same person who wrote the reply to the Viipuri City Council on behalf of the National Library Office. In 1943, the National Library Office had made a proposal of turning the library into a central provincial library for the entire Karelian region. No funds were allocated for this purpose. *Kirjastolehti* 1943, 152.

[42] Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (4.6.1867-27.1.1951) was the sixth president of Finland in 1944–1946, and Marshal of Finland. Mannerheim served for nearly three decades in the Russian Tsar's Court and the Russian Army, participating in the Russo-Japanese war and WW I. He returned to Finland after the October Revolution and served as the commander-in-chief of the so-called White Army in the Finnish Civil War of 1918. During WW II he was the commander-in-chief of the Finnish armed forces.

In 1941 the city architect Ragnar Ypyä stated that approximately three-quarters of Viipuri´s buildings had been destroyed entirely.[44] Thus, while changing Torkkelinkatu to Mannerheimintie Street can be considered as rather a symbolic project, based on what was articulated in the rebuilding plans, buildings and infrastructure were discussed under two rough categories. On the one hand, there was built environment, which could be repaired or had undergone only minor damage. The Viipuri Library was an example of a building that had suffered only minor damage. On the other hand, there were large parts of the city beyond any possibility of repair, to the extent of nothing remaining. Ypyä stated that the restoration was to follow in three stages. The first stage was to protect and repair the least damaged buildings, and take the water, sewage and electricity facilities into use. The second stage involved rebuilding structures which were still worth repairing, and third would be the construction of entirely new buildings.[45] Between October 1941 and February 1942 number of 7,600 rooms were cleaned and renovated into habitable condition.[46] As has been noted, Finnish books which had been gathered from different parts of the city, had been stored in the Round Tower building. They were also sorted through at the provincial government building, from where individual persons could also go to collect books belonging to them.[47]

An aspect which recalls the situation concerning urban planning in Viipuri before World War II, is that also then a significant amount of time and energy was spent on dealing with small-scale tasks on the everyday level, while the ideas concerning the future of the city were expressly grand. During the Continuation War, the main dilemma became even more poignant, as there was real scarcity of materials and builders, and simultaneously, the situation was introduced as an exceptional opportunity to take up projects which had remained unrealised. Among them was the idea of marking the 'heart of the city' with a group of monumental buildings. The architects who were most actively involved with rebuilding plans from 1941 to 1944 were the previous and current city planner, and the

[43] Telegram to Marshal Mannerheim, in Viipuri September 4th, 1941 signed for City Council by Toivo Valtavuo and Arno Tuurna and Mannerheim's reply. Exc. from the meeting of Viipuri City Administrative Committee 1.9.1941. Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Saaapuneet kirjeet ja muut asiakirjat (1941-1942) MMA.

[44] Ypyä, R. 1941, 128-130.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 247. Also Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 78.

[47] *Karjala* 3.10.1941. Also Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 82.

previous and current city architect. The city planner Otto-Iivari Meurman, who had worked as the mediator between Aalto and the city officials and had held a significant role in negotiating the site for the library, had moved to Helsinki in 1937. After him, Olavi Laisaari became the head of city planning in Viipuri.[48] The previous city architect Uno Ullberg[49] had also moved to Helsinki in 1936, when Ragnar Ypyä took up the position.[50] Notably, Ullberg and Meurman only visited Viipuri during the war, whereas Ypyä and Laisaari worked in the city, and thus also produced designs for seemingly minute renovations. These are the four persons from whom materials remain, and who also wrote to the *Finnish Architectural Review* about the destruction in Viipuri, as well as the restoration plans.[51]

Meurman described the situation as follows: 'Viipuri's development which had turned the city into an urban region with some 80,000 inhabitants, came to an abrupt halt at the beginning of the Winter War. At this time, a significant part of the historic centre, and the mid-town area was destroyed. Also the suburbs were badly damaged, most of all the south-eastern areas, which were burned completely. In the Continuation War, Finnish troops took Viipuri back in the summer of 1941, and it seemed like this was the beginning of a whole new period, with great opportunities lying ahead.'[52] In 1941, Meurman was invited to work on the general plan. Interestingly, he was appointed in the early phase with the civilian authorities taking back only in stages responsibilities from the army. The Finnish military handed Viipuri to civil government completely only in 1943, though all in all, it appears that same persons had a role in both governments, and the division of tasks was not completely clear-cut, which Meurman has recollected: 'The first task was the large work of rebuilding. This is when questions concerning the city plan became acute to be taken up. The military government of the

[48] Laisaari took up the position as the Viipuri city planner on 1.3.1937 and continued his work when returning to Viipuri in 1941 and remaining there until the city was finally lost in 1944. Meurman, O.-I. 1976, 109.

[49] Ullberg was the city architect from 1.7.1932 to 1.6.1936.

[50] It seems that also Paavo Uotila was involved in the rebuilding plans. Uotila had been the city architect from 1912 until 1928. Meurman, O.-I. 1976, 74. Also architect Juhani Viiste (former Vickstedt) wrote several accounts of Viipuri for the *Finnish Architectural Review*, demonstrating expertise in historic structures in particular. In 1941 the *Finnish Architectural Review* published his suggestions for rebuilding plans, with specific focus on the historic city.

[51] Finnish reconstruction plans represent a topic of its own. The main issues briefly appear to have been that architects agreed that this offered an opportunity to make Viipuri even better. Meurman, O.-I. (1958, 151-153) even somewhat ironically pointed out that war had offered the planner an ideal situation, as most of the shacks in the suburbs had vanished, and so much land was cleared for planning anew. Construction was under surveillance of the city's building inspector, the city magistrate, and 'KYMRO', 'Kulkulaitosten ja yleisten töiden ministeriön rakennusosasto' [Construction Department of the Ministry of Roads and Public Works'].

[52] Meurman, O.-I. 1958, 151.

city of Viipuri took up the question immediately in autumn 1941 under direction of Major Arno Tuurna, and the undersigned was sent to Viipuri to work on the new general plan for the city. As my assistant I had for a period of time architect Göran Sidenbladh (present-day Head of City Planning in Stockholm), with whom we sketched the general plan during the winter of 1941–42. In considering the rebuilding, it was first necessary to find out the growth estimate for Viipuri during the next generation, and secondly, which areas and how densely built, would be taken under habitation again. In searching for an answer to the first question, it was concluded that the population of Viipuri could reach approximate 120,000 and at most 150,000 inhabitants by 1970. The plan was made in accordance with the previous estimate.'[53]

This account in fact reveals the curious division between the local military and civilian authorities. Major Arno Tuurna was the city mayor, but also an army major. Meurman had been appointed by the military government to draft the city plan, but it appears to have been completely haphazard that Göran Sidenbladh, a young Swedish architect, happened to be the person assisting Meurman at the time. Architects Ypyä and Laisaari were working for the civilian government, serving in their roles as the city architect and the city planner. Uno Ullberg appears to have offered his contribution on the basis of his expertise. Ullberg produced drawings for the renovations of a number of separate buildings, but he does not appear not to have had any official role either on behalf of the local military or civil authorities.[54]

As the current city planner, Olavi Laisaari in turn wrote a lengthy statement titled 'How is Viipuri to be rebuilt?' dated 27 August 1943, where he described matters as follows: 'The destruction of Viipuri is so great that the city plan can be renewed. But the work of renewal is limited, because the war did not destroy buildings entirely; it left a lot that can be used. In addition it left ownership, mortgages and many related aspects unchanged… It should be taken into consideration that in the centre lived only a third of the 72,000 residents. The war has destroyed the centre significantly more than it has the suburbs. The first stage of rebuilding Viipuri has been estimated to be completed in 1950, at which stage 84,000 persons would live in the city area, still approximately a third of them in the centre… For the most central part of the city, Torkkeli Park and the central

[53] Ibid. 152.

[54] It seems the coordination of the reconstruction was not always smooth. Ypyä for example made the proposal for the need to open architectural competitions to SAFA, without any mention of Laisaari who was the city planner. Laisaari in turn criticises Meurman and Sidenbladh for seeing the future while failing to appreciate the current condition and needs of the city. Exc. from the meeting of Viipuri City Administrative Committee 28.10.1941.Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Saaapuneet kirjeet ja muut asiakirjat (1941-1942) MMA.

barracks area, there are plans to create in the future a group of governmental and public buildings. For this purpose the city government has decided to open an open architectural competition for this part of the city.'[55] Laisaari's account thus brings up once again the plans for the group of monumental buildings. In addition, his perspective reads as different from that of Meurman. Laisaari stressed the need to take into account pre-war property owner's rights, even debts, while Meurman rather thought on the level of the general plan and looked further to the future, viewing that destruction of privately owned buildings offers an opportunity not to restore everything, but instead to develop the city into a better version of itself. In Meurman's vision, the Viipuri of the future was to grow to have almost twice the population it had before World War II.[56]

City architect Ragnar Ypyä, in turn, offered his account of Viipuri's situation for the *Finnish Architectural Review*. Among his responsibilities was to make an inventory of individual buildings that were still worth renovating. To him, most evident was the level of destruction. 'For the city of Viipuri, the most essential thing is to study the city planning question. Total destruction has created new premisses for planning solutions. The most important and acute task is the organisation of the main routes inside the city with regard to incoming and outgoing traffic. The city is an important node for travellers between western Finland and the rest of Karelia, and in the future also between the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe. The destroyed blocks and entire parts of the city offer new opportunities for arranging housing. The area of the central barracks which thus far has defied all attempts to reorganise the centre, is now partly in ruins. – The tasks opening here are vast… A lot of serious work, many ideas, the organising of competitions, not just one but two, even three. Only once in the life of a city is there an opportunity like this, and it will be this generation whose work will be under evaluation in the future.'[57]

The library as part of an altered landscape

To recapitulate, in 1941 the library was listed in the category of buildings which had suffered only lesser damage, and were in the first priority to be repaired and protected to prevent any further damage. In this category were also the Viipuri Business College by Ragnar Ypyä, and the Art School and Museum by Uno Ullberg.[58] Within the large rebuilding operation, there was a specific project which opened a completely new view of the library, literally creating a new landscape for it. Before the war, there had been the Neo-Gothic Cathedral by architect Dippell in Torkkeli Park. The Cathedral, together with the library delineated a section of the park, referred to as the Church Park. The Cathedral, however had been nearly demolished, while the library remained in quite good condition. The specific project which totally changed the location of the library was the Finnish project of turning the Church Park into a cemetery.

Immediately in October 1941 the issue of arranging a cemetery for fallen soldiers closer to the city centre was raised at the City Government's meetings. It was felt that there was a need for an alternative cemetery due to the fact that the current one at the Tammisuo burial ground was too far away. Therefore, it was proposed that those who had been killed in the current war would be buried next to the so-called 'heroes graves' or cemetery of the fallen by the Cathedral, and that also those fallen in the Winter War would be moved to this grave site. The City Government's meeting discussed was what was considered to be the common procedure of 'church and society' to reserve a commemorative and central location for burying the war dead to ensure easy access to the burial ground, and to design the area so as to allow larger groups to pay their respects. The location which came to be agreed upon as the most appropriate one, was the site by the library and the ruins of the Cathedral. The only concern which was expressed was associated with the potential disturbance caused by the library:

'Of the potential sites the first one to be considered is the site by the old cemetery of the fallen on the south-eastern side of the Cathedral. The area would be sufficient and most appropriate for this purpose. Further, this site is already rooted in the minds of citizens as the location for burying the war dead… It would be fitting that some of the deceased from 1918, from both sides, would also be moved to this cemetery, to unite all those who had died for their convictions. Thus, being united in death and also visibly united under the same symbols, which have shaped us, the living, into a united and unanimous Finnish people… Someone could regard as a drawback the fact that this area was previously dedicated to the use of a small children's playground, where mothers and nannies brought the youngest of children to enjoy the sun. In addition it is exactly to this area where the doors of the City Library's children's section open, which might cause reason to fear that there would be more commotion than would be required for silently commemorating the memory of the deceased heroes. However it is probably no

[55] Hand written document, Olavi Laisaari 27.8.1943. Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavoihin ja niiden muutoksiin liittyvät asiakirjat. Arkistoyksikkö: Kirjoituksia Viipurin jälleenrakentamisesta (1942-1944) MMA.

[56] Meurman, O.-I. 1958, 152.

[57] Ypyä, R. 1941, 128-130.

[58] The interior of the Art Museum was badly damaged by fire. Eronen, P. 1993, 22.

Fig. 92-95. *The Finnish army photographers documented the library in September 1941. These images offer perspectives beyond the canonical architecture photos, for example, a view from the librarians work space toward the children's section, and later came helpful in restoring the library. (SA-kuva)*

disturbance, should children play by the graves of their fathers, and youth entering the library to be reminded of the sacrifices of their fathers.'[59]

The meeting concluded with a unanimous decision to place the burial ground as specified by Professor O.-I. Meurman, by the old cemetery of the fallen on the south-eastern side of the Cathedral. Further, it was decided that persons fallen in the Winter War of 1939–1940 as well as some of the deceased from 1918, from both sides, whites and reds, would be interred in this cemetery.[60] It was the children's library which was kept open, and the Church Park was given a whole new use and meaning. The park area next to the library, which had served as a children's playground, was now transformed into a cemetery. Furthermore, it is interesting that it was not only for persons who had fallen in World War II, but the decision was to move here persons 'from both sides' from the war of 1918. This refers to the Finnish Civil War of 1918 between the 'reds' and 'whites', the working and owning classes, soon after Finland's independence. In 1941 only some 20 years had passed since the brutal and tragic Civil War, discussion of which remained for a long while a difficult issue. The burial ground thus became a place which had a symbolic meaning, bringing together persons from different sides, and different wars, thus aiming to heal the wounds of the Finnish Civil War and emphasise the unity of Finns as one people. Hence, the additional efforts associated with establishing the cemetery next to the library went far beyond practical needs. In retrospect, the note that there would be no harm in children playing by the graves of their own fathers however stands out as dark humour, though at the time it most likely was articulated in a most serious manner.

After the City Government had discussed the issue, specialist statements were commissioned from three representatives of the SAFA.[61] In October 1941 the statements of architects Erik Bryggman, Martti Välikangas and Ragnar Ypyä were presented at the City Government's meeting. Their view was that the cemetery commemorating the 'War of Liberty' would be the appropriate site, and the graves could be extended towards Linnankatu Street and the library. Organised this way, the graves would not affect the rebuilding of the Cathedral, which in their opinion, however, was not to be rebuilt according to the old drawings, and the exact new site for the Cathedral was to be determined on the basis of an

[59] Exc. from the meeting of Viipuri City Administrative Committee 8.10.1941. Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Saaapuneet kirjeet ja muut asiakirjat (1941-1942) MMA.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Overall, the urgent need to restore buildings and cities destroyed in World War II was an important topic discussed at the SAFA meetings. The situation of Viipuri was closely followed in them. Consequently, the entire architectural profession would have been aware of the plans for Viipuri.

Fig. 96-98. *During the Continuation War, the remains of the monument for the Finnish Civil War became focal point in the city where range of events from parades to funerals were organised. In the third image the Lotta Svärd womens' organisation has organised a coffee break. (SA-kuva)*

architectural competition. The ruins of the Cathedral, however, could be marked in an appropriate way.[62]

Uno Ullberg visited Viipuri twice in 1941. He offered his suggestion for rebuilding the central area, accompanied by a plan that he had drawn for the purpose, published by the *Finnish Architectural Review* in the same year. Ullberg humbly described that he had also dared to send his plan to the City Government, in the hope that his suggestions could be considered as one alternative.[63] Ullberg went meticulously through specific sites, asserting that the earlier plan for taking the central barracks area into the use of the city, could now at last be applied. There, Ullberg would situate a new City Hall. Further, as the City Theatre, and several municipal buildings had been destroyed, he proposed that the central barracks area should be used for building a new theatre, a concert hall and an institute of music. As to the destroyed Cathedral in Torkkeli Park, Ullberg proposed that the remaining foundation is not ideal for building a new church on the same spot, but instead a new cathedral, more appropriate to the needs of our time, should be built alongside Linnankatu Street. Having visited Viipuri again, Ullberg told that he had heard of the project for bringing together deceased of the Winter War and the current war, and suggests that the foundation of the Cathedral could be used for the graves, and the deceased could be buried inside and outside of the remaining foundation of the Cathedral. The bust of Agricola would be on the steps of the Cathedral, between it and the library.[64]

It is however noteworthy that the official city documents, and the information published in the *Finnish Architectural Review* all tell of visions for the future, instead of describing the situation at the time. One finding of this research project is that there remains a number of Finnish military photographs from this time period,[65] which document what this part of the park looked like when it was transformed into a cemetery. These thus offer a segment of documentation which has not been presented as part of the history of the library, likely due to the

[62] Exc. Minutes of the meeting of Administrative committee of Viipuri city 28.10.1941. Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Saaapuneet kirjeet ja muut asiakirjat (1941-1942) MMA.

[63] Ullberg, U. 1941, 147. After Ullberg's article is Juhani Viiste's text on renewing Viipuri city plan. Viiste's view is that the eastern suburbs should not be rebuilt but instead the city needs to be densified, and new thoroughfares for traffic need to be established. Viiste, J. 1941, 150-152.

[64] Ullberg, U. 1941, 147. Later, the bust of Agricola, one of the founding fathers of the Finnish language was found, and during the Soviet period, up until the 2000s it was in the vestibule of the library. One legend has it that the Soviet inhabitants believed that the statue was of the architect who had designed the library, a building too grand for a small city like Vyborg.

[65] SA-kuva, Finnish military image archives, open access online in 2014. http://sa-kuva.fi However, in the numerous images where the library appears it is a particular event being photographed, and thus the library is not named as a search keyword.

Fig.99. *In 1941 Uno Ullberg offered his plan for reconstructing the centre of Viipuri. (**Finnish Architectural Review** 9-10/1941)*

very reason that here the library is in the background, not the primary subject of these photographs, and the library is not in any way referred to in the information attached to the photographs. Nevertheless, the importance of these photographs is that they quite literally make visible how the park was altered into a burial ground, in contrast to the plans for the future based on which it is impossible to detect what in fact came to be realised.

Intriguingly, these photographs reveal that what used to be the 'back side' of the library, i.e. the side of the children's section opening towards the Church Park, within Torkkeli Park, had become a central point, even the new 'heart of the city'. This is because the Church Park had become the primary site for different types of official events, such as military gatherings, memorial days and funerals. This same site was where all the international visitors were brought, ranging from individual reporters to different kinds of delegations from countries such as Germany, Hungary and Sweden. The role of the library as a building in the park was underscored by the fact that the Cathedral, which Aalto so disliked, had disappeared. To carry the interpretation further, as all these visits took place in the Church Park, and the children's section is known to have been in use, it can be argued that functionally the library was 'turned around', with everything suddenly taking place at what used to be the to the rear side of the library.

In practice, the library was reopened in mid-September 1942, and it was kept open from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays.[66] Organising the library was a large

[66] *Karjala* 16.4, 21.4, 13.9, 24.10.1942, opening hours also noted in Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 82.

project, because a significant amount of Russian language literature had been added to its collections. A so-called secret section contained literature which was regarded unsuitable for Soviet citizens, such as publications concerning Finnish history and religion. Many of these books were marked with a note: 'Contains mockery of the Red Army. To be removed and placed in the secret section'.[67] The library had remained in relatively good condition, except for an explosion of a Russian truck which had been transporting ammunition having broken all the large windows. Under the conditions, it took almost a year to replace all the broken glass.[68]

The Finnish Library Days event was organised in the Viipuri Library in 1943. In this context, it was noted that the children's section was at the time the library space that was open to the public.[69] As this was still the situation in 1943, it is likely that at least most of the time when the Finns were back in Viipuri, it was the children's section and possibly the newspaper room, which were kept open instead of the main hall. There remain, in fact, two drawings by Ragnar Ypyä from the same year, in which he designed somewhat crude versions to replace the original newspaper stands for reading newspapers while standing up.[70] The newspaper stands also point yet again to the discrepancy between the large-scale visions for the future, and the modest make-do solutions which could be executed at the time.

Re-organising the city centre

By the end of 1943 approximately 35,000 of Viipuri's Finnish inhabitants had returned to the city.[71] In April 1943 the tramlines were taken to use, and before this the governance of the city had been handed over from the military authorities

[67] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 82.

[68] *Karjala* 3.10.1941; Sallinen 2003, 44-46, 85.

[69] *Kirjastolehti* 1943, 128-129. Viipuri Library Days were held in the library, in the old children's section, which currently served the purpose of the library open to the public.

[70] Drawing dated 30.1.1943. In most accounts the aspect that is stressed is lack of both materials and a work force, which further makes credible that there would not have been personnel to keep the entire library open. Similarly, it is likely that this same reason accounts for the appearance of the crude appearance of the newspaper stands.

[71] By the end of autumn 1941 approximately 70,000 civilians had returned to the province of Viipuri, mostly working in farming or employed in immediate repair works. The largest group of persons having anxiously waited for permission to return home was present in the spring of 1942. By the end of the year, the population in Karelia was 235,000 persons, approximately 60% of the number of inhabitants in 1939. At the beginning of the new evacuation in June 1944 there were some 280,000 persons in the Karelian region i.e. 70% of 1939 population and in Viipuri there were 30,000 inhabitants, i.e. approximately a third of the 1939 population. Hietanen, S. 2007, 31.

to civilian bodies. Due to a significant part of the city area having been completely destroyed, plans for rebuilding the city were openly discussed and planned.[72] As city architect Ypyä had suggested, more than just one architectural competition was organised, and they were held in 1943–1944.[73] The competition relevant to the library was the one for 'organising the city centre of Viipuri'. Its deadline was originally 31 May 1944,[74] which however was extended to 30 September 1944.[75] This project did not overlap with the one architects Meurman and his assistant Sidenbladh had been working on, as the two men were drafting the new general plan, and the architectural competition was for a very limited area in the centre of the city.

The brief for the competition was prepared in the Viipuri City Planning Office,[76] and it included several points that offer an intriguing glimpse of visions for the future. First, the programme outlined the competition area within the city plan; second, main routes of traffic; and third, a description of the competition area. Under point three, description of the competition area was accompanied by notes on existing structures that were to be preserved. The library was mentioned here in two places. First was described the area of the Cathedral (now destroyed), delineated by Linnankatu and Vaasankatu streets. It was noted that there was also the library building in this part of Torkkeli Park, along the axis of Suokatu and Koulukatu Streets. Further, it was pointed out that the ruins of the Cathedral had been demolished for the most part. By the foundation of the Cathedral, were approximately one thousand places for graves. The second mention of the library pointed to its role as a surviving public building. It was described that on top of a hill, behind the sports fields was the 5-story Viipuri Business College, aligned with the library. This college building had been restored as the temporary City Hall.

Under point four were outlined public buildings which needed to be allocated a plot within the competition area. There were altogether 16 buildings, divided into those belonging to the city, the government and the Evangelical-Lutheran congregation. They include a theatre, a concert hall, a park restaurant – referred to as 'Espilä', the name of the restaurant building which had existed in the park –

[72] Hietanen, S. 2007, 31-32.

[73] The first competition was for redesigning the Old Cathedral, for which the competition time was extended until 13.4.1944.

[74] *Finnish Architectural Review* 11-12/1943. News of competitions stated that the competition for the Old Cathedral of Viipuri had been extended and would close on 3 May. The competition for reorganising the Viipuri city centre was to close 31.5.1944.

[75] *Finnish Architectural Review* 3-4/1944.

[76] Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavoihin ja niiden muutoksiin liittyvät asiakirjat. Arkistoyksikkö: Kirjoituksia Viipurin jälleenrakentamisesta (1942-1944) MMA.

and government offices. Thus, this 1943 architectural competition in fact recalls the 1912 competition for a 'monumental square'. Of the buildings for a monumental area, the library that had received its own new building. In comparing the two competition briefs, the main differences appear to be that in 1943 the brief required assigning a place for a number of school and administrative buildings and taking into account needs of the congregation, for which the burial ground in Church Park, next to the library was to be established.[77] To add, in 1943 the competition area was significantly larger. Furthermore, the centre of the city had come to be defined by buildings to be renovated and plots where the buildings were in ruins or had totally vanished. The jury members appointed by the SAFA were Alvar Aalto and Martti Välikangas.[78] This is clear evidence that Aalto must have been closely acquainted with the situation in Viipuri, and would have known about the condition of the library as one of the buildings to be preserved, as required by the competition programme.

By the time this extended competition closed, Finland had lost Viipuri again. Architect Riitta Thuneberg, the person quoted in the first thematic chapter where she recalled the debate concerning the site for the library, had her first job in the Viipuri City Planning Office in 1944, before beginning her studies in 1945. She had time to work there only for approximately a month and a half, participating in making plans for destroyed villages on the Karelian Isthmus. Thuneberg, however, describes how Heimo Kautonen who was head of the office, participated in the competition for organising the city centre of Viipuri, and she found it simultaneously exhilarating and incredible that she was invited to assist with the competition entry. 'I was drawing that in the evenings and in the afternoons, and there it remained on the table. As I remember it the competition period did not end on 20 June 1944… Or it was then coming near, and I remember we were then… so Viipuri was taken over on 20 June 1944 and we were retreating, so I heard on the radio that the competition for the Viipuri city plan was cancelled.'[79]

As follows, it is neither known which architects were preparing their competition entry, nor was anything concerning this competition published in the *Finnish Architectural Review*. Nevertheless, city architect Ragnar Ypyä's sketch for a

[77] The other project for the congregation, was the competition for the Old Cathedral, but as has been pointed out, this site is further away.

[78] The jury secretary was Olavi Laisaari. Alvar Aalto replaced Uno Ullberg, who was ill, and passed away in 1944.
Here the suggested deadline for the competition is 31.3.1944. Viipurin kaupungin rakennustoimiston asemakaavaosaston arkisto / Asemakaavoihin ja niiden muutoksiin liittyvät asiakirjat. Arkistoyksikkö: Kirjoituksia Viipurin jälleenrakentamisesta (1942-1944) MMA.

[79] The Finnish Architectural Society interviews 1992, unpublished manuscript. MFA library archives. In the city documents, there is no mention of Heimo Kautonen having been the head of the City Planning Office in Viipuri.

reconstruction plan from 1942 provides some indication of what kind of cityscape the competition entries would have created. The sketch illustrates how the central area could have been developed along the lines of modernist ideals. In the Torkkeli Park area there was a cluster of free-standing public buildings, one of which was the library. The plan included a large square, surrounded by public buildings such as a city hall, a concert hall, a post office and two school buildings. This square was in the place of the central barracks area, which in particular Meurman had been waiting to be released by the army for the use of the city in the 1920s and 1930s. Though a recognisably new interpretation, Ypyä's reconstruction plan could be interpreted as paying homage to the plans for a monumental square that had continued for a long while.

Indeed, the visions concerning what Viipuri might have been like as a Finnish city did not completely stop. In particular Meurman brought up the ideas of creating a monumental cityscape in number of his articles long after World War II.[80] One line of analysis is that when a population has been forced into exile, the longing is not only about the lost past, but about the lost 'great future', which could have been.[81] The ideas concerning the lost future are however also reflected in the plans of architects, evidenced in particular by Meurman's writings and recollections. Later, from the 1980s onwards, the question of what Viipuri might have looked like, had it remained part of Finland, has been raised in different

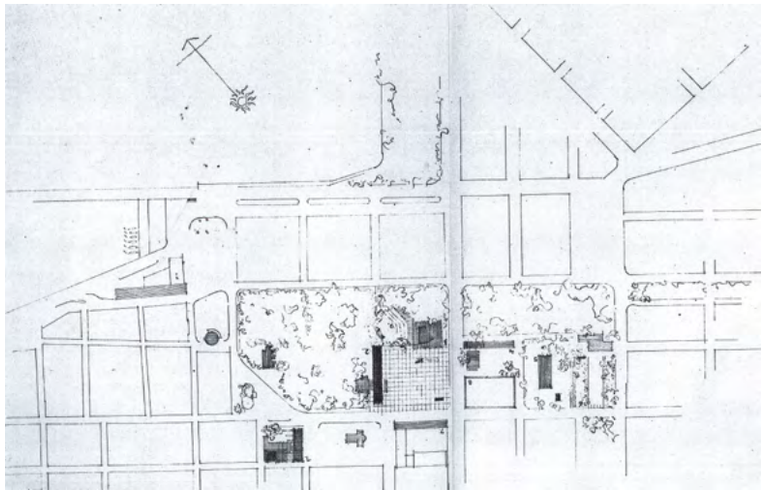


Fig. 100. *In 1942 the city architect Ragnar Ypyä made a sketch in which he positioned several public buildings along Torkkeli Park. (MMA)*

[80] E.g. Meurman, O.-I. 1958, 151-153; 1985, 264-271. See also Salmela, U. 2004, 193-194.

[81] Paasi makes this point in his study concerning the area of Värtsilä in Karelia. Paasi, A. 1996, 280.

Finnish media. In this context, the notion brought forth is that based on what has happened in Finnish cities after World War II. Consequently, Viipuri would have likely been redeveloped extensively. Thus, by Viipuri remaining a part of the Soviet Union, and later Russia, it has been jokingly pointed out that it represents the 'best preserved Finnish city'.

The Karelian Offensive 9.6.1944–4.9.1944

On 9 June 1944 life in Viipuri changed again. The Red Army's so-called 'Great Offensive'[82] on the Karelian isthmus began and approached Viipuri at great speed. On 18 June, civilians were ordered to leave the city.[83] The Red Army reached Viipuri the same day, and continued into the eastern suburbs two days later. The Finnish opposition collapsed soon due to lack of ammunition. The Finnish troops retreated from the city centre in relative disorder, and at 4:45 p.m. the Finnish flag was taken down from the tower of Viipuri Castle. The Castle Bridge connecting to the old city was exploded in front of the approaching Soviet troops at 5 p.m.[84] Due to lack of transportation the civilians left behind nearly everything when for the second time the population retreated towards western Finland.

The last day 20.6.1944 – the library at 4 p.m.

In Finnish war histories there circulates a recollection from the last soldiers who were captured by the Red Army on the day when the Finnish Army gave up defending Viipuri. This is illustrative of how the library emerges in unpredicted contexts, this time named in context of the 'Last day of [Finnish] Viipuri'. The 15th Company of the 20th Brigade of the Finnish Army was close to Kolikkoinmäki Hill, securing the exit of its platoon no.13. It is described how the enemy had broken through, and there was the risk of being surrounded. The group's leader had then told the 19-year old Toivo Lahtinen to go and see where the rest of the platoon was. So he climbed the hill and found his own company leader, 20-year old Heikki Eränen, who had told him to go find the rest of the platoon. Lahtinen recalled the events as follows:

'But there was no platoon to be seen. Instead of the Finnish tank division on Viipuri's streets were the Red Army tanks. We made use of the smoke and the

[82] In Finnish contexts, the term used is often 'the Great Offensive', also referred to as 'Vyborg-Petrozavodsk Offensive'.

[83] The evacuation at the Karelian isthmus begun on 10.6.1944. The city was to be emptied of its civilian population by 6 a.m. on 18.6. Hietanen, S. 2007, 33.

[84] Elfvengren, E. and Tammi, E. 2007, 223-250. See also http://www.virtuaaliviipuri.tamk.fi/fi/story/7, Accessed Dec 2016.

general confusion and continued on our way. Suddenly we were in the park. There were so many brown coats around us that we needed to find a place to hide. Soon we found a large white building and slid in thorough the cellar windows, behind the bushes with two wounded with us. So this was the famous library by Alvar Aalto! The men hid their valuables on the shelves, between books. There were some 20 men in the cellar, and soon everyone heard how the Castle Bridge was exploded – we didn't see it, but guessed what that great bang meant. The men realised the city was taken over by the enemy, and they were surrounded, trapped in the cellar. An older man, the already 34-year old sergeant Viljo Rentola made a suggestion. He asked if anyone had a piece of white cloth to put in the window. That way it could be possible to get out alive. The piece of cloth didn't have time to remain there for long. The group of soldiers was captured by the Russian troops. One of the men, Veikko Katainen was wounded. When the other men continued walking, they heard a machine gun and knew he would never walk again.'[85]

On the Soviet side, there was a belief that after the Finnish retreat, arsonists had remained in the city, aiming to cause as much destruction as possible. A Soviet civilian named Luknitski saw a shot Finnish soldier close to the library doors and deduced that this man, too, had been a 'torch man', because one wing of the library was on fire.[86] According to some recollections, a few days before Viipuri was taken over by the Soviet troops, a bomb fell near the library in an air raid, and the building was slightly damaged. These are the days, which also sealed librarian Johan Vasenius's fate. Retreating from the city, he disappeared and was never found.[87] After the Finnish retreat from Viipuri, the Red Army proceeded to the north of the city. The Soviet offensive was halted at the battle of Tali-Ihantala that lasted from 25 June to 9 July 1944. From the point of view of the Soviet Union, Vyborg had been liberated, and the ancient Russian city had been returned to its motherland. In Moscow, the recapture of Vyborg was a cause for great celebration, as it marked an end to the work which had begun exactly three years earlier. In the Russian-language histories, the conquest of Vyborg was recollected as long and bloody. For example General Semyon Borstsev, has described the intensive fighting which took place nearby, and in the city on 20 June 1944. The Finnish versions are different. According to Finns, the city was lost without any significant fighting.[88]

The armistice was signed on the 4 September that same year. The Peace Treaty drawn up in Moscow on 19 September 1944 returned the border to the 1940

[85] *Ilta-Sanomat* 3.5.2012 special attachment magazine. Also in Tammi, E. 2007, 339-359. and Raevuori, A. 2013, 224.

[86] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 92.

[87] Hirn, S. 1982, 522.

[88] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 89.

situation. Once again both civilians and the rest of the Finnish troops retreated westward behind the Finnish side of the border. Finland had lost ceded Karelia and along with it the city of Viipuri, but not its independence.[89] Later, it has been interpreted that Finland's loss of Viipuri was sealed already in 1943, in the Teheran conference of 28.11–1.12.1943, where the Allied Powers discussed the future of Europe. There, Winston Churchill announced to Stalin that the United Kingdom would find it difficult to agree with Finland becoming annexed to the Soviet Union against the will of the Finns. Stalin, however, felt that the Finns should be taught a lesson, and pay war reparations. When specific areas came to be discussed, Churchill brought up Viipuri, to which Stalin had replied: 'Viipuri can't be spoken of!' Thus, Stalin's view was that there was no other alternative than the annexation of Viipuri and the Karelian Isthmus to the Soviet Union.[90]

When the final peace accords were reached in September 1944, the total number of Finns who died in the wars was 91,000,[91] and the number of internally displaced persons amounted to over 420,000, about 12% of the country's total population.[92] Of the evacuees, 407,000 were Karelians.[93] After the evacuation in 1944, all families had the right to receive a new home or farm property elsewhere in Finland, and were allocated new land in proportion to their former property.[94] Because Finland had been allied with Germany during the war, reparations had to be paid to the Allied governments while at the same time resettling the Karelian population, which was a major economic burden.[95] Though Finland had become an independent nation state only in 1917, the loss of ceded Karelia to the Soviet Union marked the end of over a thousand years of Finnish settlement in the area. It is these events that gave birth to the concepts of the 'Lost Karelia' and the 'Karelian evacuees' (the Karelian exiles),[96] later seen to be a central event in the grand narrative of Finnish history.[97]

In his article 'Viipuri as a military centre and garrison city', Lieutenant-General Harald Öhquist summed up: 'There are many cities in the world which, like Viipuri, have been repeatedly destructed by tidal waves of war. There even are cities

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid. 95.

[91] Armstrong, K. 2004, 1.

[92] Saarela, J. and Finnäs, F. 2009, 575.

[93] Fingerroos, O. 2008, 237.

[94] Saarela, J. and Finnäs, F 2009, 75.

[95] Armstrong, K. 2004, 1.

[96] Fingerroos, O. 2008, 237.

[97] Armstrong, K. 2004, 1-2.

where destruction was more extensive during World War II. But in one sense the destiny, which Viipuri of our period encountered was exceptional: the buildings of the city – even though damaged – for the most part exist in their former places. So are the streets, squares, parks and bridges, briefly put all the material substance remains approximately as when we last saw it. – But still Viipuri no longer exists, because its soul has been taken away – not a single [Finnish] inhabitant remains in their hometown of Viipuri.'[98] On the Soviet side, the incomers wondered why the city was totally empty of people. 'There is no population in Vyborg. The prisoners of war reluctantly admitted that the fascist City Government had evacuated all the civilians by force. The civilians were taken away, and were not allowed to take any of their belongings with them.'[99]

The Moscow Peace Treaty sealed the re-annexation of areas Finland had lost earlier, but taken over in-between. The Paris Peace Treaty of February 1947 confirmed the annexation of ceded Karelia. Preceding this, many Finns had still been hoping it might be possible to return to their old homes and properties.[100] After World War II, Finland was a neutral country with national sovereignty and followed a foreign policy that avoided challenging its powerful eastern neighbour. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and Finland had the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (Fi. YYA), lasting from 1948 to 1992. The purpose of the agreement was on the one hand to deter the Western or Allied Powers from using Finland against the Soviet Union while Finland sought to strengthen its political independence with close proximity to strategic Soviet regions. As follows, Finnish visits to Vyborg began already in the late 1940s, the earliest trips being so-called delegation visits, associated with the YYA Agreement.[101] It was in the last part of the 1950s when Finnish travels to the Soviet Union took the form of ordinary tourism.[102] The issue of the ceded Karelia, and particularly the evacuation of the population during the 1940s, was not publicly discussed and the evacuation of Finnish Karelia remained sensitive issue during the Cold War.[103] It was not only international architectural publications, but also the Finnish library periodical and the *Finnish Architectural Review* from which Viipuri and the library disappeared for years to come, almost as if the city had

[98] Öhquist, H. 1958, 298.

[99] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 93.

[100] In fact, the discussion about any opportunity for Finland to get Viipuri back is a theme that emerges from time to time. For example, Paasi, A. (1996, 276-299) discusses the many sides, and the clash between the nostalgic idealised visions and visiting the real physical places.

[101] Kostiainen, A. et al. 2004, 271–272; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 253.

[102] Veijola, S. 1988, 22–25; Shikalov, Y. 2016, 253.

[103] Saarela, J. and Finnäs, F. 2009, 576.

never existed at all. However, as Finns travelled in the area of the ceded area already in the late 1940s, it is noteworthy that it was known in Finland that the library exists, and could be visited.

A change in attitudes has been seen to have begun only in the late 1980s as revolutions swept the Eastern Bloc. It was only then that perestroika made it possible to discuss many sensitive political issues in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, but also in Finnish civil society. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, and the restoring of independence to the Baltic republics, the Karelian issue came to life in the late 1980s, having been dormant for decades.[104] The Viipuri Library and most specifically its deteriorated condition emerges as a topic in the Finnish public media alongside the larger Karelia question in the 1980s. International publications, however, followed events much more slowly. As has been noted, a number of architectural writers repeated long after World War II, and even after the Cold War, that the library was destroyed in the war. Internationally, the *Viipuri Library* book by Michael Spens published in 1994 can be seen to mark a turning point, explicitly commenting on this misunderstanding.

Life after 1944

The armistice in September 1944 marked the beginning of the second Soviet period in the history of the city. It lasted until 1991, the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War, when Vyborg became a city in modern-day Russia. The beginning of this period has been analysed as having been a repetition of March 1940, as for the second time Finnish Viipuri turned into the Soviet city of Vyborg. Only this time the city was even more in ruins. According to the official reports from 1948, 48.5% of buildings in Viipuri had been destroyed. The most damaged sites were the blocks in the centre, closest to the port. Almost all the wooden structures had burned down.[105] The other significant difference was that in 1944 Vyborg became part of the Leningrad oblast of the Russian Federation, not the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic. Therefore, for example, in August 1944 all the Finnish language street names were ordered to be changed within a few weeks' time.[106] The order was that all Finnish, German or other foreign language books and documents were to be handed over to the archive building in Vyborg.[107]

[104] Saarela, J. and Finnäs, F. 2009, 577.

[105] Friland, D.P. 1994, 17.

[106] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 247; *Vyborg* 25.5.2007.

[107] *Vyborg* 25.5.2007; Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 99.

This decision is explained by the proximity to the Finnish border, and the conscious policy to aim to cut off any personal contacts with the Finnish side.

At the outset of the second Soviet period, the empty city was populated by means of recruitment, mostly from the north-western regions of the USSR. First the institution responsible for recruiting new inhabitants to the empty villages and cities in the ceded area was the National Defence Committee. After 1945, an immigrants section was established, which took over the responsibilities to find new inhabitants to ceded Vyborg and the Karelian isthmus. New inhabitants arrived for example from the Vologda area, where a project to create a waterway from the Volga to the Baltic Sea made it necessary to demolish several villages. Other places for suitable immigrants included Ukraine and Belarus, where World War II had caused significant destruction.[108] Also some Soviet citizens who had been evacuated from Vyborg in 1941, applied for a permission to move back. Nevertheless, repopulating Vyborg was much slower than on the previous occasion.[109] In 1944 there were 2,473 inhabitants, and the number slowly grew to 38,099 by 1950.[110]

Also this second time when new Soviet citizens were moving to Vyborg, there were rumours that the previous inhabitants might still return, as had happened earlier. The appearance of the city was also regarded as foreign, associated with the enemy. Thus, it is understandable why the new dwellers did not have personal feelings for the history of the city, and were unaware of its cultural history.[111] In 1945, from the City Government's point of view, an important part of the recovery work in Vyborg was to protect historic and cultural heritage. However, it came to be known that local government organisations ignored the 'principles of protecting Socialist property', as buildings such as the Round Tower and the Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration were looted.[112] Something similar appears to have happened to the library, which was practically intact after World War II. It was during the first post-war years, as a consequence of 'indifference and barbaric attitudes', that the building was afforded no protection, and within few years' time, turned into an empty shell.[113] Years later, in the late 1990s, some individual items, such as a free-standing shelf, was returned to the library by pri-

[108] Ibid. 101.

[109] Ibid. 103.

[110] Petrov, E. and Krinitsyna, T. in Katajala, K. (ed.) 2016, 140. The exact numbers in the years in between were 1945: 16,414, 1946: 27,336, 1947: 31,440, 1948: 36,448, 1949: 35,419.

[111] Dimitriev, V. 1991, 162.

[112] Petrov, E. and Krinitsyna, T. in Katajala, K. (ed.) 2016, 131.

[113] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 37.

vate persons who had 'salvaged' them from the building that no one was looking after.[114]

Eugene Petrov and Taisiya Krinitsyna have researched the Soviet period archives concerning Vyborg and its planning, and their account brings forth three rather discrepant plans for what Soviet Vyborg was going to be. In association with the geopolitical position of the city, the City Government took the view that Vyborg was to be developed as a military border city, and therefore its population should be selected on these premises. The Soviet inhabitants moving to Vyborg were specifically persons who did not have any earlier relationship with the city or the area, to ensure that there would not be personal contacts across the border to Finland. Soviet Vyborg was to have military headquarters, and military schools, and other army functions, with industries primarily serving them. The population was to consist of officers, soldiers and civilians serving in the army in one way or another. These plans were partly realised. The second view, however, was that due to the city's proximity to Leningrad, investments should be made in industries and port facilities, to make Vyborg an important satellite city of Leningrad, and to organise economic exchange with Finland and beyond. Finally, plans were also made to turn Vyborg into a recreational area, with sanatoriums to serve workers from elsewhere in the USSR.[115] In practice, as part of the Leningrad oblast area, Vyborg became a city where certain administrative offices of the area were located, accompanied by a few industrial facilities.[116] Separate from all the visions was the fact that as part of the Soviet Union, the population and lifestyle of Vyborg changed entirely, accompanied by the abolition of the private ownership of land and buildings.

Originally, the Soviet authorities assigned value even at the national level to the city of Vyborg. In November 1945, the resolution 'Concerning the prime restoration of 15 Russian cities', was outlined, as part of which Vyborg was categorised among the cities of historical value located along the western Russian border.[117] In practice, the Soviet officials' difficulty to reach agreement and lack of coordination of the practical reconstruction work significantly hindered developing the city. The chief architect of Vyborg changed several times, and institutions at different levels kept exchanging responsibility to create the new general plan. Meanwhile, Vyborg continued to be developed spontaneously and according to

[114] Information from the secretary of the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library, Maija Kairamo. Personal communication.

[115] Petrov, E. and Krinitsyna, T. in Katajala, K. (ed.) 2016, 123-149.

[116] Ibid. See also Shikalov, Y. 2016, 252.

[117] Petrov, E. and Krinitsyna, T. in Katajala, K. (ed.) 2016, 135. In 1947 the planning institute Gostroiprojekt's Leningrad section architects V.N. Taleporovski and F.I. Miljukova drafted the first post-war rebuilding plan for Vyborg. This plan, however, was rejected by the authorities.

temporary instructions.[118] At last in 1952 a new city plan was drawn up by an official body which had not been involved in the preceding stages, the Lengipkommunstroi Urban Institute. This was confirmed in 1953 by the local authorities as the 'Project of planning and building the city of Vyborg'.[119] In the project, Vyborg was presented as 'an ancient Russian town with historical and revolutionary traditions associated with the struggle of the Russian people for freedom and independence'.[120] The aim was to rebuild Vyborg according to the Soviet planning ideals. The main streets, squares and park axis were to be delineated by multi-storey buildings, and Torkkeli Park continued towards the east, as far as Patterinmäki Hill. Located in the place of the destroyed Cathedral was a large public building. In this plan, the library was not marked in any way, making it possible to have the south-western park axis continue undisrupted.[121] In 1961–1962, when the number of inhabitants in the city area was calculated to be 80,000, a new general plan was drawn up.[122] Soviet rebuilding began by renovating existing buildings most of all in the late 1940s and 1950s. This was followed by the construction of new housing, the so-called Kruschovkas to replace the wooden structures, most of which had burned down. Last, after the 1961–1962 general plan, construction turned towards building suburbs, further away from the historic centre. However, it is notable that the pre-war structures still characterise the overall appearance of the centre of the city even today.

The context of rebuilding, however, also tells of how the urgent need to rebuild was not solely a practical matter in the Soviet Union, as it had not been for the Finns between 1941 and 1944. In Soviet Vyborg, many buildings which had been damaged during the war were completely demolished. Many structures were also renovated, as part of which their original appearance was significantly altered because changed 'social norms'.[123] Viktor Dimietriev, the city official in charge of Vyborg's built heritage, expressed his regret in 1991 that restoring the city had turned out to be unfeasible due to three major reasons: first, was lack of documentation, as all the archival stock concerning architecture and construction had

[118] Ibid. 132. The resolution was made by the Russian Federation Council of People's commissars. The medieval centre would have represented a high-priority restoration area. Dmitriev, V. 1991, 162. Neuvonen, P. et al. 1999, 36.

[119] Petrov, E. and Krinitsyna, T. in Katajala, K. (ed.) 2016, 140.

[120] Ibid. The quote is from the 'Project of planning and development of Vyborg in 1952, archive of the 'Leningrazhdanprojekt' institute L.205.

[121] The layout of the Vyborg central area, kept at the technical archive of 'Leningrazhdanprojekt' Institute, Vyborg branch, has been published in Petrov, E. and Krinitsyna, T. in Katajala, K. (ed.) 2016, 142.

[122] Friland, D.P. 1994,17. In 1985 a new general plan, for 100,000 inhabitants, was drawn up.

[123] Dimitriev, V. 1994, 24-25.

been removed to Finland during the war. Second, inadequate knowledge of architectural heritage, or inability to assess it, explains why certain buildings which remained structurally solid, were nevertheless demolished. Third, what Dimietriev refers to as 'nihilistic attitude' towards individual layers of architectural heritage on the part of professional architects. Twentieth-century architecture, in particular, was affected by the 'prevailing theory of architecture',[124] i.e. the attitudes of the Stalinist period. Indeed, this historical severance of contacts stands out as seminal for understanding the changed meaning associated with Vyborg and its built heritage. At the end of World War II, Finland had evacuated not only the city's entire population, but significant numbers of museum artefacts, maps and different kinds of archival materials, most notably those concerning the planning and architecture. This is also the explanation why today the materials produced in the different offices of Finnish period Viipuri, as for example the moments of the City Government's meetings, the materials from the Viipuri City Planning Office, and architectural drawings are located in Finland in the Mikkeli Provincial Archives.[125]

As was noted, from the social point of view, many of the new inhabitants did not experience the city as particularly homely. This was not only a consequence of lack of any preceding relationship with the city, but also because by Soviet standards, the appearance of Vyborg was regarded as foreign. These feelings need to have been enforced by the prevailing fear that Finns might still return, like had happened during the Continuation War.[126] In fact, numerous accounts tell of the mixed feelings of the Soviet inhabitants moving into the city after 1944. For example, later oral history projects have revealed how it was not only the cityscape, but absolutely everything from farming tools Finns had left behind, to the bathrooms which appeared excessively fine for ordinary apartment buildings, which stood out as strange.[127] Between 1945 and 1946 the *Vyborgski Bolševik* newspaper published over twenty articles by the historian Nikolai Turtšaninov describing the history of Vyborg. Turtšaninov described how the conquering of the area in 1710 returned this Karelian area to its rightful owner, Russia. In 1944 Vyborg became again part of Soviet Union, having been temporarily conquered by

[124] Dimitriev, V. 1991, 163.

[125] Not everything was evacuated when Finns retreated, but the materials which are to be found in the LOGAV archive at present, are mostly materials from court offices, i.e. legal documents, and other materials which are relevant for researching family genealogies.

[126] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 248; *Vyborg* 25.5.2007.

[127] Also, what exists goes beyond the scope of this research. Pekka Hakamies for instance has conducted research into, and published as joint work oral histories from the annexed area. They illustrate well how foreign both the environment, but also everyday objects appeared to the Soviet inhabitants, often moved to the ceded area from thousands of kilometres away. Hakamies, P. 2005; 2006, 31-56.

the Finnish 'White Guards'.[128] Thus, historians, but also different types of publications from newspapers to encyclopaedias, reinforced the view of Vyborg as an ancient Russian city, and the notion that Swedes and Finns had only temporarily occupied the area.[129] Still in 1962 a Russian language guidebook on Vyborg offered a range of sites in the city, from factories to historical monuments, but without mention of the Finnish past. For example Alvar Aalto was not mentioned by name, whereas connections to Russian history and persons continued to be made with references such as 'here lived the great composer Glinka'.[130]

There are also personal recollections affirming how the Soviet inhabitants were not familiar with the pre-war history. One recollection about the library been described by the poet Joseph Brodsky, offered as an answer to the question why he became a poet. Immediately after World War II, Brodsky was four or five years old, and frequented the library. He had arrived in Vyborg with his grandmother, who sold wicker baskets in the Market Square. His grandmother thus left young Joseph in the library, in the care of the librarians. In the building, there was a separate entrance for children, a long window through which one could see the park outside, and round windows on the ceiling, through which clouds were visible. Brodsky remembers having eaten the librarian's packed lunch, and the nice librarian had taught him the alphabet. This is when he had realised being able to read is simply to know the alphabet. This recollection was described by Brodsky in the 1990s, when he paid a visit to Finland. His view was that if it had not been for this experience of the library, he could have hardly survived mental hospital or the Kresty prison before emigrating to the United States in 1972.[131]

Also a woman called Svetlana [Sveta for short] recalled her childhood in Vyborg in late 1980s. She wondered why all the Finnish tourists appeared to be looking at the buildings so carefully, not understanding the personal relationship Finns held with Vyborg. As a young girl, Svetlana also visited the library building in Park Lenina, the one which during the Finnish period had been called Torkkeli Park. During the late 1980s, the library was no longer particularly fresh and white: 'The building had a humid and rotten feel to it. Sveta remembered the walls covered with watermarks. Sveta was for a long time in a queue for a popular book in the library, called *Udivetilnij volsebnik iz strany Oz – The Wonderful*

[128] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 249.

[129] The historian Yuri Shikalov (2016, 249) has studied this topic from a range of Soviet-period publications, according to which the city had belonged to the 'bourgeois state of Finland 1918–1940, and was liberated on 20 June, 1944´. Shikalov points out that the Soviet publications reflect the political situation of the time, differing from earlier Russian encyclopaedias and historiography.

[130] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 251.

[131] Ylimaula, A-M. 2018, 51. Joseph Aleksandrovich Brodsky, (1940–1996) was a poet and an essayist. He received the Nobel Prize in 1987.

Land of Oz'[132] Similarly a librarian, who had graduated from the Leningrad cultural institute, and was given employment in the children's section of the Vyborg Library in the 1970s recalled life in Soviet Vyborg, and the role of the library. The librarian noted how popular the library was in particular among children. In mid-1960s there were an estimated 10,000 school children in Vyborg. In 1978 the library served approximately 3,000 visitors. Notably, in the provincial cities of the Soviet Union libraries tended to be quite modest, but in Vyborg the situation was different. The location of the library in the very centre of the city, and its spaces made it possible to organise all kinds of cultural events, ranging from lectures to exhibitions. Also the book collections were a compilation of 'the best of books'.[133] All this, however, emphasis the totality of the historical separation, and how also the library did not accord with what would have been typical in the Soviet Union.

In sum, while Finns were left with the pre-war documents concerning the city, the incoming Soviet inhabitants experienced their new home city as 'foreign' in all possible ways. As a consequence of the Cold War, it can be argued that two separate strands of historical writings concerning the history of the city and the area evolved. Soviet writers underscored the Russian history of the area, and the medieval urban heritage, while Finns and international authors needed to rely mostly on pre-war documents, and have consequently given emphasis to the Finnish period of the city. Today, there exists an entire body of literature consisting of writings introducing the 'golden age' of Viipuri in the 1920s and 1930s, when the city significantly grew, and a great number of building projects were realised. Notably, in the context of architecture, authors have typically focused on the era of 'new architecture', and the 1930s, when the library was new. The consequence is that general histories and architectural authors have typically spoken of this same time period. After the war, Vyborg was also cut off from its pre-war economic networks. The Saimaa Canal, which had been a vital connection to the city, was significantly damaged during World War II. The USSR rented the canal to Finland in 1963, but this canal route was re-opened only five years later. From 1937, Viipuri had its own airport, while today the closest civilian airport is on the Finnish side of the border, in Lappeenranta. Thus, after the annexation to the Soviet Union, Viipuri which had been the second largest city of Finland, became a dormant border city in the vast Soviet Union.[134] Later, the Russian historian Lev Lurje has described Vyborg as a European city, with the soul of a Russian provincial town, stressing the notion that the city transformed from a cultural and commercial centre into an administrative one. Today, Vyborg is one of the 115 Russian cities which are regarded to be historically significant. Nevertheless, the

[132] Kortelainen, A. 2015, 269.

[133] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 177-179.

[134] Neuvonen, P. et al. 1999, 36.

historian Yuri Shikalov has aptly formulated that Finnish and Soviet Vyborg were like two different cities, the Vyborg of the present day trying to negotiate between the two.[135]

Travels to the city of the past

> Once upon a time, not far from here, and not very long ago,
> a piece of geometry turned into wood and stone,
> a city which is no longer there /
> Or if it is, it is no longer real, or for us to be reached – it only lives in the past,
> it has itself turned into the past. /
> Perhaps this is why it is more beautiful than any real city, real cities are dreams
> turned into reality, this city of ours is the real turned into a dream. /
> It is perfect, because it has ceased to exist, because it is dead,
> it is eternal.[136]

After 1944, the ceded Karelian area came to referred to in Finland as 'lost Karelia' and since then the area has been remembered and recalled in a range of forums from theatre pieces to special newspaper attachment magazines, and to poems, such as the one by the well-known Finnish poet Eeva-Liisa Manner quoted above. From the point of view of Finland, the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 officially sealed the annexation of the ceded area to the USSR. The first Finnish instances of travel to the ceded area took place already during the last years of the 1940s. In 1958, the first tourist bus stopped in Vyborg on its way to Leningrad. Vyborg, however, was not the main destination of these visits, and still in the 1970s it was not possible to stay overnight in the city.[137] The Druzhba hotel, completed in 1982 significantly changed the situation, as this hotel was built to accommodate foreign tourists.[138] It was, however, in the first years of the 1950s that Finnish newspapers begin to report of visits to Vyborg.

As an example of the very early published visits, is an account by the well-known Finnish author, Matti Kurjensaari, who had the chance to pay a visit to Vyborg in 1951. His description illustrates well the period, and aspects also repeated in other Finnish accounts: 'And here it was – Viipuri – real, mundane and as it was visible to the human eye without any glory of memories. A red tram was

[135] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 193.

[136] Poem by the Finnish poet, Eeva-Liisa Manner, originally published in *Tyttö taivaan laiturilla*, 1951. Poem quoted in the *Ilta-Sanomat* tabloid's 'Viipuri -muistot' [Viipuri memories] attachment magazine, 2013, 74.

[137] Shikalov, Y. 2016, 253.

[138] Shikalov,Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 199.

clanking down from the direction of the bridge, crossing the railway, and past the Railway Station square; the buildings opposite were looking at the new world with eyes as black and as wondering as on the day when they were astounded by the war… If anything, it is the City Library by Alvar Aalto one would have hoped to have survived as a sample of new Finnish architecture; now it is a tarnished skeleton and as such at best an example of cold and crude functionalism… and then we turn to Torkkeli [Street] and read on a plaque on the wall that the name of the street today is Lenin Prospekt. This is the beating heart of also today's Viipuri. The street is crammed full of people: the new citizens are going about their morning chores; doors of stores open and close; one needs to bypass, sidestep and along with jump over the puddles of water, formed in the holes in the tarmac pavement. A familiar environment, but strange faces and clothing, a foreign language; all this makes for a somehow eerie and unreal feel. Only in Torkkeli [Park] we reach the heart of Viipuri of our times. The new locals are likely to be people whose original homes and regions were destroyed by the war even more than Viipuri, and who are now transferred to this north-western border city. They have mostly darker skin, and appear like they would have been dropped from another planet.'[139]

Three years later, in 1954 a Finnish university students' association organised a trip to Leningrad, and as the train stopped in Vyborg for visa inspections, the students had descended from the train. This happened going both ways: first the group had half an hour in the city at 7 a.m. in the morning, and upon their return they had some three quarters of an hour after 8 p.m. in the evening. They noted the disappearance of statues as those of Mikael Agricola, and the memorial to the fallen. The ruins of the Cathedral and the cemetery had disappeared, leaving only the library and the familiar *Elk* statue. The students had encountered a man named Sinyovez, who introduced himself as the head architect of the city, and offered to show them around the city. 'The architect explained by the library, which had been destroyed during the Finnish army's retreat in 1944, that Alvar Aalto had given the drawings of the library for their use, which were at the moment being confirmed in Moscow. The plan is to build the library exactly as it had been. Further, he told that all buildings with walls that are still standing are to be built to their previous condition during this current year. For example, the museum [by Uno Ullberg] will be like it had been. For this reason, he expressed the wish that Finnish architects, who might have in their possession drawings of these buildings would offer these for his use… It almost feels as if Viipuri would have been asleep for the past ten years, since our last encounter.'[140]

In the Finnish library periodical *Kirjastolehti* it was, however, stated that the library stood in its deteriorated state until the end of the 1950s. Then it was

[139] *Helsingin Sanomat* 22.9.1951. See also *Suomen Kuvalehti* 38/1951.

[140] *Ylioppilaslehti 23/*1954.

restored relatively close to its original appearance. In this periodical, the author also pointed out that it was said that Aalto's drawings would be used. Aalto's office, however, stated that there had been no contact with the architect from across the border.[141] Finnish excursion groups also made their way to the library after it had been renovated in the Soviet Union. In 1961, the Finnish Scientific Library Society made a trip to Leningrad, and one of the participants whose home town Viipuri had been, noted: 'The library designed by Aalto, completed in 1935 has now been rebuilt and opened only a few months ago. Our friendly colleagues kindly showed us around, and invited us to return on our way back home. In that reading room I wrote long ago a presentation on Sibelius, and from the children's section my younger brothers loaned books. New children were now flocking there.'[142] Reports of this kind describing organised visits continued until the 1980s when it gradually became easier for foreigners to travel in the Soviet Union. It appears that, as a rule, commentaries of Finnish visits to Vyborg made a note of the library. The reason for this might, however, have a very practical one: except for the period when the library stood derelict, it remained a public building located right in the centre of the city, a building which would have been easy to visit even when stopping only shortly in the city.

The physical and virtual life of the library

Sergei Kravchenko, the Soviet architect who became the chief designer of the restoration of the library in 1988 pointed out a widely disseminated historical misunderstanding in his article ´Viipuri Library Ruined?´[143]. This brings the perspective back to the architectural literature. Kravchenko quotes a well-known study of modern architecture, and a monograph on Alvar Aalto´s works:

> ´1. …Viipuri Municipal Library, Finland (competition 1927, constructed 1930-35, destroyed 1943), …' Jencks, Charles, *Architecture Today*, Harry N. Abrams Inc. New York, 1982, p. 302'
>
> '2. Library in Viipuri: Competition 1927, 1st Prize, Erected 1930-35. The library is located in the city of Viipuri, which numbered 90,000 inhabitants at the time the library was built. The building was totally destroyed in the Rus-

[141] Hirn, S. 1982, 522.

[142] Sainio, M. 1961, 208-210.

[143] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 135-53.

so-Finnish war and stands today in ruins…' *Alvar Aalto, Band I. 1922–1962*. Les Editions d'Architecture Artemis Zurich (1963), p. 44.' [144]

In addition to Kravchenko's examples, a third example can be added from a different type of publication, namely from a book introducing library buildings. Here the library was introduced under the title: 'Public library, Viipuri (Viborg) (Finland – now in the USSR)', followed by note on erection of the building: 'The library was awarded a prize in a competition held in 1927; it was built in 1933–35 and destroyed in the war of autumn 1939.' Adding to confusion about the situation was a note on the following page, accompanying plans of the library, courtesy of Professor Alvar Aalto: 'Viipuri Public Library: basement, ground and upper floors. (The library was destroyed in the Russo-Finnish War, 1941.)'[145]

As discussed earlier, this misunderstanding has surfaced in fact in numerous publications, repeated by reputable architectural historians, thus having been circulated as a fact of the situation. For example Sigfried Giedion and Reyner Banham have stated this.[146] In a similar vein, in 1970 also the internationally known architectural critic, Ada Louise Huxtable wrote in the New York Times: 'Aalto architecture continues to teach basic truths about space, light and function. Two generations brought up on pictures of his landmark library at Viipuri, destroyed during the war when the Russians took over the Finnish province of Karelia.'[147] Much later in 1994 Michael Spens points out how the building had not been written out of the present by the Soviet authorities, but by the most distinguished Western architectural historians.[148]

While it might at first appear that a separate, unfortunate misunderstanding has simply come to be repeated in different international publications, this misunderstanding is in fact representative of something larger: namely the separation between the physical location of the library in the Soviet Vyborg, and all the materials concerning the library which have been spread internationally. Thus, in contrast to the physical location, the library could be analysed to have a 'virtual life' elsewhere, in the form of the original drawings, archival materials and international publications, which are in Finland and been circulated in the rest of the world. To add, there is a further interest in distinguishing between the physical location and 'virtual life', because as the Finnish visits to the city illustrate, it was known in Finland that during the post-war years the library stood in a deteriorated condition, but was opened after renovation in 1961. This inevitably raises the question why the Soviet architects had not been in contact with Aalto, and why the international authors failed to confirm the information about the library's situation with Aalto's office, or some other relevant Finnish person. As the notion that the library was destroyed, was since disseminated by some of the most reputable architectural critics, and best-known architectural publications, it is evident that this misunderstanding exceeds the view of any particular authors, and was accepted as a fact. This shows how international, most evidently English-language publications, referred to an earlier publication for their information, consequently repeating the view that the library had been destroyed. Furthermore, these publications remain to be available internationally, and thus it can be presumed that to some extent the misunderstanding still prevails.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Thompson, A. 1963, 158-159; Ashburner, E.H. 1946, 153-6.

[146] Giedion, S. 1954, 578; Banham, R. 1962, 126.

[147] Huxtable, A.L. 2008, 180.

[148] Spens, M. 1994, 10.

Sergei Kravchenko is in fact highly critical of the relationship between the realised building, and how it has been presented in variety of publications. He maintains that controversial information about the library has in fact appeared in many books and publications, and that many writings have been accompanied by illustrations of earlier drawings of the design process, which do not correspond to the final design.[149] In this sense, information about the reality of the library and how it has been described in published texts, have always stood apart. Nevertheless, the most significant piece of misinformation remains the notion that the library had been 'totally destroyed', while Kravchenko points out that during the Winter War of 1939–40, the library suffered almost no damage at all. In reality, somewhat ironically, it was only some time after World War II when the library became derelict, and stood empty for nearly a decade. Based on photographs, the building was in relatively good condition both outside and inside soon after 1944. Kravchenko writes: '…a considerable body of Soviet and Finnish evidence shows that Alvar Aalto's library, contrary to so many other buildings in Viipuri, suffered little damage. There are many people alive today who can prove that, when hostilities ceased, the library was intact. This is also supported by the statements by experts from later on, concerning the condition of the library… Also in their former state were the rare-wood inner surfaces, Aalto's furniture, library equipment, lights and other Aalto-designed elements, rubber and parquet floorings and basement HVAC systems. Also many of the books survived from the Finnish library. But the glass in the doors and windows had been broken, and the library left without any kind of supervision… The tragedy began when, from the first post-war days onwards, no decent protection was afforded to the building. For some ten years after 1944 the building stood like an empty box exposed to the elements'[150] Having become part of the Soviet Union, some locals wondered

[149] *Architecture and Furniture AALTO*, 1938.

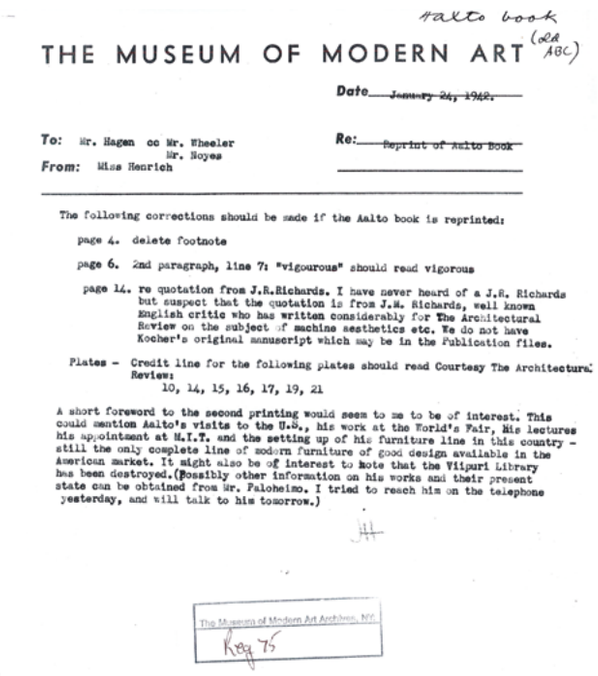
[150] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 37.

why this city had a library which appeared too large for a smaller city like Vyborg, and consequently, there was a plan to turn the building into a public sauna. There, however, remains no concrete evidence of these plans to alter the function of the building, and it is likely this remained only an idea.[151] The first Soviet-period plans for repairing the library date from 1950, and in the same year, the first architectural measurements were made. It was proposed that the building should be repaired and opened again as are municipal library. The Soviet restoration plans are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

To return to the separation between what took place in the physical location, and the 'virtual life' of the library, it is relevant to enquire about Aalto's role in all this, and how the idea that the library had been destroyed might have come about. A rarity in the context of architectural publications is the well-known Italian architectural historian and critic, Bruno Zevi's text from 1976 where he offered his own theory about the potential origins of the misunderstanding in this perplexing matter.

> *'The Viipuri library is standing still*
>
> *It has been repeatedly written that the famous work by Alvar Aalto was destroyed during World War II. These photographs, taken by the English architect John Ellis, testify that the building had considerably declined, but it stands intact. Ellis affirmed that the famous curved auditorium ceiling had not suffered severe damage. How did the error – committed also by Karl Fleig in the volume on Aalto - take start? The hypothesis is as follows: the area including Viipuri is part of the eastern Finland annexed by the Soviet Union in 1947. The city is called today Vyborg: the Russians do not let the Finns visit it and they did not feel the urge to inform the public about the preservation of the library.'*[152]

A finding which surfaced during this research is an unpublished letter which appears to be the earliest reference to offer the view that the library has been destroyed. Dated 24 January 1942, the letter is in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) New York archives. It was typed on the museum's own stationery. The topic of the letter is the plan to reprint the 1938 Aalto book, the one Aalto's biographer Göran Schildt had referred to as the first book on Aalto. The letter states: 'A short foreword to the second printing would seem to be of interest. This could mention Aalto´s visits to the U.S., his work at the World's Fair, his lectures, his appointment at M.I.T. and the setting up of his furniture line in this country – still the only complete line of modern furniture of good design available in the American market. It might also be of interest to note that the Viipuri Library has been destroyed. (Possibly other information on his works and their present state can be obtained from Mr. Paloheimo. I tried to reach him on the telephone yesterday, and will talk to him tomorrow.)'[153]



Aalto book

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (old ABC)

Date ~~January 24, 1942.~~

To: Mr. Hagen cc Mr. Wheeler
Mr. Noyes

Re: ~~Reprint of Aalto Book~~

From: Miss Henrich

The following corrections should be made if the Aalto book is reprinted:

page 4. delete footnote

page 6. 2nd paragraph, line 7: "vigourous" should read vigorous

page 14. re quotation from J.R.Richards. I have never heard of a J.R. Richards but suspect that the quotation is from J.M. Richards, well known English critic who has written considerably for The Architectural Review on the subject of machine aesthetics etc. We do not have Kocher's original manuscript which may be in the Publication files.

Plates - Credit line for the following plates should read Courtesy The Architectural Review:
10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21

A short foreword to the second printing would seem to me to be of interest. This could mention Aalto's visits to the U.S., his work at the World's Fair, His lectures his appointment at M.I.T. and the setting up of his furniture line in this country - still the only complete line of modern furniture of good design available in the American market. It might also be of interest to note that the Viipuri Library has been destroyed.(Possibly other information on his works and their present state can be obtained from Mr. Paloheimo. I tried to reach him on the telephone yesterday, and will talk to him tomorrow.)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY.
Reg 75

Fig. 101. *A letter from January 1942 where it is pointed out that the library has been destroyed at war. (The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY. Collection: REG. Series Folder: 75.)*

While knowledge as to who might have given the information in 1942 that the 'Viipuri Library has been destroyed' remains obscure, there exist later references to Aalto having made a somewhat cryptic remark that 'the library still exists, but it has lost its architecture'.[154] In the MoMA archives, along with this letter are undated letters by Aalto, where he emphasised the similarity of world

[151] This remark concerning renovating the building to a sauna has been circulated as a hearsay. Kravchenko has pointed out that from the Soviet time there seem to be many gaps in knowledge, and concludes that it is for future researchers to find out what exactly happened after 1944, why the library was left unused, especially as the building had experienced little damage in the war years. Kravchenko, S. 1990, 37-38.

[152] Zevi, B. 1976.

[153] One page letter at The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY: Reg. 75 Date: January 24, 1942 Re: reprint of Aalto Book To: Mr. Hagen cc Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Noyes From: Miss Henrich.

[154] Spens, M. (1994, 10) has titled one of the chapters 'The Building that lost its architecture'. He offers this quote from Aalto in his own contribution. However, the earlier source, to which also Spens refers is Gutheim, F. 1987, 26. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the earliest point when Aalto might have very originally made this statement.

views and way of life between Finland and the USA, both being part of the same democratic world, and expressed the wish that USA would offer its helping hand to Finland. In 1942, World War II still continued. In Viipuri, the Finnish inhabitants were returning to the city after Finland had recaptured the ceded area in 1941. The rebuilding of Viipuri was actively discussed among Finnish architects, and Aalto must have been informed about the situation.[155] Therefore, it can be interpreted that Aalto was not interested in correcting the misunderstanding that the library was destroyed, and still much later only volunteered to offer the somewhat obscure comment that 'the library has lost its architecture'. It appears that this statement, being open to interpretation, transformed into number of international architectural authors repeating as a fact that the Viipuri Library has been destroyed.

Approximately a decade later, during the 1950s, similar remarks were made even by reputable Finns who could have been expected to be better informed. Göran Schildt, for example, pointed out that the library not only remained on the other side of the border, but that it was probably also 'materially destructed'.[156] In similar fashion, Meurman recalled that 'This building, among the highest achievements of its designer, and its positioning in the park surrounding it were most eloquent and enhanced the beauty of the place. It is a great loss to new Finnish architecture that it remained behind the border, and is likely to have been wrecked.'[157]

It was however roughly the 1970s to 1991 when a new intriguing phenomenon appeared. It is the 'library run', a re-occurring recollection, repeated by several Finnish and international architects.'[158] Number of persons have reported of having left the train when it stopped at the Vyborg Railway Station for border controls, to quickly run to the library and back to the train, as if no one would have noticed. A Finn recalled: 'During the period of the Soviet Union, the Helsinki–Moscow train stopped in Vyborg for an hour. We dashed to see the library. – This is what everyone did. The city was different. It smelled of charcoal, the people looked scruffy and the streetlights were dim. The cityscape could have

[155] E.g. in the *Finnish Architectural Review* 9-10/1941, there are two articles by Aalto concerning reconstruction in Finland, alongside Ragnar Ypyä's and Uno Ullberg's writings about Viipuri. Aalto was also in the jury of the 1943 competition for the plan of Viipuri, evidencing he would inevitably have been aware of the condition of different buildings in the city.

[156] Schildt, G. 16.7.1953.

[157] Meurman, O.-I. 1958, 259.

[158] The restoration architect Tapani Mustonen of the Finnish Restoration Committee once pointed out that there could be a special 'benefit run' organised for architects. The route would be from the train, running along Torkkeli Park to the library, taking a quick photo 'as evidence', and then running back to the train.

well been Helsinki, but decades ago.'[159] Similarly, Alan Irvine, an English architect recalls: 'I had always wanted to see the Aalto library and had heard a rumour that it had not been destroyed in the war, as Frederik Gutheim states in his book on Aalto. Briefly, I was making a trip travelling independently through Finland and on into Russia, and saw from the schedule that the train halted for a short time in Vyborg after crossing the border. When it arrived there, I left my luggage in the compartment and jumped off the train without being seen. I knew the location of the library from pre-war maps I had studied and ran straight there with my cameras. I managed to take several photographs inside and out before running back to the station just in time to get back on the train as it was moving. As you probably know, it was a prohibited military zone at the time and closed to visitors, especially ones with cameras. I remember thinking that it would not have been good for me if I had missed that train.'[160]

Jussi Rautsi, who worked at the Finnish Ministry of Environment, and was involved with initiating the restoration project late in the 1980s has offered a very fitting analysis of the meaning to the library to foreign visitors: 'Perhaps it doesn't exist. It's like in Italo Calvino's novels. It's a glimpse somewhere at the borders of one's sight.'[161]

[159] Jon Maury, personal communication.

[160] Kairamo, M. 2002, 38. As the examples of Finnish visits to Vyborg evidence, it was possible to visit the city, though not to stay overnight. Thus, this interpretation that the city would have been completely out of bounds is not quite correct. To add, in Finland this is a recollection which many architects have repeated. For example architect Juhani Pallasmaa remembers having once got into the library with some of his colleagues during the time it was standing empty. The doors however had got locked, and they were not able get out the same way they came in. Knowing the floorplans, they managed to get out and rush back to the train in time. Personal communication.

[161] Jussi Rautsi, personal communication.

Theme IV
The Restoration

Photo: Jussi Rautsi

THEME IV

The Restoration

In which the library is restored. The restoration of the building begins in the Soviet Union, under three different architects. The process is slow and complicated. Already in 1952, there was a plan to either 'preserve' in its former state, or to change the 'bourgeois style' of the library to correspond better to the requirements of modern Soviet architecture. The building was renovated and opened in 1961, renamed after Lenin's wife, as the Nadezhda Krupskaya library. The Soviet architects wished to contact Finland, where all the documentation concerning the library was located. It was however only in the last years of the 1980s when the issue was introduced to Alvar Aalto's widow, Elissa Aalto, and the restoration project between Finland and the Soviet Union begun. The Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library has published the process of the restoration stages in two books. Thus, this chapter focuses on the reception of the restoration project.

The situation of the library was discussed both in Soviet/Russian, and Finnish newspapers already earlier, but it is after the end of the Cold War, and the Soviet Union when the library emerged as a topic followed in Finnish media in dozens of articles from 1991 until 2013 when the restoration was completed. There were three peaks in the Finnish public discussions. First were articles seeking to make the condition of the library known, reporting on the existing situation. Second, the issue was discussed on the 'opinion' pages, where individual persons, for example, suggested that the library should be rebuilt in Finland, to provide space for example for the Guggenheim Museum which was planned to be set up in Helsinki in the 2010s. Finally, professionals of different fields became involved with the discussion. The point of interest is that on the pages of Helsingin Sanomat newspaper, the Finnish public and the restoration architects articulated their views concerning the meaning of this building.

The restoration was an international process: a large number of international bodies helped with gathering funds, and finally the Russian Federation provided the money to complete it. It was, however, the Finnish restoration architects who supervised the work for two decades. In this, the role of individual persons stands out: it is most likely that restoration would not have happened without their dedication. Last will be discussed what has remained 'in between the lines', outside of the documentation of the restoration.

In this last thematic chapter, the building is defined by its location in Vyborg, it is valued as a work of Aalto, and located in ceded Karelia. However, as the historian Yuri Shikalov has aptly formulated, Finnish and Soviet Vyborg are like two different cities, the Vyborg of the present day trying to negotiate between the two. It can be analysed that the reception of this library building did not take place only after its opening, but has continued throughout its existence. The completion of the exemplary restoration has made the library internationally known all anew. The reception of the library continues.

Reinterpretation – The International Restoration Project

– 'Why on earth do Swedes, Swiss, Germans, British, Canadians and Americans want to give support for the restoration of a library, designed by Alvar Aalto of Finland and located in a small Russian city? What is it about this building that it raises so many feelings?'

– 'But it is one of the key buildings of modern architecture!' exclaims architect Maija Kairamo, the secretary-general of the Restoration Committee. 'It is precisely this building which is studied in architecture schools around the world as an example of the new thinking of its time.'[162]

'What is essential here, is that as Vyborg was no longer part of Finland, it became a symbol for everything lost in the war. From this, Aalto´s library became one very special condensation point, a way to deal with the past, mirroring various kinds of hopes and fears. In other words, for many Finns the Aalto Library became much more than just a physical place… Local officials, inhabitants, Finnish tourists, the old Finnish inhabitants and their descendants… striving for the restoration of the library, are all interested in this library.'[163]

The first quote above is exemplary of the context of architecture, namely professional interest as one umbrella category. This is represented by persons motivated by the fact that the building has a recognised role as an example of modern architecture internationally, while also being an early work by Aalto. The second quote tells of the context of history, that is, of persons interested in the library in association with its geopolitical location, specifically in the history of the city and the area. The quote pointing out that in Finland, the library became a symbol for everything lost in World War II, is the analysis made in the 2000s by the researcher, curator and art critic Mika Hannula. As follows, it is not just architects, but also so-called 'general public', who have become intrigued by this building, more than any other building in post-war Vyborg or the area in ceded Karelia.

This offers a bridge to the library context, namely, that it is a public building, which has remained in use in its original purpose except for the years after World War II, when it stood derelict. I argue that it is here that the library's role as a public building becomes seminal. The reasons are that in Finland, the library unites

[162] Jäämeri, H. 13.6.2010.

[163] Hannula, M. 2004, 55. Hannula is writing about site-specific art, and in this context about the library and Vyborg as its specific location.

persons with a personal interest in the city, and simultaneously, the building is extremely popular in the present-day Vyborg. Indeed, in the 2000s, the library has served about a quarter of a million visitors each year, or 800 per day.[164] The director of the library, Tatyana Svetelnikova, has stressed that the building introduces elements of Finnish library architecture, and that it is in fact the 'only existing monument of the European library culture in Russia'.[165] Furthermore, the library attracts large numbers of Finnish and international tourists, who want to see this building by Alvar Aalto. In association with this, Hannula has pointed out that past events are essential for understanding why the library is so meaningful, while it is simultaneously in the present day that both Russians and Finns are interested in this specific building.[166] Thus, in this chapter the library context is evidenced by the building's role as a public building, popular among the general public.

Interest in the library, however, did not remain only abstract, but became materialised in a very real way. In the 1980s, a number of professional architects actively fought for the cause of the library, making it known the building still existed but was in urgent need to be restored. As part of this process, the library received grants from Finland, but also international funding. The painstakingly slow restoration finally culminated in the discussion between the President of Finland and the Prime Minister of Russia, as quoted in the introduction.[167] As a result of this meeting, the Russian Federation allocated 255.5 million roubles, approximately 6.7 million euros, to complete the restoration as a joint project between Russia and Finland.[168]

The first Soviet renovation – 'A change of course in architecture'

In the Soviet Vyborg, the city authorities had made a decision in March 1945 of the necessity to totally renovate the library. The plans, however, were not realised, and the building stood 'like an empty box', exposed to the elements. It was in this period when not only wooden but also copper, lead and all other extractable details disappeared.[169] The first steps towards repairing the library date from

[164] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 7.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Hannula, M. 2004, 64.

[167] *Helsingin Sanomat* 23.11.2013; news about the granted funding published in *Helsingin Sanomat* 15.12.2013.

[168] http://www.alvaraalto.fi/viipuri/restorat.htm Accessed May 2015.

[169] Travel report, 12.12.1990 Mikko Mansikka, Jussi Rautsi, Ministry of the Environment. The information is given by Sergei Kravchenko. The Restoration Committee's archive, AF.

1950, when architectural measurements were made,[170] and this is when it was proposed that if the existing library building was renovated, it would be possible to move there the municipal library which was located on the second floor of a building on Lenin (formerly Torkkelinkatu) Prospect.

At this point, architect Petr Moiseyevich Rozenblum made plans to restore the library.[171] Two alternative ways to approach the renovation were presented in 1952. According to the first alternative, the building was to be 'preserved' to its former state. This, however, would not have strictly speaking meant restoration but the renovation of the façades, the adding of new doors and windows, and repairing the interiors. The second alternative was to renovate the building 'on the basis of the requirements of modern Soviet architecture'.[172] Based on this, the building's functionalist, 'bourgeois style' was to be altered to accord with 'academic style'. This second approach would have meant ´transformation of a work representing Western Constructivism´, meaning that classical columns, cornices and pediments would have been added to the facades. In addition to this, the narrow roof terraces on the north-western and north-eastern side would have been fitted with walls to create symmetrical volumes.[173]

In January 1954, the Leningrad Oblast Architectural Commission made its decisions concerning the designs. Both proposals were to be sent to Leningrad and Moscow to be confirmed. The conclusion was as follows: 'The façades of the building are to be restored to their former appearance. In repairing the façades it is not considered expedient to undertake any major construction because, in addition to the expense of the work, it is extremely difficult to find a new architectural solution of sufficiently high quality.'[174] It is likely that there are several explanations as to why this decision was made. The expert reports accompanying the alternative renovation plans offer some explanations. They included an estimate of the damage in different parts of the building, confirming that by necessity there would be expenses in making the building a functioning library again. An inspection of the extent of damage was presented in percentages. Based on this,

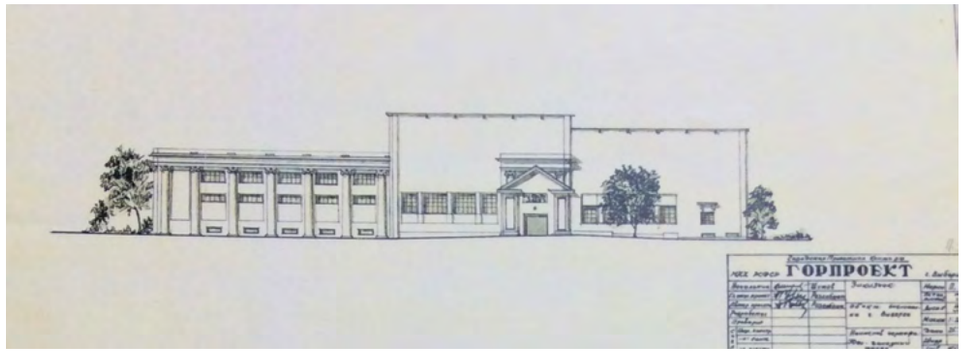
[170] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 37.

[171] Reskalenko, K. 2002, 40. Architect Aleksander Shver believed the alternative drawings were made by someone else than Rozenblum, who was a 'good architect'.

[172] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 39. Kravchenko was the person who found the drawings in the Leningrad archives.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid.



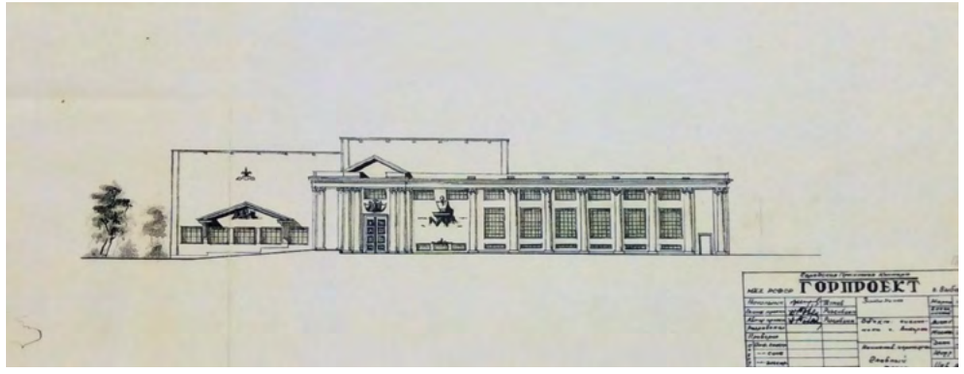


Fig. 102-103. *In 1952 architect Petr Rozenblum presented two alternative approaches to renovate the library. In this second alternative, the facades would have been modified to follow the official doctrine of Soviet architecture. (Courtesy of Jussi Rautsi)*

the windows, doors and wooden floors but also the inner and outer surfaces had experienced 100 % damage.[175]

The extent of the need for repairs would partly explain why the first alternative to ´preserve´ the building would have resulted in adding of new doors and windows, and all in all, renovating the building. In addition, there was a statement by the library expert V.F. Saharov, who supported retaining the original function of this 'American-style public library'.[176] The motivation to describe the library as 'American-style', most likely refers to the open-shelf system, which so evidently characterises the layout of the continuous space of the main hall. V.F. Sakharov's

[175] Kairamo, M. 2003, 93. The estimate of the level of damage was: foundations: 0%, inner and outer brick walls 15%, reinforced concrete intermediate walls 30%, reinforced concrete flat roof 40%, mosaic floors 80%, wooden floors 100%, cement floors 40%, intermediate brick walls 100%, windows 100% , doors 100%, stairs 20%, inner surfaces 100%, outer surfaces 100%.

[176] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 42.

statement is noteworthy also because open-shelf system was not used in Soviet libraries, but despite this, he supported retaining the original layout of the space.

Nikita Khrushchev, who had been elected as the First Secretary of the Communist Party shortly before, had criticised the Stalin period architecture for its overt decorativeness, and spending state funds on what he defined as 'architectural excess'.[177] Architects were even encouraged to study foreign buildings and techniques. This can be seen to have contributed toward modernism becoming the prevailing trend in the eastern block. Exemplary project telling of changed ideas is a statue called 'Ob izmenenii napravlennosti v arkhitekture' ('A Change of Course in Architecture') that the Soviet Government commissioned in 1954, rejecting the classical, decorative motifs associated with the Stalinist era. Hence, this was perceived to be a propitious moment to renovate the library – without adding columns and classical symbols. The commission then inspected the library in June 1954.[178] This was followed by preparing of a technical report, and making plans for the main works. The work was begun before the design work was completed, because the Soviet Ministry of Culture threatened to reallocate the funding, unless the work begun during 1955.[179] The local building organisation thus started the renovation, involving some demolition.[180] At the time, no original drawings or technical documents concerning the library were available, and the work was done on the basis of old photographs and fragments found in the building.[181] In particular the heating system which was integrated in the ceilings proved to be impossible for the contractor to resolve. Then, in 1957 architect Rozenblum passed away. He was followed by architect Aleksander Mikhailovich Shver,[182] who recalled: 'When I came to Vyborg, reconstruction drawings were complete, except for the interior design. Work had begun on the site. The plans were the work of another architect, then elderly. After he died, I took over his work. I never got to meet him.'[183]

When Shver took over the responsibility of seeing the renovation through, the first attempt to directly contact Aalto's office was made. This was in June 1958, when the Vyborg city officials wrote to the Minister of Culture in Moscow, requesting permission to contact Aalto. According to the city officials, this world-famous monument should be restored to its original appearance with as complete furnishings and technology, as it had had before its destruction. The plan was to request the drawings from Finland, and finally, to order from other countries parts and materials such as the round glass panes covering the conical skylights, and automatic air-conditioning equipment for which patents were not possessed. The reply arrived that same year, but was not favourable. Thus the local building organisation went ahead with the renovation the best they could.[184] Shver described that for the interiors, he was allowed to design built-in furniture, but not any moveable furniture, which was considered to be *zhilpotreb*, utility goods. A consultant from the Lenin Library in Moscow was involved in designing the interiors, as the Lenin Library was not only the country's most important library, but also a key scientific library and a model for library activities and library planning. The consultant, however, required that the former newspaper room be turned into a lending hall, and the entire main hall would serve as reading rooms. The furniture was designed accordingly. In the end, this plan to alter the use of the spaces was dropped. The furniture design however was not changed, but the design planned for the newspaper room was taken into use in the main hall.[185]

The other notable alterations concerned the cloakroom space, located in the entrance hall. Originally this had been a space for which there was no separate supervision. In Shver's design there were no partition walls, originally made of plywood, between which the cloak hangers were positioned. This cloakroom space was separated from the rest of the space with a counter serviced by a coat checker. The other alteration which did not come to be realised, was a plan to turn the lecture hall into a cinema. In this design, the undulating ceiling would not have been restored. According to Shver, when he begun with the work, a slab of concrete had already been poured for the projection room. Shver however managed to convince the organisation that the space was too low for a cinema, and the plan was dropped. Instead, the acoustic ceiling was reconstructed from spruce battens obtained from a factory which produced musical instruments. The situation, however, remained that no drawings, or even proper photographs, were available that would have shown the details.[186]

The library was re-opened on 12 March1961. That same month, *Vyborskij Kommunist* boasted: 'The work has been completed. The carpenters have nailed the last board, painters have made the last brush-stroke, the librarians have

[177] Anderson, R. 2015, 216. While Khrushchev criticised the decorative Stalinist style, his criticism was directed also towards the constructivist architects of the 1920s and the 1930s for prioritising architecture and design over everything else.

[178] The exact date was 23.6.1954.

[179] Reskalenko, K. 2003, 41.

[180] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 42.

[181] Reskalenko, K. 2003, 40-47.

[182] Kairamo, M. 2003, 93.

[183] Reskalenko, K. 2002, 41.

[184] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 42. See also *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989.

[185] Reskalenko, K. 2002, 45.

[186] Ibid. 44.

arranged the furniture in their places and the books on their new shelves.'[187] There is also a photo album from 1961 with images revealing what the library looked like after the renovation. Here it was described that the book storage had space for 360,000 books, and in 1961, there were 34,882 acquisitions. It is informed that in 1962 the library was organising three year courses to train specialists with secondary library education. It was also pointed out that the main reading room was open from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., and had 'free access stacks'.[188] The opening of the library was a notable event in the cultural life of the city, and it soon became extremely popular place among the citizens, even the most important cultural site.[189]

ДЛЯ ВАС, ВЫБОРЖЦЫ!

Это здание строгой архитектуры в парке имени В. И. Ленина давно уже привлекает внимание выборжцев. Дворцом книги назвали они прекрасное сооружение, сделанное из железобетона, стекла и полированного камня.

Строителям долго пришлось трудиться над восстановлением городской библиотеки — красивого здания, где все располагает к плодотворной работе над книгой.

И вот строительство закончено. Столяры поставили последний шкаф, маляры положили последний мазок кистью, сотрудники библиотеки расставили мебель, на новеньких стеллажах свои места заняли книги. Все готово к открытию. Замечательный подарок получают выборжцы.

К их услугам читальня и лекционный залы, разнообразная литература, в этом же здании размещена и детская библиотека.

Высоко оценили Выборгский дворец книги, побывавшие в нашем городе писательница В. Панова, поэты А. Прокофьев, Н. Браун, А. Чепурин, критик Д. Молдавский. В книге отзывов они сделали записи:

«Мы увидели замечательную библиотеку. Хорошо, что выборжцы восстановили такое великолепное здание. В нем не только взрослые, но и дети будут пополнять свои знания.

Желаем вам, сотрудники библиотеки, успешной работы в этом прекрасном здании».

О том, что представляет собой новый очаг культуры, рассказывается сегодня в нашей газете.

Дворец книги

Fig. 104. *Vyborskij Kommunist newspaper 13.3.1961 described the restored library in an article titled 'Our library'. (LOGAV)*

Unfortunately, according to Sergei Kravchenko, this was the point when any remaining interior details finally disappeared. Furthermore, Kravchenko notes, this renovation, done only superficially in fact resulted in humidity and mould infesting in the walls. The library was renovated, but with use of materials and details that did not suit the original building.[190] While the photo album from

[187] *Vyborskij Kommunist* 12.3.1961 also referenced in *Helsingin Sanomat* 4.12.1988.

[188] Reskalenko, K. and Roberts, L. 2002, 66-75. The article is illustrated with images and texts from the photo album produced in 1961 after the new opening of the library. The original photo album is archived in the library. One added function is a story-reading nook for children, with two paintings from a Pushkin story on the wall. Aalto had included a story reading space in the 1928 version of the library, for which a potential precedent was Asplund's Stockholm City Library. It is not known why this space was excluded from Aalto's design.

[189] Shikalov, Y. and Hämynen, T. 2013, 178. Shikalov (2013, 177-179) writes about a true story of the life of a librarian who had moved to Vyborg in the 1970s and worked in the children's section. She describes how the library was a city institution, and received its funds directly from the state budget, which covered the upkeep of the building and the small salaries of the personnel. See also http://aalto.vbgcity.ru/12m1961.

[190] *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989.

1961 gives a most positive impression, the poor quality of the restoration did not remain unnoted by the local library directors whose letter titled 'Library requests help', was published in *Vyborskij Kommunist* in September 1962. The letter stated: 'The state has not saved in costs to restore and furnish the building and has used 400,000 roubles for this purpose. Yet the first months have evidenced the poor quality of the work and that the plans were potentially wrong.' And further – about the carpenters: 'The window frames and doors are poorly made.' On the furniture: 'The desks in the hall wobble, it is impossible to write on them.' On the painters' 'last brush-strokes': 'The floors of the entire building have been ruined. The valuable, beautiful linoleum has been scratched and it is covered in paint stains.' In addition to this, the roof was leaking and in winter it was cold inside. Finally, the writer complained: 'In the reading hall the natural light has been planned all wrong (for Aalto this was the 'jewel' of the entire building: the light entered the hall through conical holes and the walls were enclosed, guaranteeing adequate soundproofing).'[191]

As a result of appeals to numerable official bodies, some minor adjustments were done, but the roof, for example, kept leaking. The architect Shver explained that there was a scarcity of all materials. The skylights were problematic, because no one produced glass panes which would have been large enough. The solution which was proposed was to use searchlight-glass, supplied for the army. This however would have become excessively expensive, and consequently, a workshop in Leningrad created dome-shaped cupola skylights made of plastic. The rest of the roof was covered with roofing felt. The construction work was however done by builders who did not have the skills for it. Later, there were attempts to do spot-repairs on three occasions, but it was not possible to repair the leaks properly.[192] After this, except for including the building in the district heating network, for a long period only smaller cosmetic repairs were carried out.[193]

The discussion however continued on pages of even larger newspapers. In 1964, *Leningradskaja Pravda* published an article titled 'Annulment of a New York legend'. It had been found that in the United States had been published a book in which 'in good English language the condition of the library was deplored'. *Pravda*'s reporter thus commented: 'Let us begin our visit from the loans hall, technically the most important part of the hall and its famous natural light… And furnishings which are at least as comfortable as in the legendary past times.'The concluding sentence was: 'Do you still after this believe in New York legends. Let

[191] *Vyborskij Kommunist* 7.9.1962. Also referenced in *Helsingin Sanomat* 4.12.1988.

[192] Reskalenko, K. 2002, 45.

[193] Kravchenko, S. 1990, 42.

us not believe in foreign legends.'[194] This shows how foreign newspapers were followed in the Soviet Union. Yet, the legend that the library had been destroyed in the war continued to be disseminated internationally, unaffected by the Russian language articles. As pointed out earlier, for example Ada Louis Huxtable asserted this in *New York Times* in 1970.[195]

During the 1970s the library began to arouse interest among Soviet architects. This is when the architect and architectural critic Andrei Gozak contacted the Finnish Museum of Architecture in Helsinki.[196] In turn, architect Maija Kairamo,[197] who later came to be the secretary general of the Finnish Restoration Committee, recalled the process on the Finnish side. She described how serious concern arose in Finland during the 1970s regarding the condition of the library. This was followed by several appeals to Soviet officials from various Finnish organisations, including the Museum of Finnish Architecture, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, and Institute of Russian and East European Studies. Unfortunately without any significant results.

To renovate or to restore – No news from Vyborg

After the renovation was completed in 1961, the next round of plans to fully renovate the building followed in 1984. This is when the Leningrad area administration commissioned plans from the Leningrad Civil Construction Institute's Vyborg branch. It was concluded that not only the furniture and many interior details, but also the unique air conditioning and the plumbing systems had vanished. Furthermore, it was noted that it would not have been viable to try to calculate the network of the ventilation channels.[198] This time Soviet architects such as Andrei Gozak intervened. Their view was that the building should not be renovated in a somewhat haphazard manner, but instead the library would deserve to be truly restored. To be able to do this it would be vital to obtain original drawings and other technical documents concerning the building.

This is the context in which the third architect after Petr Moiseeyevich Rozenblum and Aleksander Shver became involved with the restoration of the library. He was Sergei Kravchenko, whose role is notable because he managed to establish

[194] *Leningradskaja Pravda* 29.6.1964. Also referenced in *Helsingin Sanomat* 4.12.1988.

[195] Huxtable, A.L. 2008, 180.

[196] Undated, printed copy of a summary of the events 'to salvage the library' from 1961–1989. Handwritten note: 'drawn up at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs'. The Restoration Committee's archive, AF.

[197] Adlercreutz et al. 2009, 42.

[198] *Helsingin Sanomat* 4.12.1988 quoting *Stroitelnaja Gazeta.*

contact with Finnish architects and obtain original drawings from Aalto's office. Kravchenko recollected how as a young student he knew that there was one masterwork by Alvar Aalto located in the Soviet Union, but that students of architecture believed the building was outmoded and in poor condition. Then, visiting the building for the first time, Kravchenko had first believed that the library had remained in almost original condition. Taking a closer look, however, he noticed all the changes that had been made: 'The windows were not Aalto's ingenious constructions, only two pieces of glass with dirt in between them, impossible to open. Post-war scarcity was visible everywhere'.[199] This took place in 1985, on the verge of perestroika. Kravchenko was then employed in Vyborg by the Leningrad Civil Building Design Institute. The Vyborg cultural board commissioned the renovation plans, with no mention of restoration, as the idea had been given up as too ambitious. The problem was handed down to the lower level, to the local government of Vyborg, and Kravchenko became the architect to draw up the plans. But he recollected that he had known it was all wrong. If the library was still to be renovated superficially, it would have been destroyed, leaving nothing left of Aalto's masterpiece.[200]

Kravchenko told that through contact with the Finnish Finnstroi company, which was building a cellulose factory near Vyborg,[201] he got hold of some original drawings sent to him by Alvar Aalto's widow, Elissa Aalto and the Museum of Finnish Architecture. Two problems remained unsolved even after receiving copies of the original drawings. First, it was evident that Aalto had made changes to the plans in the construction stage, and thus the drawings did not exactly match the realised building. Second, there was essential information still missing: the plans for the air conditioning and plumbing. Kravchenko commented on this: 'Here we need the help of Finnish experts… They could rummage through their archives and find materials useful for us. In addition, I regard it appropriate to invite Finns to the restoration work. I believe that a project as this is nowadays realistic, as there are foreign restoration experts working in the Soviet Union. But this is an exception. The library is regarded throughout the world as one of Alvar Aalto's greatest creations. A jewel of 1930s architecture, a monument of architecture… of local importance. And as this is the case, the matter is in the hands of the local people.'[202] The debate concerning the potential role of Finns continued,

[199] *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989. At the time, the library was named after Lenin's partner, Nadezhda K. Krupskaya and serves as a central library in the Soviet city of Vyborg.

[200] *Helsingin Sanomat* 9.5.1989.

[201] Finnstroi was working on a cellulose factory at Sovetski (in Finnish Johannes), originally built according to architect Uno Ullberg's designs in 1928. The head of the Finnstroi company, Kauko Rastas helped as a contact person, travelling between Helsinki and Vyborg.

[202] *Helsingin Sanomat* 9.5.1989.

as it was reminded that any possible payment would need to be made in Western currency, which would have been most difficult to arrange, and also, if Finns were invited to participate, it would not be a matter of the city's executive committee to produce an official invitation. The city authorities of Vyborg wanted to get on with the renovation, as funding had been granted for this purpose. However, the builder who was to start the work hesitated, faced with the difficulty of the task.[203]

In November 1987 architect and architectural writer Andrei Gozak[204] spent a month in Finland, and the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper published an interview with him. This article marked the beginning of popular discussion about the library's condition, a topic on which there are dozens of newspaper articles published in *Helsingin Sanomat* alone.

> *Reporter: 'Do you know how the restoration plans for Alvar Aalto's Viipuri Library are proceeding, the project with which also Finns have offered to help?'*
>
> *Gozak: 'I not only know, I've also been initiating the project, which aims the restoration of the library with as skilful persons as possible. Two years ago a renovation plan was drawn up which would not have returned the library to its original appearance. Leningrad architects and cultural persons set up opposition to such plans and received support from elsewhere in the country, too. The restoration of the library as an outstanding architectural monument was endorsed. It is evident that carrying out the restoration of the library should be entrusted to Finns. The new rise in appreciating Aalto's work is not solely about architecture, but also friendship between neighbours. If we succeed, the result is a shared, humane cultural act. There are, however, economic, and possibly other obstacles still in the way.'*[205]

Then Andrei Gozak's initiative and a newly established Soviet Cultural Institute gained attention for the library, and a committee was sent from Moscow to get acquainted with the building and the renovation plans. In 1987 it was decided that the library should be restored instead of renovated. At this point Kravchenko thought the matter was out of his hands. However, as it was known he was the person to be closely acquainted with the library, Kravchenko was eventually assigned

[203] Ibid.

[204] Gozak's book *Алвар Аалто* [*Alvar Aalto*] was published in Russian in 1976. It includes three plans, a section, and two photographs of the library from 1935, and one from the 1970s.

[205] *Helsingin Sanomat* 3.10.1987.

to continue gathering information.[206] He was appointed the chief designer in the restoration project in 1988. In this role, Kravchenko was able to visit Finland in the following year.[207]

According to Kravchenko, the bottle-neck however was not the architects, but the lack of technical knowledge required for restoring a building of this period, and the heavy bureaucratic system of the Soviet Union. It is noteworthy that the Soviet/Russian architects who have commented the library have categorically supported the idea that the library should be returned to its original condition. This appears to have been taken most literally, as for example in 1989 Kravchenko insisted that his primary aim was to find out what kinds of light switches Aalto had selected for his building: 'The first thing anyone entering a building encounters is the light switch, … I want to know what kinds of switches Aalto originally selected for his library. That is the appearance to which I want to return the building.' Visiting Finland, Kravchenko also hoped to find persons who would have worked in the library, 'as no details are too small as not to matter'.[208] As some kind of result, the Vyborg city executive committee concluded on 16 June 1988, that the organisation to which responsibility for the renovation has been entrusted, could not ensure the good quality of the repairs of the roof, which had resulted in multiple leaks. 'Here the question is of works much more complicated than repairing the roof'.[209] The building had the status of a monument of local importance, but this status was too low to directly justify that it should be restored to its original condition. For this purpose, the USSR Ministry of Culture was contacted on several occasions, but no results were achieved.

Meanwhile, the personnel of the library had grown increasingly frustrated over the situation, and in December 1988 *Stroitelnaja gazeta* newspaper received a letter from representatives of the library, on account of which the newspaper's reporter paid a visit to the library. 'Architects all over the world are arriving to us to see with their own eyes the building about which they have learned in study books of architecture. And they see ravaged, mouldy, fungus-infested walls and ceilings. And if many Soviet and foreign tourists come to visit when it rains, this roof does not protect them. Practically all the roof windows leak.' The newspaper reporter described the situation as follows: 'In the Vyborg Library I was guided by its director, S. Semjonova. Where should be start our tour? Naturally the lending section, which is technically most outstanding, though currently its impressiveness is difficult to detect: mould, traces of leakages, cracks in the roof windows.

[206] *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989. According to the article, this is when Finns got to hear about the two alternative plans for the library and the recent decision to restore the building.

[207] Norri, M.-R. 1990, 86.

[208] *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989.

[209] Ibid.

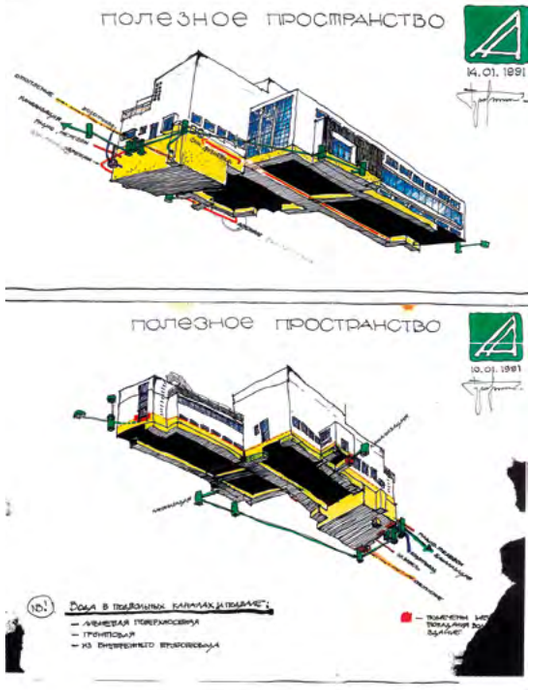


Fig. 105-106. *Sergei Kravchenko gathered information concerning the technical installations through 'building archaeology' and axonometrical drawings. (Drawing courtesy of/photo: Jussi Rautsi)*

'We don't have special glue', tells librarian Svetlana Ivanovna, 'the cracks need to be glued with special installation tape. And that is coloured. The magpies peck them full of holes.' The reporter continued to enquire: 'What about the furnishings? Those famous three-legged stools by Aalto. Are they like they had been?' 'Of course not. Finns who have visited us say we have completely different furnishings and sent us a few stools as a present. The same ones are being produced in Finland at this moment.' The reporter then investigated whether the city government was aware of the situation, and L. Andrejeva, the city's secretary of the executive committee, confirmed they were well aware and that the library had caused them concern for several years already. Andrejeva pointed out that probably no one remembered how many large or small repairs the building has undergone. However, when the ceiling is plastered in one hall, in another hall the walls cracked. The cracks kept being repaired, the heating in the cellar did not function. The article in *Stroitelnaja Gazeta* ended with quotes from the library's quest book, evidencing of how foreign visitors had experienced the library. The Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger had written: 'There are few buildings like

this in the world to be remaining from this significant period in architecture. Make your best to return the original appearance of the library and to preserve it for generations to come.' His American colleague Michael Graves in turn had written: 'I wish success in reconstruction of the building. I hope to visit the library once more when the work is completed.' The reporter however concluded: 'Don't rush your visit to Vyborg, Mr. Graves. For the time being we have no news for you. We don't have any for ourselves.'[210]

In May 1989, the Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* published a news item mentioning that some twenty Soviet architects were visiting SAFA in Helsinki. One of the main issues to be discussed was the common goal of salvaging the library, and restoring the building to its original condition. At this meeting, the representative of the group of Soviet architects, G.N. Buldakov stressed that should the Aalto Library be restored to its original appearance, it would be the very first from the functionalist period to be restored in the entire Soviet Union. Therefore, the restoration would be an exemplary project in the Soviet context, and Buldakov asserted this meant it was only Finns who had the capability to restore this masterwork. But, he added, to succeed, both were needed: 'In order to reach the top of the hill, we need to take two routes – from Finland and the USSR – to be able to at last shake hands at the top.'[211] However, the final decision remained in the hands of the Soviet Union's Ministry of Culture in Moscow. In the end, the 1980s debate whether to renovate or restore the library did not lead any further. Only small repairs were made to the building.

Nevertheless, it is evident that contacts between Finland and the Soviet Union were becoming easier to establish during the last years of the 1980s. The potential reason why it was possible to initiate cooperation was that the perestroika was beginning to influence relations between the two countries. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the library was brought up in news in the context of Finland and Soviet Union searching for cultural cooperation projects.[212] In this

[210] *Helsingin Sanomat* 4.12.1988 quoting *Stroitelnaja gazeta*.

[211] *Helsingin Sanomat* 25.5.1989. Among the first documents before the Restoration Committee was established was a document dated 3.2.1989 stating that the Finnish Ministry of Education will establish a committee for the purpose of developing cooperation with the Soviet Institute of Culture, in matters of cultural heritage. Another is a memorandum for the Viipuri Library renovation dated 29.5.1989, outlining a plan for restoring the library during the next five-year period.

[212] As discussed in the previous chapter, for Finns as well as for other foreigners, Vyborg was for a long while after WW II a place where it was not possible to stay overnight, and there are recollections about making a dash from the train as it stopped at Vyborg station for border controls and currency exchange. The situation however changed essentially in 1982, when the hotel Druzhba (Дружба Отель), meaning 'friendship,' was opened in Vyborg to serve foreign visitors.

context, the renovation of the library was presented as an appropriate project to be realised as part of celebrating the 700th anniversary of the city of Vyborg. The director of the Cultural Institute of the Soviet Union pointed out that the library's restoration could be a fitting project for Finns, and that the Institute sought to get the library listed as a state level monument. Here, it was again proposed that Finns could be most helpful with planning the restoration and providing the appropriate materials. According to the director of the Cultural Institute cooperation was to start with projects that did not hurt feelings on either side – for instance stemming from Vyborg's recent history.[213] Thus, interestingly, whereas still in the 1970s and early 1980s the more recent history of the city was perceived as difficult, and for example Aalto was not mentioned in the books describing the main sites in Soviet Vyborg, during the last years of the Soviet period it became possible to offer the library as an appropriate cultural cooperation project.

In Finland, the project was taken up in 1989 as a project of cultural cooperation, and an appeal to take up the issue signed by numerous known architects was sent to President Mauno Koivisto.[214] This appeal was made with the upcoming high level meeting in mind, as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev made a visit to Helsinki in the autumn of the same year. Thus, it was in the last years of the Soviet period, that also state leaders were drawn into the process. The two goals stated in the appeal were first that the library should be granted the Soviet classification status of 'a building notable at the international level'. Second, the wish was expressed that the restoration would be done in cooperation by Finland and the Soviet Union.[215] At this point, the appeal led to no concrete results. The secretary general of the Finnish Restoration Committee, architect Maija Kairamo has later summed up that the problem of the library, in a city once part of Finland but ceded to the Soviet Union in 1944, was at the time a delicate issue for Finnish politicians.[216]

Three men start the restoration

'Sergei Kravchenko was a new inhabitant, originally from Kirgizia. Kravchenko wrote about architecture into a drawer. And it was he who started to scratch the library walls. He was trained as an architect and thus able to glean information from the holes he had made. However, when a group of Finnish politicians visited the building in the beginning of the 1990s, they were horrified. 'The building has cancer!' And lacking a shared language, the director of the library was unable to explain that this was building archaeology. So, the Finns went on: 'Terrible, holes!'[217]

In addition to Kravchenko, two Finns became involved with the restoration: Jussi Rautsi, and Mikko Mansikka from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, 'two Don Quixotes' as Mansikka put it.[218] Rautsi had also worked at Aalto's office for some seven years, and personally known both Alvar and Elissa Aalto. According to Rautsi, he and Mikko Mansikka had convinced Aalto's widow, Elissa Aalto to become involved with the initiative to restore the library.[219] In 1990, negotiations took place behind the scenes, as Rautsi and Mansikka went to Vyborg to study the condition of the library and to meet Nikita Maslennikov, the director of the Leningrad Institute of Architecture, Sergei Kravchenko who was responsible for planning the restoration, and Victor Dimitriev, the Vyborg city architect.[220] It was also recognised that it was necessary to make the condition of the library known internationally. In the summer of 1991 the Alvar Aalto Club (an unofficial organisation of architects who had been employed by Aalto's office) with the support of the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, made an appeal to architects throughout the world to support the restoration of the library. 'This was also meant to bring attention to the fact that the library had not been completely destroyed during the war, as had wrongly been stated in several books, and could still be restored.'[221]

The reason why this can be recognised as launching a new stage in the process towards the restoration of the library, is that before this, the renovations had been planned without access to original drawings, or the help of Finnish architects. Furthermore, at this point, the restoration became essentially a local issue, with Kravchenko working on the project on-site, Mikko Mansikka and Jussi Rautsi

[213] *Helsingin Sanomat* 16.9.1988.

[214] A petition with gathered signatures was sent to President Mauno Koivisto 16.5.1989. Copy of the petition in the Restoration Committee's Archive, AF. Several Finnish politicians, for example Presidents Martti Ahtisaari and Tarja Halonen, were appealed to during the restoration project.

[215] *Helsingin Sanomat* 25.5.1989.

[216] Adlercreutz et al. 2009, 42.

[217] Jussi Rautsi, personal communication.

[218] Mikko Mansikka, personal communication.

[219] According to Rautsi, it had been Mikko Mansikka in the first place who introduced the idea to Rautsi, after which they began to promote the project together.

[220] 4.12.1990. Meeting at the Ministry of the Environment with Nikita Maslennikov, who was concerned about the low status of the building; 12.12.1990. Travel report of Rautsi and Mansikka; 22.3.1991. The Finnish Ministry of the Environment organised an open meeting titled 'The Viipuri Library can be restored'; 6.8.1991. A meeting with several Finnish and Soviet representatives; 11.11.1991. The Ministry of the Environment commissions Aalto's and Magnus Malmberg´s offices as consultants to outline the use of the different spaces of the library. The Restoration Committee's archive, AF.

[221] 22.3.1991. The Finnish Ministry of the Environment organised an open meeting titled 'The Viipuri Library can be restored'.

Fig 107. *Architects Mikko Mansikka (on the right) and Sergei Kravchenko c. 1990 with a 'new Soviet', who organised materials for the restoration. (Photo: Jussi Rautsi)*

making repeated visits, and remaining in contact. Prior to this, a major part of the discussion concerning the deterioration of the library had taken place elsewhere than in Vyborg, and on pages of Finnish and Soviet newspapers. In this new restoration project the solution came to be the realisation of small sub-projects, in which something specific, as for example the undulating ceiling of the lecture hall, was realised as a separate project. This was dictated by the practical reason that there was no funding to carry out the entire restoration at once. Instead, funding was applied separately for each sub-project, which also came to be useful for showing that action had been taken, and the building was being renovated.[222] As follows, this stage can be seen to initiate an independent event in the sequence of the continued work to get the library restored. To add, this turn of events is also illustrative of what appears to be a common phenomenon in following the case of

[222] The persons involved with the restoration have changed in stages. Very early the most active person appear to have been on the Soviet/Russian side Sergei Kravchenko. The director(s) of the library also participated most actively (e.g. Svetelnikova). On the Finnish side in the early stages the names, which appear most often are Elissa Aalto, Jussi Rautsi, Mikko Mansikka, Vezio Nava, and Eric Adlercreutz. Later, Maija Kairamo and Tapani Mustonen became the persons without whose contribution it would even be possible that the restoration would not have ultimately succeeded.

this library: when new persons came on the scene, the most acute issue associated with the library became reframed, and even completely reinitiated.

December 1991 marked the end of the Soviet Union, and is usually also taken to also mark the end of the Cold War.[223] This also meant re-thinking the strategy for realising the restoration. It was already before the end of the Soviet Union that a so-called popular interest in the library begun to emerge. However, the perspective of those having been involved with the restoration project, and the views expressed by the general public were recognisably different. In the ensuing discussions, the issue was considered as if from a clean slate: the restoration plans from the time of the Soviet Union and the original Soviet initiatives were not discussed. What however happened in the Finnish 'general public' participating in the discussions concerning the library's condition, was that different notions associated with the history of the city and the area became discussed as part of the restoration project.

Restoration after the Cold War – The right and last moment

Among the Finnish media, it was most of all the largest national newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* which published news about the library in a sustained manner. As follows, it can be deduced that this newspaper disseminated information about the library's condition more widely in Finland, also beyond individuals with personal interest in the library or Aalto's architecture. One of the earliest articles about the library was an earlier mentioned interview with Andrei Gozak in 1987. It was practically only after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when different media had other matters to report. Except for this, the library's condition remained a topic that *Helsingin Sanomat* followed for more than the two decades, that it took for the restoration to be completed.[224] Arguably, this suggests quantitative evidence of Finnish public interest in the topic. While there are also Russian newspaper articles about the library's condition, this appears to have been of concern to persons such as the librarians, or professional architects who valued the building as a work of Aalto. Consequently, it is the general public's perspective in Finland, which represents an entire body of material on its own. The media followed is *Helsingin Sanomat*, due to its significance as a newspaper, but also as a platform

[223] The Soviet Union officially came to an end on 26.12.1991. Although this research does not quote the larger historical context, published and researched widely, the main sources used for the historical background are: Kaukiainen, Y. and Nurmiainen, J. (eds.) 2010; Meinander, H. 2010; Kirkinen, H. 2000; Luukkanen, A. 2009.

[224] This was the case all the way to the completion of the restoration in 2013, and to some extent even later.

that brought together different perspectives, both those expressed by the 'general public' and the professional architects involved with the restoration.

The discussions which took place during the 1990s had three 'peaks', each bringing forth a specific theme associated with the ongoing restoration of the library. The first phase was represented by rather matter of fact type of reports, aiming to make the restoration project known, and to assure readers that it is viable. This began immediately in 1991. The persons behind these writings were most of all involved in one way or another with the restoration. Thus, their perspective mainly emphasises the building's role as an early work by Aalto, and an example of modernist architecture.

The second peak in the discussion took place in 1996, when series of writings appeared in the 'Opinion' section of *Helsingin Sanomat*. This marks the point when the issue became topical for wider audiences. Here, the 'general public' expressed the idea that the library could be copied/replicated/rebuilt/or bought to Finland. The motivation for this was that in the 'public view', there were various reasons why it could be regarded questionable to invest money in a building, which, as these commentaries pointed out numerous times, stands on land taken by force from Finland.[225] This line of argumentation typically continued along the lines that if the building's design is so exemplary, it should only make sense to use the original drawings to re-create it a Finnish city, for example one in need of a new library building. Expectedly, the consequence was that many, typically architectural experts found this to show that any person even thinking of such alternative failed to understand what the building is about.[226] Within this peak of discussion, the library was perceived as a type of public building, one Finland has lost in World War II, but also as a building which is inherently tied to its original location.

In the 'third phase' also other experts and academics, such as historians and art historians took part in the discussion. This is when the condition of the built environment in the rest of 'ceded Karelia' and the question of whether Finland can the assume right to intervene in matters concerning it, were introduced as main issues. Again, as one might expect, those involved with the restoration project saw things in a completely different light, and were expressly frustrated with views that Finns would be in some way be intervening or meddling in a restoration project in foreign territory. Notably, these three 'peaks' in the Finnish public discussions are evidence of an entirely new form of reception of the library, but are

[225] E.g. *Helsingin Sanomat* 11.6.1996, where the writer of this opinion text proposed that the library could serve as a 'Finland house', offering cultural services to citizens of both countries and shelter for tourists mugged and robbed in Vyborg.

[226] Here 'professional architects' refers to those who expressed their views in this context, understandably not the views of the entire profession in Finland.

also a telling example of how completely different contexts of architecture and history become inseparable when different people come to articulate their views concerning what this library building is all about.

The following introduces the Finnish public discussion, with use of selected 'representative examples'. This process of discussions can be regarded as culminating in an art project by the Finnish-American artist Liisa Roberts, who created an 'alternative restoration' through site and place-specific art projects, seeking to bring together Finnish architects, tourists, and present day Russian locals. This chapter will conclude with a discussion concerning the practice of the restoration.

In October 1991 Jussi Rautsi, from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment wrote an article in the *Helsingin Sanomat*.

The Viipuri Library to be restored now

Helsingin Sanomat (13.10) and Ilta-Sanomat (12.10) have published writings on the Viipuri Library. The fame of Alvar Aalto's library from the 1930s as an architectural and technical hallmark building has accumulated. The building is repairable. Work should be started in 1993, the 700th anniversary year of Viipuri, and completed in 1998, marking the centenary of Aalto's birth.

Why at this moment?

The Russians have considered for a long time that this is a matter which belongs to the Finns. Finns again have felt that the Russians should take action, as it is they who have allowed the building to fall into disrepair. Both views are illustrative of the prejudice and inflexibility of the liturgy of cultural cooperation. Times are changing.

In present-day restoration thinking cultural, scientific and economic factors are united. A new aspect is also the cooperation of the public and private sectors. The library could be an example of new cooperation on the Karelian Isthmus. Thus, not an ossified monument, but a living and economically viable building.

The Finnish Ministry of the Environment has discussed the restoration with Vyborg's and Russian state level officials. They have indicated their strong will to participate in the restoration project, and the model for dealing with this matter already exists.

The two parties would split the costs. Finland would be responsible for the planning, supervision, and part of the work. The specific wish expressed by the Russians is that the Alvar Aalto architectural office would take care of the architectural design. The original furniture is still in production. Russia would pay its share in materials.

Where could the funds come from? The Finnish Ministry of the Environment has cleared away bureaucratic obstacles and commissioned research. It would not, however, gladly give 20 million marks of the taxpayers' money to be used in a foreign country, especially during an economic depression.

Let us, however, consider the matter from a broader perspective. Think about the use of the building. The library is a gate to issues much greater than one building. The restoration could be an educative example of new kind of behaviour in Europe, where cultural issues and social factors are united with economic factors.

The representatives of the city of Vyborg feel that the library must remain in use as a library. This is so, but in addition to a library there could, for instance, be a research centre for restoring old buildings or a facility for researching the surrounding natural environment. A small library restaurant would bring life to the city and money for the upkeep of the building. Elsewhere in Europe also companies invest in these kinds of institutions. What would Finnish and possibly international companies get in exchange for their money? The library could house conference facilities to be used by companies. The restoration work would provide important information about concrete structures of the 1930s. Industries could benefit from the knowledge, and provide an example of their know-how.

The moment is right, and possibly also the last one. This valuable building is falling apart. The longer we wait, the more expensive the restoration will be. The matter must be dealt with now, if it is to be dealt with at all. The library's condition is known. It is known how the work is to be done, and the cost of it. The question is about money. Are there organisations, companies and inhabitants in Finland with enough insight?

Jussi Rautsi, Ministry of the Environment Helsinki[227]

In August 1991, the Baltic States had declared independence. The above article came out almost exactly two months before the official end of the Soviet Union, when President Mikhail Gorbachev resigned in December due to the fact the state of which he had been the leader no longer existed. In the newspaper articles focusing on the library, however, it is the city of Vyborg and, for example, its approaching 700th anniversary celebrations in 1993 which are introduced as the relevant context, not the evaporation of the Soviet Union.

[227] *Helsingin Sanomat* 17.10.1991.

In January 1992 Elissa Aalto and the Alvar Aalto and Co. Architectural Office[228], together with representatives of the Alvar Aalto Club, the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and Finland's Consulate General in St Petersburg made their first official visit to Vyborg to meet the city authorities. During the visit, the previously mentioned appeal by the Alvar Aalto Club, directed to architects around the world, which had accumulated some 1000 signatures during six months, was handed to the Mayor of Vyborg.[229] That same month, architect Mikko Mansikka from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment, and the St Petersburg area committee's vice-president Sidorova signed a letter of intent to both investigate the practical realisation and funding of the restoration of the library. For the first time, the function of the building came to be perceived as an obstacle, as it was felt that obtaining funding would be particularly difficult if the building functioned solely as a library. Thus, the plan was that a joint Russian-Finnish organisation would run the building, and spaces would be made available for institutions, companies, and even the Finnish state to rent. In association with this, an event was organised in Vyborg where plans to accumulate income for the building were presented. The Finnish Ministry of the Environment had commissioned the plans from the Aalto & Co Architectural office.[230]

The idea was to organise small-scale congresses in the lecture hall. This would have required extending the service area in the entrance hall, next to the cloakroom space. It would have also meant adding a service staircase to the basement level. Further, accessibility for the disabled was taken up, and addition of a book elevator was investigated. Other proposed potential uses included a space for the Finnish consulate, a restaurant, and/or conference and exhibition spaces.[231] It was noted that the consulate would need to be in the newspaper reading room to have its own entrance. The largest changes would, however, have been digging the basement level floor by 80 cm, to make it possible to rent this space to firms

[228] After Alvar Aalto died in 1976, the office continued to be run by his widow, Elissa Aalto up until 1994.

[229] The mayor at the time was Nikolai Smirnov. Kairamo, M. 2009, 42. The Finns had outlined summaries of the situation with bullet points and three alternative cost estimates, dated 26.11.1991 and 11.12.1991. The Restoration Committee's archive, AF.

[230] Gardberg, S. in Joutsalmi, S. (ed.) 1994, 66-69.

[231] Ministry of the Environment, Jussi Rautsi 23.1.1992. Memorandum. 'Situation of the Viipuri Library's restoration'. The Restoration Committee´s archive, AF. The cost estimate for the restoration was 26 million Finnish marks plus 11 million marks worth in Roubles, totalling 37 million Finnish marks. 20.11.1992. Travel report by Jussi Rautsi describing the situation of the library, the Viipuri Old Town, where some renovation projects have begun, and the ecological plan of the Karelian isthmus. 24.3.1992 is an agreement on intent, listing 20 points, outlining the co-operation, aims and responsibilities. Signed by Mikko Mansikka, Ministry of the Environment and N. Smirnov, Vyborg city deputy director.

which would invest in the renovation of the building. Architect Sergei Kravchenko also suggested that a new underground storage would be constructed to the west side of the library. This solution was however regarded to be difficult to realise due to the need for ventilation shafts, emergency exists and other above ground structures. In May 1992 an alternative plan was presented to the city architect Dmitri Fridland. This time an underground book storage would have been positioned towards south-east, and an extension of the library would have been built on the other side of the street. This would have also made it possible to re-arrange the driving route of the library bus, which was serviced from the main entrance. The Finnish architect Sverker Gardberg made sketches for this solution.[232]

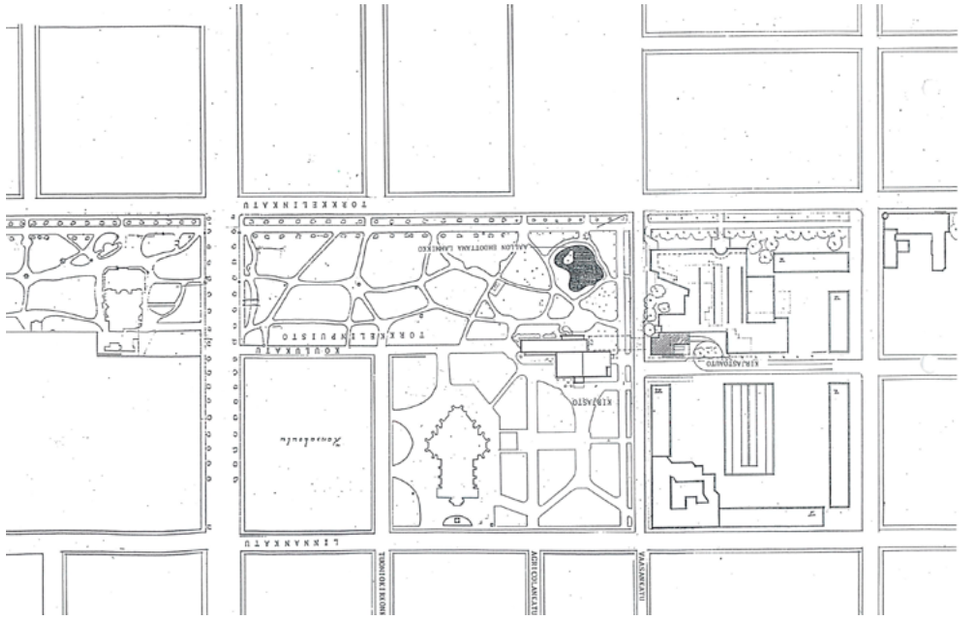
The first action, however, was an emergency programme to repair leakages in the plumbing, and to ensure that the ventilation would function to decrease the humidity in the building.[233] Later, Tapani Mustonen, who came to be the person to see through the restoration has pointed out that these additional plans were simply unrealistic. The plan to lower the underground level would have been hampered by the fact that the basement is like a 'swimming pool with water on the outside', as Mustonen put it. In other words, the basement is surrounded by ground-water all over. Furthermore, to the side of the children's section was an old burial ground, which would also have caused difficulties.[234] All in all, this plan to extend the library came to be considered overly expensive, especially as there was a continued struggle to find funding for the restoration. While the connection to the previous events was not made explicit, *Helsingin Sanomat* published an article about the library in April 1992.

> ***Valuable buildings in Viipuri are being restored and money is gathered for the library designed by Aalto***
>
> *Money is being gathered for the Viipuri Library designed by Alvar Aalto. Part of the library is to be restored so well that it could be hired out for instance to a company. The rent would then provide funds for continuing the renovation.*
>
> *Jussi Rautsi from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment said at a seminar on the restoration of Vyborg in Helsinki that funds need to be found from the commercial sector, as no other funding exists. An emergency plan has been drawn up for this library, opened in 1935, which includes, for example, the renovation of the roof and the foundations of the building. The esti-*

[232] Gardberg, S. in Joutsalmi, S. (ed.) 1994, 66-68. Kravchenko made the proposal at the ICOMOS Finland seminar on 22.4.1992. Attached is an outline for use, unsigned, printed on Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd paper, dated 27.2.1992.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Tapani Mustonen, personal communication.



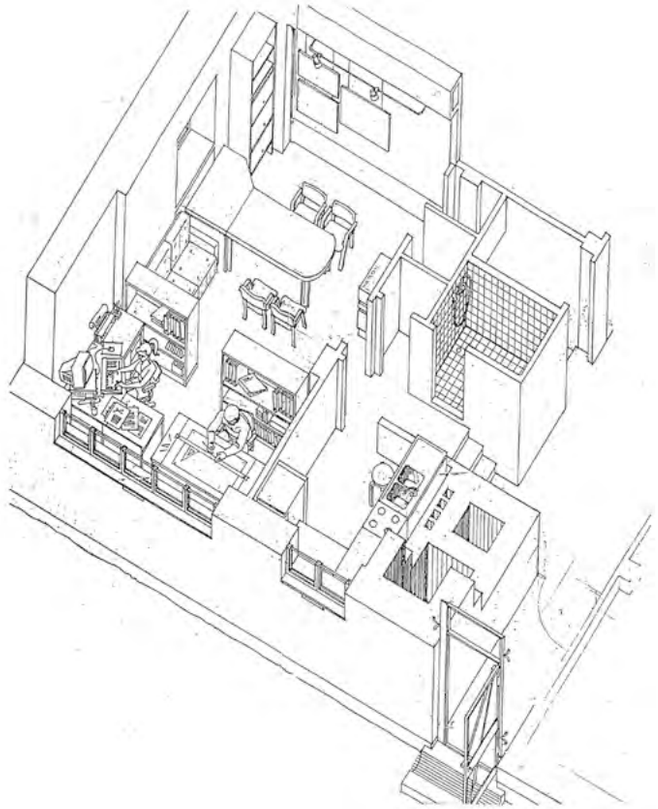


Fig. 108-109. *In the early 1990s, plans for the future were made on very different scales. Alvar Aalto & Co. studied the possibility to build an extension for the library to the south-eastern side. Sergei Kravchenko, in turn, made plans for turning the caretaker's apartment into an office space which could be rented out. (Drawing courtesy of Jussi Rautsi)*

mated cost of the restoration is 50–60 million Finnish marks, and the plan is that Russia would cover half of the sum. 'The Russian part needs to be considered with reservations. It would be good if even half million could be received in international currency', Rautsi said. Rautsi suspected that the building will be in such condition in five years' time, that it will no longer be viable to restore it. The gathering of funds has been launched by the friends of Aalto's architecture, who have established an Aalto Club. The Alvar Aalto architectural office has prepared a sketch of the restoration plan. There has been cooperation has been done with Sergei Kravchenko, an architect from Vyborg who begun to study the library's condition in the late 1980s. As a result of inadequate ventilation the interior walls have suffered greatly, and the furnishings have disappeared.

The newspaper reading room, planned to be rented out, has its own entrance. According to Sverker Gardberg, the space would be suitable for small exhibitions, for a company's office space, or to be used by the Finnish consulate… Also the Russians carry out restoration. Many sites have been restored in Vyborg, but the Russians have not had time to deal with any of the newer buildings. They have expressed regret for lack of skills in renovating the newer buildings. Instead, the Round Tower has been restored… Architect Viktor Dimitriev, who is the head architect for historical and cultural monuments in Vyborg says that the aim is to restore the buildings to their original use. For instance, a sewing workshop is moving out of the former Lehtovaara [restaurant] *building. Alko wine and spirits store. Also some buildings have been built anew to appear exactly the same, replacing ones that have been destroyed. One of these is for instance at no. 10 Piispankatu Street.*

The Finnish experts suggested the Vyborg seminar to initiate a joint building inventory with the Russians. The Russians have listed 257 buildings in Vyborg to be protected at the level of national importance.'[235]

The article quoted above tells of the numerous plans to come up with ways to get small streams of income accumulated for the restoration of the library, which followed after this first event. Moreover, this brings forth how the restoration of the library was contextualised, and how in the early years of the 1990s cooperation came to be emphasised. These articles typically also comment on the situation of other buildings in Vyborg. In respect to the library, this context tended to be added as an explanation that Finns were needed because in Russia it was easier to find expertise for restoring older structures. Simultaneously, articles of this type also pointed to issues that remained implicit. First, practically the entire city of Vyborg, not only individual buildings, but also infrastructure, would need

[235] *Helsingin Sanomat* 27.4.1992.

to be renovated, as for example the plumbing and sewages were from the Finnish period. Secondly, it is worth noting who the actively involved persons were. Officially, for example the Finnish Heritage Agency (earlier the National Board of Antiquities) provides expert statements upon request, but as a rule does not become involved with sites outside the country. In particular Jussi Rautsi and Mikko Mansikka were working for an official body of the state; the Ministry of the Environment. Thus, in particular soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union some of the Finnish persons who contributed in the project seem to have had a kind of dual role, balancing between representing the institutions where they worked and the role of individual experts.[236] In sum, small newspaper articles of this kind stress the fact that like no other building in Vyborg, it is the library that continued to attract the attention, and that from the Finnish side, numerous persons invested a significant amount of time and energy, many of them without any separate compensation for working for the cause of the library.

The Finnish Committee for the Restoration of the Viipuri Library, established in 1992, signed a restoration plan which summed up the goal: 'We are now inviting all friends of Alvar Aalto's architecture, individuals and institutions, to contribute to this project. We hope that the project will be an example of new international cooperation in saving a unique piece of cultural heritage for present and future generations'.[237] In May 1993 *Helsingin Sanomat* published again a long article titled 'Viipuri's small bang - long waited restoration of Alvar Aalto's library begun triumphantly. Hopes are high although the funding issue remains open.' The article described how the sun was shining, a band was playing and champagne was sparkling. 'Long live Alvar Aalto and the Viipuri Library!' exclaimed the sub-heading, and the reporter continued:' First the Finnish architects Kristian Gullichsen and Elissa Aalto and Vyborg's Deputy Mayor Boris Pevtsov get to use the shovel… the pit is getting larger. The salvaging of Alvar Aalto's masterpiece has now officially begun. The moment is historic, because the need to repair the building has been discussed for decades. Is it now that something will finally begin to happen?'[238] Sergei Kravchenko, who had worked for nearly a decade to save the library rejoiced: 'I have waited for this day for a very long time… One can only be content to see the dream come true.' The newspaper's reporter however suspected whether this was the happy end of the story, pointing out that money

[236] In a discussion with architect Maire Mattinen, at the time working at the National Board of Antiquities, she stressed that this institution's role is not to take a direct stand on issues of this kind. Instead, it is upon invitation that expert statements can be requested, in case advice is needed. Personal communication.

[237] Report by the Restoration Committee. 'Alvar Aalto Viipuri Library Restoration Project'. Helsinki, October 1992. Description of restoration plan accompanied by drawings. Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd September 1992. See Appendix 7 for the members of the Restoration Committee.

[238] *Helsingin Sanomat* 24.5.1993.

was not the only obstacle, but also Russian-Finnish cooperation has had its challenges. The Finnish plans had not been immediately accepted by the local architects. The Finns again had suspected the neighbours' workmanship in restoring this kind of modern building. 'The triumphant celebration is over. Viipuri Library awaits. But for how long?'[239]

The Friends of Viipuri Library association was established in 1993. It served essentially two purposes. First, to make the library known and interesting beyond the circles of professional architects, and secondly to have a body that could apply for funding, for example from private foundations. As the representative of the association, Elissa Aalto negotiated with several international foundations in search for funding for the most urgent repairs.[240] A concert given by the Finnish opera singer Jorma Hynninen was organised at the library as part of the first charity event. Just like before its opening in 1935, the library was again referred to as the 'House of Miracles', this time marking the awaited miracle that the restoration had finally begun. 'The atmosphere has been so incredibly positive that tears come to my eyes', said Elissa Aalto in the summer of 1993.[241] It was decided that the work was to be done in stages, but the Alvar Aalto and Co. Architectural Office would draw up the plans for the entire restoration. The restoration plans were presented in St Petersburg and Vyborg in May 1993.[242] Several aspects were to be taken into consideration in order to make the building better suited to present-day requirements. They included adding a lift, a control point, and a small 'coffee bar' in the entrance hall, and the lowering of the basement level floor in order to add an underground connection to the annex building on the other side of the street.

Elissa Aalto died in May 1994. It was noted in her obituary how she actively continued Alvar Aalto's life's work, and was involved in the restoration of several buildings such as Finlandia Hall, the National Pensions Institute in Helsinki and

[239] Ibid. Few days later (*Helsingin Sanomat* 28.5.1993) reported that the British architectural publication *The Architectural Review* had published Alvar Aalto's Viipuri Library at length, in a text by architect Michael Spens, who has been to Vyborg.

[240] 17.4.1993. The Friends of Viipuri Library [Viipurin kirjaston ystävät r.y.] association's letter sent to all the members confirming the latest news and that the association has been registered. The Restoration Committee's archive, AF.

[241] *Helsingin Sanomat* 24.5.1993. Also described in a travel report dated 1.6.1993 by Jussi Rautsi. Kirsti Päällysaho of the Finnish Ministry of the Environment organised the concert with the assistance of Tiina Jansson, SAFA. Valdemar Melanko from the Russian and East European Institute assisted with practical matters.

[242] 17.2.1994 'Viipurin kirjaston restaurointisuunnitelma' by Vezio Nava. Alla Sovoljova added some critical comments to the plans, published in the *DoCoMoMo* periodical 11/1993. There is also a document from 14.2.1994 from the Ministry of the Environment titled 'Viipuri Library first aid', outlining sums of money that Finland had agreed to contribute for specific purposes in the library. Signed by Mikko Mansikka.

Fig. 110. *The Finnish opera singer Jorma Hynninen performed at a charity event in May 1993. (Photo: Jussi Rautsi)*

the Paimio Sanatorium. However, at the end it was noted 'Close to her heart was the Viipuri Library, and salvaging it from destruction. Only two weeks before her death she had negotiated the restoration with a high-level committee that had visited Helsinki from Moscow.'[243] Indeed, after Alvar Aalto had passed away, an important function of the Alvar Aalto and Co. office came to be planning and providing expertise for the renovations of Aalto's buildings. Here, however it was Elissa's death, and the most topical renovation project which merge together as a single news item. That same month the Restoration Committee introduced the project to restore the large glass wall by the stairs, through which light enters the entrance hall. As a first project in the chain of restoring small sections one by one, it was stressed that this separate project would not clash with the overall restoration plan. Following the death of Elissa Aalto, the Restoration Committee regarded it necessary to appoint a head designer from Aalto's office, who was already known and trusted in Vyborg through the project. This was architect Tapani Mustonen,[244] who had worked in the office since 1991.

[243] *Helsingin Sanomat* 13.4.1994.

[244] 19.5.1994. Typed letter from Alvar Aalto and Co, Viipuri Library Finland Committee. Signed by Head Architect Kaija Santaholma. The Restoration Committee´s archive, AF.

In October of the same year, the Finnish and Russian representatives met in Vyborg, and discussed the next steps after the most urgent repairs. The Finnish Restaurointitekniikka company had conducted work worth 120,000 Finnish marks.[245] In 1995 an initiative was taken to include the library in the list of monuments of the Russian National Register. Lack of this official recognition was regarded as a major obstacle, as it had prevented the possibility to apply for funding in Russia.[246] In the same year, the library was included to the Russian Federation's list of Sites of Historical and Cultural Heritage. The protection status meant that the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation had to approve all planned changes and renovation plans concerning the library.[247]

The copy and the original

The second peak of discussions took place on the pages of the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper in 1996. Here, two different perspectives on what the restoration of the library was about were articulated. First was the so-called general public's perspective, which was exemplified in an entire chain of suggestions that rather than restoring the library, it could be rebuilt somewhere in Finland. What this perspective did was to separate the library from its geographical location, thus in a sense ironically, treating the building solely as a piece of architecture. The second, contrasting perspective was most of all articulated by professional architects, whose view was that the library was inherently tied to its location.

Notably, these discussions can be recognised to build on the preceding debate about the library's use in the future. Thus, when the 'general public' participated in the discussion, it was not actually restoration they were talking about, but main focus was in the use of the library: different alternative uses for the building were proposed, and in association with this, rose the question of who the users would be. To add, it was first the Finns involved with the restoration, who tried to come up with alternative uses to raise income for the building, and the same themes were taken up by the general public. In contrast, Jussi Rautsi has stressed that in the process of the restoration, it was the Russians who held the unwavering view

[245] Notably, 'Restaurointitekniikka Oy' translates to one man, Heikki Hänninen, and his expertise. 14.10.1994. Travel report by Jussi Rautsi. The Finnish participants listed are E. Adlercreutz, S. Gardberg, M. Jaatinen, T. Mustonen and J. Rautsi. This is among the first documents where Mustonen's name is included. 1.11.1994. An outline of works and costs, signed by Mikko Mansikka and Jussi Rautsi. The work was carried out by the Restaurointitekniikka company with the use of local workmen and materials. The Restoration Committee´s archive, AF.

[246] 27.7.1995. Letter to Chief Architect Kaija Santaholma of the Ministry of the Environment in Helsinki from Natalia Dushkina of the Moscow Institute of Architecture. On the Finnish side, Mikko Mansikka wrote a report on 31.10.1996 to Minister of the Environment Pekka Haavisto.

[247] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 44.

that the building needed to remain in use as a library. In the first spur of the general public beginning to express views regarding the restoration of the library, the focus was in the fact that the building is located in Russia. This led to a number of propositions to consider the possibility that Finland could buy/copy/replicate the library to resolve the problems associated with ownership as well as the rights and responsibilities concerning this building.

However, while the views that the library could be rebuilt elsewhere were typically expressed by the so-called general public, intriguingly, among the first persons to have proposed this alternative was the Japanese professor of architecture, Yoshinobu Ashihara. In June 1996 *Helsingin Sanomat* published an article describing the shock felt by Ashihara upon visiting the library.

> ***The last moment for the Viipuri Library***
>
> *Take the library apart and re-build it anew somewhere in the centre of Helsinki', says professor Yoshinobu Ashihara at the Bruznizhoje border station on his return from Vyborg. A friend of Alvar Aalto's architecture, the 77-year-old Japanese architecture professor has travelled all the way from Tokyo to see the Viipuri Library, Aalto's legendary early work. The deteriorated condition of the building came as a shock. Only a fine line separates one of the most famous white flagship buildings of functionalism from a ruin. Ashihara has never seen a building in worse condition. It is easy to believe the pessimistic views, which have suspected that one of the following winters will be calamitous to the building. The latest catastrophe took place in February. A radiator under the lecture hall's large window exploded in the small hours of the night. Waves of boiling hot water spread across the floor moistening the building before help arrived. The floor of the lecture hall quakes all soft under one's feet. If the Viipuri Library is to be saved, the work is to start immediately.*[248]

A few days later, the same newspaper published in the commentaries section a reaction to the above. It was from a pensioner who expressed the view that the library should be built somewhere in Helsinki, and that Finnish politicians should not even consider using taxpayers' money for the restoration.

> ***A copy of the Viipuri Library to Finland!***
>
> *Based on recent news Finland is prepared to pay half of the restoration costs of the Viipuri Library by Alvar Aalto, under the condition that Russia also*

[248] *Helsingin Sanomat* 1.6.1996.

pays half… Aalto's architect friend, Japanese professor Yoshinobu Ashihara suggested an alternative in his statement: Rebuild the library somewhere in Helsinki. That would be the only truly patriotic action, as this would also guarantee the upkeep of the library, and the building would remain in Aalto's home country. Indeed we have a copy of the Elk statue by Mäntynen next to the Museum of Natural History [in Helsinki]. It could be moved to its nearly original location in the vicinity of the library. Regards to [Finnish politicians] Virolainen and Uosukainen, that if millions in taxpayers money is petty cash to them, they may feel free to make the donation from their own pockets. A Finnish 'monument' will never receive great appreciation in Russia, although funds are always welcome.[249]

The first comment was continued some two weeks later. This time, the author writing in the opinion pages pointed out that as a first reaction the proposition to build the library anew somewhere in Helsinki stands out as odd, but, he continues, it would in fact be worth considering more closely.

Copy of the Vyborg Library

The project to salvage Alvar Aalto's masterwork from his youth has finally moved on to real action, i.e. finding funding (for the project). The badly deteriorated house is piece of architectural history, where for instance the famous undulating line was developed. The plan is to divide the restoration task between Finns and Russians. The work is urgent because lack of maintenance has significantly damaged the building. Japanese professor Yoshinobu Ashihara was horrified by the building's condition, and made a noteworthy suggestion in August, to rebuild the library somewhere in the Helsinki city centre. At first sight, the whole idea seems odd, but the opinion of this Japanese friend of Aalto is worth considering closely. First, it is unclear to what extent chaotic Russia could contribute to the restoration and future maintenance. A building not part of Russia's own culture cannot stand very high on the country's list of priorities. Copies have been opposed for no reason. For instance, a successful copy of the Lascaux cave in France and its paintings dating back tens of thousands of years has been made with the aid of computer technology. The original paintings are too fragile for masses of tourists, who now can be acquainted with the ancient artworks through well executed copies.[250]

[249] *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.6.1996.

[250] *Helsingin Sanomat* 18.6.1996.

Many similar opinion pieces appeared after this early text opposing the use of public funds for this purpose and expressing scepticism about Finnish-Russian cooperation and whether there would be a guarantee that the library would be appreciated in Russia as a work of Aalto. An aspect which draws attention is that in Vyborg, there is an *Elk* statue in the Torkkeli Park close to the library. In the commentary, it was proposed that the *Elk* in Helsinki could be moved, to create a 'nearly original location'.[251] Here, it can be concluded that persons speaking of creating a copy of the library, and those working towards its restoration appear to be speaking about two completely different things, even holding irreconcilably different views to the matter. What however is interesting to analyse a further is *how* these different persons contextualise their perspective. They are namely illustrative of how the library's meaning continues to be constructed through other material reference points: in different stages the relevant location of the library is 'anchored' to something that has been physically close to, or can be otherwise associated with, the structure, for example on basis of resemblance. In the first chapter, the library was 'imagined' as one of the future public buildings of the Viipuri cityscape. In the second chapter, the actual 'mode of thinking' in the context of architecture was evidenced by the library being compared with other buildings by Aalto, and other international buildings which hold resemblance with it.[252] In the third thematic chapter, the immediate landscape next to the library changed, as the Church Park was turned to a burial ground, and this site also became a focal point for all kinds of events, even making it a central site in the city.

Thus, it can be interpreted that the references to the *Elk* statue and the Lascaux caves continue in a similar vein of thinking. The *Elk* is offered as a familiar reference point, as this sculpture appears in innumerable photographs, with the library in the background. Similarly, this interpretation can be stretched to apply to the Lascaux cave. This time, the author felt that copies had been opposed for no reason, and brought up the Lascaux cave as a comparison point to assert that a well-executed copy can convey the 'correct kind of information'. In sum, they all tell of how particular material reference points are used to describe a broader

[251] There are in fact four of these *Elk* statues by sculptor Jussi Mäntynen, cast in bronze. The one by the library dating from 1928, in Lahti from 1955, in Turku from 1969, and in Helsinki from 1972. Helsinki City Museum, public monuments database: http://taidemuseo.hel.fi/suomi/veisto/veistossivu.html?id=68&sortby=artist. Here, the meaning of the *Elk* statue can be analysed to be in that it is one of the known landmarks in Vyborg, which has remained in place after World War II. Intriguingy, the *Elk* statue in Lahti was donated by Karelian associations, and there is also a copy of Emil Wickström's Agricola statue, the original having been next to the Cathedral in Torkkeli Park. Lahti was one of the main cities where the Karelian evacuees were relocated.

[252] Another physical reference point is the pond, which had been discussed during the design process of the library, and Aalto had drawn an asymmetric pond. This pond was never realised, but during the restoration, the possibility of creating the pond was taken up again. Adlercreutz et al. 2009, 21.

context, an entire imagined landscape. Nevertheless, as the following reveals, those who were involved with the restoration used different points of 'anchorage' in constructing the meaning of the library.[253] After commentaries of this kind, they could not hold back and sought to correct at least some of the 'general public's' views. First was the head of the Finnish section of the European Cultural Council, followed by a text by Eric Adlercreutz, the chair of the Restoration Committee.

A copy cannot substitute the original

The idea to rebuild the Viipuri Library in Finland has come up in publications here and there, most recently in such an influential medium as a leader piece in the Helsingin Sanomat *newspaper. Perhaps it is good for Finnish attitudes and cultural thinking that through Alvar Aalto the opportunity arises to consider more widely the importance of creative geniuses for a nation. Hopefully, discussion will arise more extensively.*

Alvar Aalto would not have achieved international reputation, which is still growing and there are no signs that his reputation would be fading, unless he had created something significant. It was characteristic of him to design a building, as an inherent part of its location, for its users. The entire creative process was alive. Some of the drawings were also made in Viipuri on-site, when the need arose.

So, should a library building designed for the 1930s inhabitants of Viipuri and positioned specifically at the edge of Torkkeli Park be moved, for instance, next to Finlandia Hall or to Sibelius Park [in Helsinki]*? What would it look or feel like? Not like the Viipuri Library. In my view the same applies to the marble façades of Finlandia Hall. They might also keep better should the entire building be rebuilt in Jyväskylä where the air is a bit cleaner. It is possible to come up with all kinds of ideas.*

If Aalto had designed Finlandia Hall using granite, the entire building would surely appear different. Perhaps not much, but 'that something' would be different. The creative line, thought, feeling. A copy of a Sibelius is a copy, a copy of Aalto is a copy. Never the original. Already now many lost sites in Helsinki are missed, places which cannot be copied or restored back to their original appearance… The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assign significant sums from their budgets to make Finland better known internationally. The city of Helsinki is planning the European Capital of Culture year with great sums of money. Internationally only the original and authentic are appreciated. Alvar Aalto and his works are true Finnish and international designs in a visible and sustainable form.

Pirkko Vahervuori
European Cultural Foundation
Director of the Finnish section
Helsinki[254]

Thus, Vahervuori offered different criteria to explain why a copy cannot replace the original. Interestingly, while her views emphasised the building as part of its location, and its history there, she also pointed out that 'the creative line, thought, feeling' would be different. Stressing this view makes it obvious that the building's importance is also linked to the presence of Aalto; the authentic materials and the original details. In the following text, architect Eric Adlercreutz focused on the building being designed for Viipuri, and at the same time on the library's international importance.

The library is linked to Torkkeli Park

Recent opinion pieces concerning the Viipuri Library have focused on two questions: 1) Should the library be rebuilt in an 'appropriate location' in Finland? 2) Is it worth spending funds on restoring a building on foreign soul? Pirkko Vahervuori has responded to the first question (HS 20.6) by stating that the building is linked to its context in Vyborg, in Torkkeli Park. The Viipuri Library is a concept. The fact that the most modern city library of its time was built precisely in Viipuri is a historical fact, which should not be neglected. When the City Council in 1933 decided to give up the original location for the library and reserved for it a new one in Torkkeli Park, the result was in fact a new design task. Aalto's new solution was also crucially different from the previous design. It was affected by the surrounding buildings, the streets, the paths and trees in the park, the points of the compass and differences of elevation at the site. While logically and architecturally the library provided a striking solution to the task, it was also a creation affected by the specificities of the location. The weight of the library in the history of architecture is such that the economic and intellectual investments cannot be seen solely from a national perspective. It is, however, easy to list the benefits. The project provides employment for Finns and promotes

[253] Opinion pieces supporting the idea to copy or buy the library are for example 'The Turku Library with Aalto's drawings!' and 'Lets buy the Viipuri Library', both in *Helsingin Sanomat* 26.6.1996.

[254] *Helsingin Sanomat* 20.6.1996. At the time, there was a heated debate concerning the renovation of the marble facades of the Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, as it was known that the original material could not endure the Finnish climate, but would begin to bend.

the Finnish building industry. It is also a significant Finnish-Russian cultural cooperation project in an area that is so important to us, and – due to the building's fame – it could become a pilot project for restoring buildings of this period. The most notable view, however, is that the library remains a part of the Finnish architectural heritage, a part of that legacy of international importance. This leaves us with a particular responsibility. Headed by Enrico Baleri, Italian architects, designers and artists have gathered nearly a million Finnish marks for the restoration work. In November, a seminar will be organised in Milan, where also the restoration of the Viipuri Library will be taken up. Those, who suspect the sense in providing help could try and answer the question: What is the motivation which makes over a hundred Italian representatives of different fields of arts to donate their works to be auctioned off for a deteriorated library building far away in the north?

ERIC ADLERCREUTZ
Chair of the Viipuri Library Restoration Committee[255]

An aspect which stands out in these discussions is the library's dual role: it is quite literally at once local and global. The building is perceived to be defined by its life in its specific location, while it also has a role as an iconic building internationally. In the above comment, Adlercreutz also turned the discussion back to the restoration, as this aspect had been forgotten in the intervening discussions.

Later, discussion concerning the possibility to rebuild the library in a Finnish city become an often repeated anecdote, referenced for example in different connections in the Restoration Committee. Architect Tapani Mustonen who saw through the completion of the restoration, has counted at least 15 Finnish cities,[256] where it was suggested that the library could be rebuilt. In the 2000s, it was not only for the purpose of a library. For example, there was a project lasting several years to build a Guggenheim Museum in Helsinki, for which an international architectural competition was organised. In one of the opinion pieces published in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the idea was expressed that the designs of the Viipuri Library, a monument of architecture, already existed and could be used for building the Helsinki Guggenheim.[257] As the discussions proposing that the library could be copied somewhere in Finland had continued for some time, it could well be that the example of turning the library into the Guggenheim in fact indicated that the

[255] *Helsingin Sanomat* 6.7.1996.

[256] Tapani Mustonen's speech in January 2016. The event was 'Sjunde januari' (The Seventh of January), which has its roots in Viipuri, and is organised each year at the House of the Nobility in Helsinki.

[257] *Helsingin Sanomat* 23.5.2013.

issue had been taken to a meta-level. The prolonged process to carry out the restoration of the library, and the seemingly endless discussions on whether or not a Guggenheim Museum should be built in Helsinki, were issues that continued to be published in the Finnish media. Hence, this opinion piece could have been an ironic comment rather than an actual suggestion. Whatever the underlying motivation, the author however tapped into the 'general public's' debate on whether the library should be rebuilt, where the site would be, and what would be the most viable function for it.

Whose library – whose responsibility?

The third recognisable strand of discussion emerged three years later, during the summer of 1999. This time, the focus was on issues of the memory of World War II and ceded, or 'Lost Karelia', as the Karelian area annexed from Finland to the Soviet Union in 1944 is commonly known. The exchange of views began from an opinion piece titled 'What are all the things that the deteriorating Karelia should be salvaged from'. It was a longer text, and it suffices to summarise the main points here. The author begun by pointing out how the Finnish politicians were not taking a stand on the issue that the author described as the 'Finnish areas beyond the border'. 'The deterioration has been visible to all. Visitors to Karelia have been able to visit their former homesteads several times but no one tells of any progress. It could well be worth studying how many have regarded the situation as remaining at least unchanged. Cultural heritage is in the most difficult position. The crumbling of monuments is linked to fruitless contributions. Viipuri Castle and Aalto's library are the most often described examples. To the first, nothing at all has been done, whereas to the second, the funds have literally gone down the drain, into decay caused by leaks, with floors, ceilings and walls already once repaired with Finnish funds.'[258] The writer concluded that the matter should remain a concern for Finland as a whole, and not only for the Karelians [the evacuees and their descendants]. As is the case with the others, it is worth bearing in mind that opinion pieces such as this are all perspectives of individual persons. What the previous illustrates is that the library has been also associated with 'lost Karelia', and the perception that to the evacuees forced to leave their homes behind this still remains an example of an unjust historical event. This opinion piece led to a reply from the secretary general of the Restoration Committee, architect Maija Kairamo, who summed many projects done at this point. The response was published some two weeks after the previous opinion text.

[258] *Helsingin Sanomat* 2.6.1999.

Fig. 111-113. *In the early 1990s, the library was popularly used, and for example a youth's chess club gathered regularly in the lecture hall. (Photos: Jussi Rautsi)*

The condition of the Viipuri Library is a matter of pride for Finns

Without commenting in detail on Esko Nieminen's piece 'What are all the things that the deteriorating Karelia should be salvaged from' (HS 2.6.) the Restoration Committee of the Viipuri Library wants to correct the false impression that the funds used for the renovation would have gone 'down the drain'.

The restoration idea came up in the Finnish Ministry of the Environment at the turn of 1980s and 1990s and the restoration project began under direction of Elissa Aalto in 1992, as the mutual work of Russians and Finns.

The funds for the restoration have been received from the Finnish Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Education, and through international as well as some domestic donations. Approximately 200,000 Finnish marks have been available yearly. Due to lack of funds the restoration project had to be divided, and there are few visible results as focus is on urgent works. The concrete in the basement has been repaired along with leaks in the roof and the heating systems, the framed glass wall of the stairwell has been salvaged and restored, and the old caretaker's apartment has been turned into the studio of the restoration project. The terrace roof on top of it has been fixed, and electricity centre has been renewed.

Architecturally, the most challenging tasks have been conducted with Finnish money and work, while the Russians have focused on the technical side. The realised works have been arranged with the city's building office and the library's owner, the cultural directorship and the library directors of Vyborg.

A ten-metre prototype of the famous undulating ceiling of the lecture hall was created in Aalto's centenary year of 1998 to study the structure, and it was installed in the lecture hall. The original undulating ceiling disappeared after the war, as the building stood empty for over a decade.

Russians renovated the building to take it in use at the beginning of the 60s. At the time it was not possible to use original drawings from Aalto's office. In the summer of 1998 part of the clumsy wood ceiling from the 1960s was removed, and in this 'research space' was installed a test version of the structure, made by the Heinola institute's carpentry students.

Part of the ceiling remains revealed at the moment, where damage created by leakages after the war are visible on the concrete structure. The wall panels mentioned by Nieminen do not exist at the moment, and repairing the worn-out floors is not acute.

The library is the most important cultural facility in present-day Vyborg. The local people appreciate their library, and some 700 persons visit it daily.

Alongside the Paimio Sanatorium the library played a role in making Aalto world-famous, and its realisation was a Finnish achievement.

The International Union of Architects has made an initiative for Viipuri Library to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage list, and the matter is under preparation at the Russian Federation's Ministry of Culture.

Although Viipuri is no longer ours, the library is part of the Finnish cultural heritage. This is why we feel it is important that Finns participate in the restoration of the building. A functioning library and cultural facility in Vyborg contributes to the development of its area which we believe, is also beneficial to Finland.

Maija Kairamo
Secretary of the Restoration Committee[259]

Kairamo's response is once again illustrative of the fact that on the outside it appeared to many visitors to the library that very little, or nothing at all, was happening regardless of media information about the restoration project and the gathering of funds. These two opinion pieces, however, mark the beginning of an exchange of views. The aspects brought forth focus again on questions of whether or not it is worth restoring the library, regardless of love for architecture and this particular building. Eric Adlercreutz, also offered his response, explaining the reasons why he saw that 'Alvar Aalto's library is irreplaceable for Vyborg'.[260] He felt that Vyborg's modern library and information centre could become the most beautiful jewel of cooperation. Concerning the maintenance of the building, Adlercreutz noted that as a cultural facility and a tourist attraction the library was an important – and even the most important – building in the city. He pointed out that not all spaces in the building were equally important, and some of them could be modified freely without degrading the building. Commonly accepted restoration premises were always affected by functional requirements. And, he concluded that 'the restored lecture hall, legendary in the architectural world could become a real meeting and discussion point and symbolically a reminder of the universality of Aalto's architecture. It should also be remembered that today the library's official name is the Alvar Aalto Library.'[261]

[259] *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.6.1999.

[260] *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.7.1999. Still in the early 2000s there was a spur of commentaries, this time among experts of architecture. They included art historians Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna and Riitta Nikula, as well as Eric Adlercreutz and Maija Kairamo from the Restoration Committee. *Helsingin Sanomat* 26.4.2003, 4.5.2003, 10.5.2003 and 16.5.2003. See also Kervanto Nevalinna, A. 2005, 235-247.

[261] *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.7.1999.

A procedure for carrying out the restoration works was developed alongside these public discussions. A meeting between representatives of the Cultural Commission of the Leningrad Oblast, the City of Vyborg, the Central City Alvar Aalto Library and the Restoration Committee was organised, and an agreement on an annual working programme was made. This was to better coordinate the restoration. It was decided that a sub-project can be started only when it can be fully funded.[262]

From this point on, newspaper articles typically contained information about what was taking place on site, for example that in 1999 there was an internet connection in the library. While the case remains that the 'general public' and those involved with the restoration maintained their respective perspectives, it is noteworthy that they explicitly commented on each other's views in the same place, on the pages of *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper. Once again, also the building's role as both local and global was underlined, illustrated with explanations that the library was important to the local people, a part of Finnish cultural heritage and also a symbolical reminder of the universality of Aalto's architecture. From the point of view of those involved with the restoration, there was, however, recognisable change from the writings of the early 1990s which reported about the library's situation, to the late 1990s when the project became framed as a cooperation, and the library as a functioning building in the present day. The authors of the opinion pieces proposing to copy or buy the library in contrast were telling of suspicion whether cooperation between Finland and Russia would be realistic, and contained an echo of the memory of Finland having lost the city and the area in 1944. The main difference was that the general public directed its potential criticism to future collaboration, with a memory of historical events. The restoration architects again reminded readers of the building's value in the context of architecture, and directed their energy to the hands-on restoration work of the present moment.

To take some distance from these discussions, it is possible to analyse that the library offers itself as a material reference point through which the different persons with interest in Aalto's architecture, the city of Viipuri and the 'lost Karelia' are all able to articulate their views and concerns. As art historian Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna once pointed out to me, 'when we [Finns] talk about the library, we are talking about Viipuri and the lost land of Karelia.'[263] This way, the restoration had the potential of becoming kind of architectural resolution: In the best possible scenario, the library would become a successful example of restoring modern architecture and Finnish-Russian cooperation.

[262] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 44.

[263] Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna, personal communication.

What's the time in Vyborg? – Past and present brought together

In 2000 the Finnish-American artist Liisa Roberts moved to Vyborg to initiate a project titled '*What's the time in Vyborg?*'.[264] The art project consisted of a series of smaller time-space specific art 'events'. The motivation for her project rose from the recognition that Vyborg, and more specifically the library appeared to be of special importance for various reasons, and to explore how the city has been redefined throughout its long history. In practice, Roberts organised a creative writing workshop for teenagers living in Vyborg. The idea was that the panoramic view of the city from the library's lecture hall was a central metaphor through which the teens could create a narrative of Vyborg based on their own observations and aspirations; the city itself would be a stage for the materialisation of the project. For instance a documentary film produced as part of the project followed Finnish pensioners visiting their old homes, being shown around by young tour guides who did not have a clue that Vyborg had once been part of Finland, let alone of the significance of the buildings. For the former occupants, the library and the city remain rooted in the pre-war period while for the city's present residents the library is part of their everyday lives, the Soviet Union and subsequently the Russian Federation having been the building's owner for the past seventy years or so.[265]

The project continued in many different forms, as broadcasts on local and St Petersburg television and an installation at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki as well as a film which was also shown on Finnish television. As Roberts noted in an article: 'More recently we've begun to do things outside Vyborg within an art world setting: we treat our participation in art exhibitions as a continuation of the project, not as an opportunity to present documentation of it.'[266] In addition, there was a website with a live camera set in the library's lecture hall, and in 2003 the workshop participants organised a tour of Vyborg whose audience included people who had been evacuated as teenagers, among them a historian of the city's Finnish period and a retired Finnish politician. Therefore, the whole art project does not really exist without the particular times and places where the different parts have taken place. Roberts said that her 'work is the event and its documentation, both at the same time'.[267]

[264] Sundell, M. 2004, 153. Roberts's art project was also followed in *Helsingin Sanomat* e.g. 28.4.2002; 7.7.2003; 11.11.2004.

[265] Pelkonen, E.-L. 2014, 23-25.

[266] Sundell, M. 2004, 153.

[267] Ibid.

Roberts's project could be interpreted as a reaction to at least three different things. First, she pointed out, that 'when one begins to search for information concerning this building, it is the same images from 1935, which get reproduced over and over again'.[268] To stretch the interpretation, images stand out as analogous with people's views: the old images and the meaning of history are so overpowering that it is difficult to view the place in any different way, making contemporary Vyborg a kind of a blind spot. Roberts was particularly intrigued by the ways in which the variety of existing perspectives were justified. 'For the Finns, the place would be essentially about nostalgia whereas for the local people it was located at the border. The paradox is that all the different perceptions do not meet, nor want to meet.'[269] Roberts stressed that we should be ready to question what kinds of images get to be reproduced and distributed. This is because recording is telling about defining what we want to remember, and what will become historically important. The second notion that Roberts brought forth was that *the architects are interested in restoring the building to its original condition*, namely that the issue is that of the library being perceived primarily through the professional lens, and in doing so the role of the building was emphasised beyond what ordinary local people might think of it. In his book *The Polemical Aalto*, Gareth Griffiths[270] stresses that in the criticism of buildings of merit, artistic privilege is typical of an aesthetic approach. This means that typically the internal function of the building does not get discussed, and in the most extreme case the building is 'indifferent' to its location. Roberts's project can thus be interpreted as a reaction against underlining the role of one person as the primary 'author' of the artwork/building, and also that material objects would primarily tell of the time when they were first created, as examples of their period. Third, Roberts was intrigued by how the building 'responds' to art. This is art understood in terms of continuity in contrast to the idea of art being about framed images, or objects exhibited in museums and galleries, in this sense petrified in time and place. What Roberts aimed to do was a *different type of restoration,* to get out of the frame and bring past and present together.[271]

It can thus be interpreted that Roberts's project had in fact multiple goals. It was to challenge the idea of an oeuvre, the role of a single artist, confined to a place or time frame. Then, it was to make an intervention into what images had 'done' to the building. But perhaps most of all, this project aimed at challenging the dominating perspectives of history, and the library being typically presented

[268] Liisa Roberts, personal communication.

[269] Hannula, M. 2004, 51-64.

[270] Griffiths, G. 1997, 47-54. Griffiths refers to architect, professor Kimmo Lapintie in this connection.

[271] As Margaret Sundell (2004) so aptly puts it in her article discussing Roberts's project, it emerged in true Duchampian fashion, definitively unfinished.

Fig. 114-117. *In June 2015 the main facade was gleaming white, and the interiors had been restored close to the original appearance. (Photos: Kristo Vesikansa)*

from the perspective of professional architects. Thus, Roberts organised events as part of which it was possible to introduce different groups, such as the architects and young local people to each other, and to deliberately include the building in an art project where it was not treated as a piece of art. Perhaps the part which had the most direct causality was that Roberts made it possible for young local people to voice their views and experiences of what Vyborg and its library were about, giving them new pride about their home city.

For roughly two decades, from 1991 until 2010, the restoration was financed through three different channels and realised as small sub-projects. Funding from the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Cultural Commission of the Leningrad Oblast was managed by the Commission's Department of Architectural Monuments located in St Petersburg. The City of Vyborg also provided some funding. Last, the Restoration Committee raised funds from Finland and other 'western' countries for planning, research, documentation and specifically defined sub-projects. The committee also delivered plans and specifications, and inspected the works.[272] A moment which transformed the situation concerning the restoration, but also altered the way that the library was publicised came in 2010, when the Russian Federation allocated funds to complete the restoration. The project was completed in 2013, with the final work carried out in 2014.[273] Thus the total process of restoring the library as a cooperation between Finland and Russia took approximately a quarter of a century. Since then, news about the library has focused on publicising the merits of this restoration, and on international prizes.

In the 2000s the Restoration Committee, published two books concerning the project, the first in 2009 and the second in 2013. The first one introduces the background, including the design stages leading to the realised building, the restoration principles and efforts to realise the work. The second book describes the completed restoration. Together, these publications offer an unrivalled account of the restoration, documented and described by persons who had been involved with the project for several years. However, Olli-Paavo Koponen, Professor of History of Architecture at Tampere University of Technology once pointed out in a discussion about these restoration books: 'But where is everything that remains in between the lines?'[274] The following aims to offer a small contribution towards

[272] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 46. The restoration consisted of altogether 11 sub-projects before funding was received in 2010, which made it possible to complete the work. For the main events of the restoration process, see Appendix 9.

[273] Afterwards, a most unfortunate problem has risen, as the building was taken into use before the final inspection. Bills from the restoration company responsible of executing the work remain unpaid. Kirsti Reskalenko, personal communication.

[274] Olli-Paavo Koponen, personal communication.

this lack of information, and also serves as a conclusion to this fourth thematic chapter.

The restoration in between the lines

'Theoretically, the restoration of a modernist building does not differ from the restoration of a historical monument, but in practice, it differs quite a lot'[275]

After Elissa Aalto's death in 1994, Tapani Mustonen who came to be the person who continued to work on the restoration until its completion. He recalls: 'It was in 1991, we were eating in the taverna [at Aalto's office designed by him, there is a small dining room and kitchen, referred to as 'taverna'], when Elissa dashed in. She was coming from the Ministry of the Environment, and said that Magnus Malmberg's engineering office is involved, and the Ministry is hiring us to see what the condition of the library is.' But it was just before midsummer, and everyone from Aalto and Co. was away travelling, canoeing, or unable to make a trip to Vyborg at such short notice.' Hence, Tapani was asked to go. He had been planning to go sailing with his brothers, but instead, came up with the idea that it might be possible to sail from Sunila at Kotka, from where they had intended to leave and take a complete different route from there to Vyborg. 'I called my brothers. To east from Sunila. Everyone was all excited. A great adventure.' They spent two days in Vyborg, with Kravchenko as their guide.

Although Mustonen would have two decades worth of information about the restoration project, two recollections are very indicative of the aspects that 'remained between the lines'. First is the separate project to get new parquet flooring for the lecture hall. To make it possible to import the flooring material a 'tourist trip' was organised for The Friends of Viipuri Library association. Each participant thus had 25 kilograms of parquet flooring material as their 'luggage'. This made it possible to bring across the border more expensive materials without paying additional duties from the scarce restoration funds. It was still necessary to get the rest of the flooring to Vyborg 'the normal way'. However, the delivery had been lost. It had gone to Narva in Estonia instead. When the materials arrived, there was a great rush. 'I and the library's plumber worked for two or three weekends, nights too, nailing down the parquet floor'. The second recollection is about cooperation between the two countries. At times, it was difficult to get materials, for example the specially made lamp fittings brought from Finland. At the customs, it was always enquired whether Mustonen was importing anything valuable. For this purpose, he had a photo album, to show images of the library, and explain what the materials and tools in his car were for. Once the customs officer told him

[275] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 50.

that he was an ordinary visitor to the library, and was intrigued to see what the building had looked like in the 1930s. They then opened the back of Mustonen's car again , and the customs officer asked, 'These are not valuable?', to which they had both agreed 'No, not valuable'. Upon enquiring from Tapani Mustonen whether there are any lessons to be learnt from Viipuri, something that might be more generally applicable, he replied: 'At least doing bit-by-bit. Too much good stuff gets thrown out with the dirty water when everything is done at once. This applies to all planning, building, realising things. Doing small things makes it possible to learn [during a project]. And, it should be made sure that someone continues to care for the building when the contractor's responsibility ends, otherwise the deterioration begins all over again. This is a real 'killer''.[276]

Another person whose individual role cannot be ignored is that of architect Maija Kairamo, the secretary general of the Restoration Committee. Her contribution might be more hidden, but it was she who spent several years, from 1997 until the completion of the work promoting the cause of the restoration and acquiring funding. In fact, what can also be seen as the culmination of her role is not generally known. It was Kairamo who had written to the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, who then took up the issue of the library at the meeting with the Prime Minister of Russia, Vladimir Putin, in 2010. As Mustonen has noted, if it had not been for Maija Kairamo, the restoration would more than likely remained uncompleted.[277]

A separate theme which emerges in number of writings and commentaries concerning the restoration of the library are the attitudes towards restoring modern architecture, and what might be the differences between Finland and Russia. In the *Finnish Architectural Review*, Mustonen described matter: '[T]here are crucial differences in the whole idea of restoration.'[278] For example, for the Russians it did not seem to matter that much what kind of materials were used. Accordingly, covering a floor, or painting a wall would be more a question of how many square metres needed to be done, rather than worrying about what materials were used. For example, for the newspaper room, the Restoration Committee found linoleum that resembled the original flooring as closely as possible. However, the Russian company doing the restoration work used a completely different type specified for private spaces. The director of the restoration company agreed, and the room was redone with no extra charge. In a similar vein, Professor emerita Riitta Nikula, has pointed out that it was 'the Russians who for example proposed that replicas should be made of the original cast iron radiators, as Finns could

[276] Tapani Mustonen, personal communication.

[277] Ibid.

[278] *Finnish Architectural Review* 2/2014, 27-35.

afford to do this'.[279] The interpretation was that replica was the most 'authentic' way to restore. This is backed up by Kravchenko's reference to the Convention of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection (UNESCO PARIS 1975), based on which he concluded that from a scientific point of view a monument is considered 'as a historical art document' with the aim of such restoration being an exact and authentic reproduction of all of the building elements, hence reconstructing its original essence.'[280] This goes to the extent of the immediate landscape, and what had remained unrealised design ideas. Namely, Kravchenko even maintained that '[i]t is also important to create the pond as suggested in one version by Aalto.'[281]

Fig. 118. *In 2009 architect Tapani Mustonen gave a talk about the restoration process on the roof of the library. (Photo by the author)*

In contrast, what the Restoration Committee seems to have stressed was to keep the existing mistakes when possible. For example, the large glass wall giving light to the entrance hall was not entirely symmetrical. Mustonen proposed that instead of making everything straight, the new wooden frames were to be made to the old measurements. This was done, regardless of the fact that Kravchenko would have preferred to straighten the window. Integrity of the measurements is in fact an aspect for which the Finnish architects have expressed their concern numerable times. This is exemplified also in the lecture hall's window, where three layers of bricks had been added to the bottom. The reason had been lack of large enough glass panels during the Soviet restoration. When this window, through which the undulating ceiling is visible was returned to its original dimensions, Maija Kairamo commented on this saying: 'A building is very sensitive.' In contrast, while the

[279] Riitta Nikula, personal communication.

[280] Spens, M. 1994, 79.

[281] Ibid. 80-81.

aim was to furnish the building with the original Artek furniture, there are also, for example, new desks in the newspaper room, and other visible aspects which make it evident that the building is a present-day library. As follows, the interior furnishings stand out as something on the surface, towards which the attitudes are more practical. According to Vezio Nava, it was avoided to recreate things which would have been only 'a replica of the old'.[282] However, an exception to this is the reproduction of the basket for the book wrappers, although the original purpose that the basket served in the 1930s seems to have been lost in history.

Finally, an aspect which cannot be left unmentioned is that the restoration of this building brings together numerous aspects which stand out as contradictions in terms. The Restoration Committee stressed that here the original architecture plays a very significant role because the memory of the original has not faded away. There are approximately 350 sketches and drawings, specifications, items of correspondence between the architect and the contractor as well as working models and material samples, photos, texts and even films remaining. Simultaneously, Alvar Aalto is known about his flexibility, making alterations on site, for instance sketching the final details on a cigarette box. Therefore, there also remain outstanding gaps in the documentation. Nevertheless, the 'aim of the restoration of the Viipuri Library is to restore the essential features of Aalto's architecture'.[283] Furthermore, it could be perceived to be inherently contradictory to preserve an 'experiment', modern building technologies and materials such as concrete, which are not easy to conserve. The implication is that the deteriorated materials such as concrete, need to be replaced completely and not just patched up. Finally, this process took place between two different cultures, Finnish and Russian. This is evident in social, technical and legislative views, the issues concerning acquiring of funding within the conditions of two different economies, while there was also the prevailing complexity in using three different languages - Finnish, Russian and English in the process.[284] All these points have been articulated by the Restoration Committee. Regardless of all the obstacles which might very well have deterred the entire project, or simply given grounds to halt it altogether, the restoration was successfully completed.

Tommi Lindh, the Director of the Aalto Foundation, concluded the following about the project: 'What began as a salvage project has turned into a broader cultural process as it became evident how important the building is for the city of Vyborg. There is the internet, it is a democratic institution. Also, the staff is well educated, and they have visited libraries in Finland, and they find it important to develop the library into a modern, functioning library. This restoration

[282] Vezio Nava, personal communication.

[283] Adlercreutz, E. et al. 2009, 50.

[284] Ibid. 51-52.

project is a pilot project, the building is a prototype of functionalism as well as with regard to many architectural details that Aalto used later in his other works. It is also an example that is used in teaching architecture around the world, and accordingly, people interested in architecture visit the building. Thus, in comparison with other buildings in Vyborg, it clearly represents the one that has potential for international interest.'[285] Thus, the restoration has come to be presented as a project bringing together the global and local importance of this building.

Vezio Nava, an Italian architect who worked in Aalto's office from 1961 to 1984, has reflected on Aalto's attitudes towards designing buildings. Nava has pondered what Aalto might have thought about all the discussions concerning the restoration problems of the library, and offers a fitting epilogue to the fourth thematic chapter. 'I have never seen Aalto to take a strict stand, when a mistake has been made at a construction site… Aalto used to say a house is not a clock, and therefore a small mistake cannot be particularly important or affect the completed work. The case is almost to the contrary, *errare humanum est,* and that is why one should make the best of the situation and take up the challenge. In fact, he managed to turn mistakes into architectural motifs, and it would be possible to make a long list of interesting details, which have been created because of a mistake on the site. If the result was still amiss, he would say playfully – though with some seriousness – that the whole situation can be salvaged by letting some vines grow on the façade. If a building was 80–90 % successful, he said, that is enough and a good result… These attitudes added to the humanity of his buildings. Why have I wanted to recall characteristics of Aalto's thinking in this context? Because I believe that when we speak of the restoration problems of the Viipuri Library, we should well take into account Alvar Aalto's thoughts and the spirit of his thinking, present in all his works: an untheoretical attitude, going against the rules, flexibility, accepting discrepancies and not hiding them, anarchy, but also common sense and pragmatism which is visible in his architectural solutions. I forgot to mention Alvar Aalto's sense of humour, and I can in fact imagine him smiling on the edge of a cloud, hearing us speak of the problems of restoration.'[286]

[285] Adlercreutz et al. 2015, 14.

[286] Nava, V. 1996.

Part III

The Library as a Distributed Object

A Gellian reading

Having presented the chronological 'genealogy' of the Viipuri Library through focus on core materials, this chapter returns to the 'Gellian theory', which he outlines in his book *Art and Agency An Anthropological Theory* (1998).

To start with, it is relevant to stress that the 'reading' offered here represents one approach to this complex theoretical framework. Gell builds on a variety of examples and concepts from fields such as history, anthropology and art history. As follows, it would not be possible to exhaustively explain, or 'use up', Gell's theoretical perspective within the frame of any single study. My reading, therefore, does not claim to be conclusive, but rather an opening. Like Gell describes his theory, also this research represents 'unfinished business',[1] a springboard for further research.

The contribution I aim to offer is to test how Gell's theory can be used as an architectural theory. I suggest that the theoretical framework introduced by Gell is particularly fitting because by this stage, it is obvious that the life of the Viipuri Library contains events of very different size and kind, and it is necessary to find terms with which to articulate 'what is going on here', and to analyse the phenomenon of very different ideas having become associated with this building during its existence. A further reason why I feel Gell's theory is particularly appropriate is grounded in the fact that he built it closely reflecting on art-historical perspectives, and with use of these, outlined a more 'human-centred' theory of art. In doing so, the focus is on what physical objects 'do' as part of social relations in contrast to what they 'mean'. My interest in this is in the notion of 'doing', which turns attention to the passing of time and how the role of the library changed in the sequence of different events. An additional reason for finding Gell's theory particularly fruitful is that as a discipline, the history of architecture has close kinship with the history of art. Buildings and the built environment alike are in many ways 'artistic creations', but what I propose Gell's theory offers, are ways to better tackle aspects where the built environment, such as the library, elude the limits of being interpreted as solely art.

As described in the introduction, Gell is known in the field of anthropology through several of his works. However, while *Art and Agency* is typically known by students of anthropology, it is more rarely that even anthropologists would have engaged with it beyond the best-known selected chapters.[2] A convincing explanation why this theory has not been taken up by researchers more widely, can be found in Nicholas Thomas's introduction, where Gell's book is described

[1] Gell, A.1998, 80; Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2015, 3.

[2] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2015, 2.

as 'demanding'.[3] Later, Chua and Elliot have described Gell's work as 'fiendishly difficult and captivatingly clever'.[4] The situation remains that the existing corpus of literature is dispersed, and it appears that most often different scholars have opted for selecting one or a few of Gell's terms rather than engaging with the theory more extensively.[5]

The seminal works where Gell's work has been taken into use thus far are *Beyond Aesthetics*[6] and a later volume, *Art's Agency and Art History*[7] which speaks more closely about the implications of Gell's theory for art historians. Also, *Distributed Objects Meaning and Mattering after Alfred Gell* edited by Liana Chua and Mark Elliott introduces applications of Gell's theory in fields such as archaeology, musicology and literary studies. Chua's and Elliot's volume was motivated by the recognition that regardless of the cross-disciplinary reach of Gell's book, there had not been a consciously interdisciplinary forum engaging with Gell's work. For my research, this volume in particular has been useful for reflecting on the use of this theory in an interdisciplinary way.

However, to my knowledge, Gell's theory has not been thus far tried out for analysing a case of architecture in more depth. Nevertheless, among the examples that Gell offers is the often quoted case of the Maori House, as an example of a cultural typology where each of the individual buildings 'represent' the same building. And as has been noted, I maintain that Gell offers a perfect theory for analysing a case of architecture for multiple reasons. Having outlined the nitty-gritty details of which the life of the Viipuri Library can be understood to consist, I propose that it becomes most evident that the library is an example of an 'art-like' object, which simultaneously has a recognisably complex life beyond being appreciated as art. Namely, it was designed by an architect who is perceived as its main auteur; the creation of this building is typically presented as a design process; and the building's importance is inherently associated with its role with other buildings bearing a stylistic resemblance with it. Yet, from the very beginning, it has seemed that this library makes it possible to articulate notions beyond the physical structure. For example, the library made it possible for all the different competing libraries to become united in this one building, and as

[3] Thomas, N. 1998, xiii.

[4] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2015, 2.

[5] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. 2015, 3.

[6] An anthropological conference held in Canberra in 1998 marks a first step in exploring the potentials of Gell's work. The contributions of this conference were subsequently collected in *Beyond Aesthetics.* Pinney, C. and Thomas, N. (eds.) 2001.

[7] Outside anthropology, the 2000 Theoretical Archaeology Group meeting, followed by a 2003 conference, and later the volume *Art's Agency and Art History* (2007), have developed implications of Gell's theory for art historians. Chua, L. and Elliot, M. (eds.) 2015, 3.

part of finding an appropriate site, the library in a sense served as a tool for thinking about the envisioned future cityscape of Viipuri, and potential sites for other public buildings. What I however argue is that the library is not only some kind of vehicle for meanings, but it is consequential as a physical entity. In other words, *it has had an actual role as part of different events, inducing different kinds of interpretations, and even causing things to happen.* I argue it is this way, the library can be recognised as having 'agency'.

This further refers back to why I originally came to the conclusion that the Viipuri Library makes an interesting case to study, as this building stood out as an object which I had come across in curiously different types of contexts. To recapitulate, the questions that this research set out to provide answers for, are 1) what exactly are the contexts in which the Viipuri Library has been presented as a building of importance and 2) what, if anything, is special about this particular library that it appears to have a kind of 'capacity' to bring together different perspectives? Thus far, the four thematic chapters focused on the main clusters of materials, with the aim to bring to view the less-known history behind the canonised fame of this building. It is specifically the second research question, for which Gell's theory stands out as helpful. First, for finding terminology to articulate more complex notions associated with the 'capacity' of this building to accumulate different meanings at this one place. In this sense, Gell's theory provides 'tools for thinking'. Second, the theory makes it possible to take the case of the Viipuri Library to a more generally applicable level, and outline notions of *how buildings – as a type of art – can be perceived to have agency as part of social processes,* making it possible to review critically what might be special about the case of this library.

Gell's key notion is that material objects such as buildings can be understood to have 'agency' as part of social relations. Specifically, Gell is interested in *objects which are perceived to be particularly meaningful.* An exemplary category of these kinds of objects are works of art. The point Gell, however, makes is that traditional art theories have been formulated for analysing Western artworks, such as paintings. His critique is thus aimed at the fact that framed this way, significant part of art-like-objects become excluded. This is because most non-Western art is created from the beginning to serve a purpose, to be used in a particular context, rather than to be displayed in a gallery or a museum. In his theory, Gell outlines the core idea that material objects can be understood to have agency as part of a *social-relational-matrix*. Notably, he however stresses that this is not to say material objects would be the same as persons: human agency and agency of material objects are recognisably different.

For his anthropological theory of art, Gell outlines that 'doing' is theorised as agency, as a process involving indexes and effects; the anthropology of art is constructed as a theory of agency, or of the mediation of agency by *indexes,*

understood simply as material entities which motivate inferences, responses or interpretations.[8] In other words, it is quite easy to think of examples where buildings, in this case the Viipuri Library, have motivated inferences, responses or interpretations during their existence. I argue the library is a material entity of this type, in Gell's term, an *index*.

There are three notions in Gell's theory which I propose are focal. **First**, he formulates a theory of agency for the material world. **Second**, agency is defined as something which happens 'in relation'. In other words, agency is not something abstract, but it always takes place in a context, in between things, whether material objects or persons. **Third**, my interpretation is that Gell sets out to offer a theory for art objects primarily because he is intrigued by the idea that certain objects are understood to motivate inferences, responses or interpretations more than others. To give an example, the way we react to seeing, for example, a pair of scissors is very different from our responses and interpretations when we are presented with a painting by Rembrandt. Thus, the point to be stressed is that *some material objects are more meaningful than others*. This is a seminal reason why I found Gell's theory to speak to the case of the Viipuri Library: it stands out as an object which is particularly meaningful as part of Aalto's works, as an example of 'new architecture' and a building in Viipuri. Understood in this way, the library is a material object that has motivated highly different inferences, responses and interpretations, as evidenced in the four thematic chapters.

Thus, the question to be raised is what the Viipuri Library 'does' (in Gellian terms as an index) in the social-relational-matrix presented in the four thematic chapters. Furthermore, the aim of the following theoretical discussion is to suggest notions that could be applicable more widely, beyond the case of the library.

With knowledge of the contents of the thematic chapters, and Gell's main ideas being introduced earlier, it is possible to move directly to the task of contrasting Gell's theoretical approach to the case of the library. This chapter introduces altogether nine figures, five of them published in *Art and Agency,* as part of Gell's original outline of the theory, while four are my own versions, adjusted to the case of the library. The first of Gell's figures introduces the relationship between the four terms, and it is applicable as such. The rest of the figures are introduced as pairs, first Gell's original, followed by my version of it. The motivation for offering these figures is first that Gell's method is to illustrate his points with a great number of examples that he draws from a range of different disciplines. Here, the figures make it possible to introduce the relevant concepts, only alluding to some of the examples that Gell offers to explain his theoretical notions. Second, I suggest the diagrams offer a particularly useful way of framing complex issues that the case of the Viipuri Library has highlighted.

[8] Gell , A.1998, ix.

Gell's method of developing the theoretical frame is to continuously build on what he has said previously, adding to the web of theory he is developing. Thus, while the figures presented next mostly fit best with one or other of the thematic chapters presented in this work, the figures are all interconnected, and are best understood together. This is an additional reason for introducing the figures only at this point, instead of having integrated them with the thematic chapters. Last, thus far, Gell's theory has most often been used only with reference to one or two of his concepts. While also this work offers only one reading of Gell's complex theoretical framework, I propose that through the use of Gell's figures and testing them with the case of the library it is possible to introduce a broader reading of *Art and Agency.*

Art Nexus – relations between four basic terms

PATIENT \ AGENT	Artist	Index	Prototype	Recipient
Artist	Artist as source of creative act / Artist as witness to act of creation	Material inherently dictates to artist the form it assumes	Prototype controls artist's action, appearance of prototype imitated by artist. Realistic art.	Recipient cause of artist's action (as patron)
Index	Material stuff shaped by artist's agency and intention	Index as cause of itself: 'self-made' / Index as a 'made thing'	Prototype dictates the form taken by index	Recipient the cause of the origination and form taken by the index
Prototype	Appearance of prototype dictated by artist. Imaginative art	Image or actions of prototype controlled by means of index, a locus of power over prototype	Prototype as cause of index / Prototype affected by index	Recipient has power over the prototype. Volt sorcery.
Recipient	Recipient's response dictated by artist's skill, wit, magical powers, etc. Recipient captivated.	Index source of power over recipient. Recipient as 'spectator' submits to index.	Prototype has power over the recipient. Image of prototype used to control actions of recipient. Idolatry.	Recipient as patron / Recipient as spectator

Fig. 119. *The art nexus: The table of agent/patient Relations between Four Basic Terms. (Gell, A. 1998, 29)*

This first of the figures from Gell's *Art and Agency* is titled the *Art Nexus*. The reason for referencing this is threefold: Firstly to describe the notion that Gellian agency always happens 'in relation', second, that relationships change from event to event, and third, that agency indicates agency over something, and is thus a hierarchical relationship. In my reading of Gell, the over-encompassing notion is that *agency is qualitative in the sense that it is descriptive of a kind of relation.*

As buildings of importance are typically associated with an artist-like architect behind the design, the Viipuri Library as an early work of Aalto offers itself as a prime example of a Gellian 'art-like situation'. For explaining this type of situation, the *Art Nexus* is the basic framework through which Gell begins to develop the claim that *social relations only exist in so far as they are made manifest in actions*.[9] Gell defines the performers of social actions as 'agents' acting on 'patients' (which are social agents in the 'patient' position vis-a-vis an agent-in-action). Relations between social agents and patients, for the purposes of the anthropological theory of art, obtain between four 'terms' (entities which can be in relation).

> These are:
> *Indexes*: Material entities which motivate abductive inferences, cognitive interpretations etc.
> *Artists* (or other 'originators'): To whom are ascribed, by abduction, causal responsibility for the existence and characteristics of the index.
> *Recipients*: Those in relation to whom, by abduction, indexes are considered to exert agency, or who exert agency via the index.
> *Prototypes*: entities held, by abduction, to be represented in the index, often by virtue of visual resemblance, but not necessarily.[10]

According to Gell, this table is based on the premise that all four of the so far distinguished terms can be considered as social agents of different kinds, and, as such, are capable of being in the 'agent' or 'patient' position vis-à-vis one another, as well as in relation to themselves. The table above therefore opposes indexes, artists, prototypes and recipients as respectively 'agents' (horizontally, reading downwards) and as 'patients' (vertically, reading horizontally).[11] Where the four terms – index, artist, recipient and prototype – coexist we have, so to speak, the 'canonical' nexus of relations in the neighbourhood of art objects. Gell explains

[9] Ibid. 26. As pointed out earlier in introducing Gell's theory, he opposes the premise that material objects would have assigned meanings, or that thy would be language like 'signs'. In contrast, Gell is interested in how meanings change and transform in time.

[10] Gell, A. 1998, 26-27.

[11] Ibid. 28.

that the situations in which indexes of an art-like kind can form part of a nexus of social relations between agents are very diverse indeed. This is the purpose of the classification that he offers in the *Art Nexus* diagram, explaining that 'one convenient approach to the problem of classification is the construction of a table of combinations'. In other words, this is the framework for analysing the different positions that the entities can hold in an 'art-like situation', where some, or all the four terms can be present at once. In regard to the Viipuri Library, Gell's entities offer an appealing way to emphasise the change and dynamics that have characterised the existence of the library throughout its existence. A further reason why I find Gell's formulations fitting for analysing the library is that he points out that a theory of the kind he is developing consists primarily of a device for ordering and classifying the empirical materials with which it deals, rather than offering law-like generalisations or predictions therefrom.

In the case of the Viipuri Library, the building is most evidently the *index.* As an agent, it is the entity that induces different kinds of interpretations. For example, the library can be interpreted as exemplifying, i.e. an index of Aalto's work and his skills as an architect and, consequently, as a building that is captivating for many recipients. This way, the library 'abducts agency': it can be understood as exemplary or 'representative' of Aalto, and even modern architecture more widely.

The a*rtist* needs little explaining, as this would most evidently be Aalto. It is in the second chapter, 'the architect', where Aalto takes his place as the artist-agent. The artist can, however, be also another kind of originator, whereby it can be interpreted that other persons, too, can temporarily hold this position of an 'originator'.[12] Whereas Aalto had the main agency in the social-relational matrix of architecture, in other contexts, as for example in the first thematic chapter, Viipuri's city planning architect O.-I. Meurman has a significant role in negotiating the site issue of the library and in developing the cityscape of Viipuri. Or, in the early stages of the restoration Sergei Kravchenko was a person with a significant role in convincing others how the Library was to be restored, and actively took part in the actual physical restoration. Thus here Kravchenko can be analysed as having taken the position of an 'originator' artist-agent, influencing other persons as patient-recipients. The effect of analysing the changing roles this way, is that it is possible to focus on several persons having affected the library during the different events, beyond the evident agency of Aalto. As follows, Gell's interest in

[12] This recalls Michel Foucault's notions which he presented originally in a talk in 1969, titled 'What is an author?' Here he suggests that the name of an author is not precisely a proper name among others, but it is functional: it serves as a means of classification. Bouchard, D.F. 1977, 113-138. I would like to thank Renja Suominen-Kokkonen for pointing out the association with Foucault.

artistic agency is less in visionariness, and more in the skills and abilities, in what artists 'do'.[13]

The *recipients* are most evidently all those who have experienced, visited, or seen images, drawings and descriptions of the library during the different events. For example, the users of the library, the authors having written about it, or the Soviet actors needing to decide whether to change the appearance of the building or to restore it can be understood to have been in the position of recipient in regard to the library (as an index). It is noteworthy that in the case of each of the four terms the positions between any of the four entities being an agent/patient move and are never fixed. From the point of view of the library, it appears that in many points the recipient is almost balancing on the verge of whether to be an agent or of a patient. In other words, it can be debated whether the persons involved are influenced by the building, where the recipient as 'spectator' submits to index, as formulated in the diagram, or whether the recipient in fact takes part in shaping (e.g. restoring) the building, and therefore has agency over the building as patient-index. To give an example, the restorers of the library can be analysed as having been influenced and impressed by the building (recipients as patients to the agent–index), or almost simultaneously making significant decisions about the appearance of the building, affecting the 'form taken by the index' (recipients-agents exercising their agency on the index–patient), even challenging the prototype (what the library should index; modern architecture or something more appropriate to Soviet standards). The chain can be continued further to the artist. Thus, it can be asked, for example, whether Aalto the artist is in the patient or agent position in respect to what his role is taken to be in the later events, when the library (as an index) has been completed and other persons continue its reception. Perceived from this point of view, the recipients have agency when they make new interpretations simultaneously of the library and Aalto as the artist who designed the building.

Prototype, which could be defined as the 'underlying idea' is represented most evidently in the notions that the library is an example of Aalto's works, a key building of 'new-style architecture' and an important building in Viipuri. In other words, the library stands for an index for these larger, more abstract notions. However, ideally there would be tangible 'prototypical' examples which could be recognised to have served as an inspiration for the library. The case remains that for 'new architecture', Aalto has carefully avoided admitting to direct influences. The only building that Aalto admitted to knowing about was the Stockholm City Library. Similarly, the library has been offered later as an inspiration for subsequent library designs, but it is mostly selected details which would make it possible to deduce that the library could have served as the inspiration, the prototypical idea for the design of another building. Thus, as a term, the Gellian prototype appears most fitting for describing the more ephemeral types of notions associated with the library, rather than the relationship between specific examples. This will be followed up in discussing the following two figures.

[13] Gell's other works tell of the long development of associated ideas, most of all *The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology* is an article in which Gell analyses technological innovations.

To make the relationships between the four entities more complex, Gell introduces the idea that the same entity (artist, index, prototype, recipient) can appear more than once during the span of a single event. For example, the recipient can appear first as the 'patron' and next as the 'public'.[14] The point that the Viipuri Library does not yet exist for most of the first chapter as well as the second thematic chapter describing the design process, stresses particular positions in the diagram: for the most part, the recipients have power over the library as the index, and Aalto is not yet able to exert his agency as the artist (the site being under debate and the library as an index still unrealised), thus making both Aalto and the Viipuri Library patients in the first chapter. The local people, most of all the city officials[15] (the recipient-agents) have the library question on their hands: that it gets realised and where it is to be built. What I suggest is that the first chapter, the events preceding the creation of the library are characterised by the presence of several prototypical ideas, by projects looking to the future, for example the notions to create a 'heart of the city' and more concretely the competition for the monumental square. All in all, this is the time period which comes to represent in retrospect the 'prototypical Viipuri' in the minds of Finns. It is also in this way that the notion of prototype becomes more interesting. As the very term suggests, a prototype is something which is of importance only later, when it is possible to look back to something as an early or first version. In sum, I propose that the case of the Viipuri Library illustrates that certain stages of 'art-like events' are likely to tip the balance toward one or some of the four entities, thus distributing their agency unevenly.

In the introduction of this work were outlined three contexts, where the library appears to be of special importance. Here I further suggest that each of the contexts – the context of history, the context of architecture and at least to some extent the library context – can be broken down to the four Gellian entities of agency: index, recipient, artist and prototype, as tools for articulating the con-

[14] Gell offers complex tree diagrams illustrating the sequence of different positions. Gell, A. 1998, 59.

[15] Admittedly, if we agree that other 'creators' beyond Aalto can be in the position of artist, recipient as agent can come very close to the position of an artist. However, following Gell's formulations, I would follow the definition of artist agency being primarily defined by the notion that the artist is the 'creator', the recipient holding more indirect agency, as the 'cause of' artists' action etc.

tinued dynamic relationships. *Index* is easy to account for, as the whole argument hinges upon the presence of the library in all the different contexts: it is meaningful as part of history, architecture and the library context, whether in the position of index-agent or index-patient. Then, all the persons having been involved can be analysed to have taken the place of the *recipient* during the events described in the four chapters, either in the position of an agent or as a patient, whether their perspective is motivated by the historical, architectural or library context.

The *artist* position is most evidently relevant in the context of architecture, in which Aalto has an unsurpassed role both as a known architect, and through the library being understood as his seminal early work. In contrast, in the context of history and the library, the artist's role is certainly noted, but it is by no means as important as it is in the context of architecture. Each of the three contexts can also be recognised to be invested in its own 'underlying idea'; a *prototype.* In the library context, the motivating prototypical ideas are to create book collections, and soon later, to provide educated, literate citizens for the modern nation state of Finland, to be achieved by providing books and library spaces as democratic, inclusive spaces open for all the citizens to use. This perspective is established in the first thematic chapter. In the context of architecture, the prototypical ideas are Aalto's recognisable style, and his turn to the 'new architecture', for which the Viipuri Library becomes an index, as introduced in the second thematic chapter. The context of history is in a way more complicated, because from the point of view of Finland, this perspective is strongly motivated by the traumatic event of the loss of ceded Karelia to the Soviet Union in 1944. However, the context of history begins already from the first thematic chapter, as the point in time which is most often recollected is Viipuri of the 1920s and 1930s when the city grew significantly, and when also the library was built. Indeed, the perspectives focusing on history can be recognised to be motivated by three separate ideas: the Finnish-period city of Viipuri, World War II and since then, the concept of 'lost Karelia' which emerged as consequence of the war. Thus, while the 'context of history' is most of all established in the third thematic chapter describing the events during World War II, this perspective refers back to the first thematic chapter. In sum, in each thematic chapter the library is taken as telling of prototypical ideas that the building then comes to index.

Gell, however, mentions almost in passing that the four terms are also 'in relation to themselves'. What I propose in association with this, is that there is not only the changing relationship between artist - index - prototype - recipient, but it is more than possible that during one event, there is, for example, more than one artist exerting agency. Analysing a real-world case in detail, however shows that it is more than likely that these are not in equal relation. A most apt example is that we know also other persons participated in the library's design, most importantly Aino Aalto. All these persons are the 'artists' behind the library,

but the fact remains that it is typically only Alvar Aalto who is named. Nevertheless, in analysing the relationships between artist – index – prototype – recipient, Gell points out that positions can change. But as the task that Gell sets himself is to introduce the theoretical framework he is developing, he does not focus on explaining a particular case in length, or how it might change as time passes. In the case of the Viipuri Library, the role of *time* soon out an inherent part of how meanings change, and this is where the research at hand can recognisably contribute to testing Gell's theoretical framework.

As an example, the agency of the city officials dominates a large part of the first chapter, and consequently, the prototype associated with their interest becomes the strongest: in discussing the cityscape and the potential sites in Viipuri, they take the place of the primary prototype, directly affecting the final shape of the building. Here, other possible 'prototypical ideas', for example ones that the library specialists might have had in mind, become secondary.[16] Therefore, what I suggest is that in the first thematic chapter the recipient-agents (the city officials) induce primary agency for their respective prototype (the cityscape). The building's functionality as a library building/the library specialists have a significantly weaker recipient-agent position. Then, already in the design process of the library, Aalto as the artist has agency, as he gets to work on his designs largely unhindered by the library experts who are unable to impose any practical requirements for him as the artist to take into consideration. Indeed, the interpretation can be pushed further: It is credible to presume that the local librarians did not articulate their perspectives more forcibly because of concern that the library project could be postponed to the unforeseeable future, potentially even never becoming realised. Thus, as part of the social-relational matrix, the local librarians are in the patient position with regard to the cityscape. It can be interpreted this is due to the fact that the agency of the city officials is 'primary', the librarians only 'secondary', and consequently, it is the city officials interest in the cityscape, which came to dominate the discussions. As such, there is nothing very remarkable in strong agent being able to promote their own interest. The reason why this relationship is interesting to me, is that both the city officials and the local librarians direct their interest in the library building, which stands as the index for their prototypical underlying ideas. In sum, I assert that the consequence is that the four terms, index, artist, prototype and recipient, have an effect on each other. In other words, for example the city officials take the position of the artist

[16] Gell discusses 'The logic of 'primary' and 'secondary' agents and patients'. However, he describes how the artist and patron/prototype can quite easily be understood as exercising 'primary agency' whereas in the case of an artist painting an apple, the artist's agency is primary, the prototype's secondary because, understood as a subject of presentation, it will convey secondary agency (1998, 36-38). Thus, my interpretation somewhat differs from that of Gell's, which results from my analysis drawing from one and the same example.

(creator) in the first chapter, and consequently, it is *their* prototypical idea (the cityscape), which has agency over other simultaneously existing ideas, such as the library institution.

As has been pointed out, the positions of agent/patient illustrate that the relations in a social-relational-matrix are hierarchical. The overall reason why I regard Gell's *Art Nexus* table a useful tool for thinking, is that the Gellian entities of index – artist – recipient – prototype make it possible to articulate the qualitative changes between different events: that agency is always of a certain *kind.*

In sum, each of the four thematic chapters of this research; the city, the architect, the lost library and the restoration, reveal of how different perspectives have dominated at different points in time, and how the issues associated with the library have changed. First, the library is essentially imagined as a public building for the future cityscape of Viipuri, but when Aalto the artist comes to dominate the story in the second thematic chapter, other aspects gain emphasis and the location of Viipuri as the prototype becomes less important. In turn, the beginning of the World War II represents a transformation which made it necessary to re-interpret the area and the city as prototypes, and consequently, the library as an index. In the fourth thematic chapter discussing the perspectives concerning the restoration, I propose that the point of interest is that the different recipients are forced to re-consider, and articulate to others their views concerning Aalto, Viipuri and the geopolitical location. Most notably, when it becomes necessary to offer explanations for why this library is important, it is these prototypical notions which different persons offer as issues that define the library.[17] In art terms, the prototypical notions evidence of the past of the library, and give it 'provenance'. Explicitly, I view it most unlikely that the library would have achieved the role it has, if it had not been part of the dramatic historical events and the different, even discrepant, perspectives associated with this particular building.

This overview will suffice to introduce the main ideas and the ways how the terms artist – index – prototype – recipient can be taken into use to analyse a specific case such as the library, as for the purposes of this research it would be neither viable nor useful to go through all the possible positions of how the different 'events' could be read through the four entities in relation to each other, changing between positions of agent and patient. The points I want to keep for the following discussion are firstly, that for anything to have agency, it needs to have agency *in relation* to something else - which is in the position of a patient. Secondly, Gellian agency is never fixed but in the *Art Nexus* table, the crossing

[17] As noted, Aalto described in his original account from 1935 that the changing site had a significant effect on his design: the site thus stands out as prototype which dictated the final form taken by the library (index). However, in most architectural publications, if the changing site is is mentioned in passing, if at all.

points of artist – index – prototype – recipient are essentially descriptive: telling of change between certain *kinds* of agent/patient positions.

As is applicable to each of the tables, it is useful to flip the coin and ask what the case of the Viipuri Library might add to or reveal about Gell's theoretical frame. It was already suggested that this case study reveals how artist, index, prototype and recipient are likely to affect each other, and form pairs, for example artist (creator) and prototype having together primary agency over other potential perspectives. Something which stands out is that Gell does not really discuss the material (art) object before it is created or even the creative process itself, themes which the first and to a large extent the second thematic chapters of this research are all about. The most obvious reason is that Gell offers clearly delineated examples to illustrate his theory, and in doing so, any explanatory background of the cases is left out. I suggest that this supports the need to test Gell's theory with a detailed case study as this one. While the *Art Nexus* table was applicable as such, for the following figures I offer my adjusted versions to make them fit the case of the Viipuri Library better. Therefore, while I regard that there is good reason for Gell's theoretical frame to have been formulated as it is to be general enough to be applicable for different types of studies, the contribution I seek to offer is to test what happens when one does not start from the theory, but the other way round, i.e. how reading Gell's theory through the lens of a specific case might potentially add to or alter the theory.

Aalto's oeuvre as a distributed object

There are two figures in Gell's theoretical frame which speak most of all to the Viipuri Library's role in the context of architecture. The first of these figures illustrates *The artist's oeuvre as a distributed object* (Fig. 120). Here, 'artist's oeuvre' refers to all the works by an individual artist from the beginning to the end of his or her career. This is helpful for thinking about the library in association with other buildings by Aalto. The other figure, is titled *The Maori meeting house as an object distributed in space and time* (Fig. 122, to be discussed separately) introduces the idea that a physical object, in Gell's

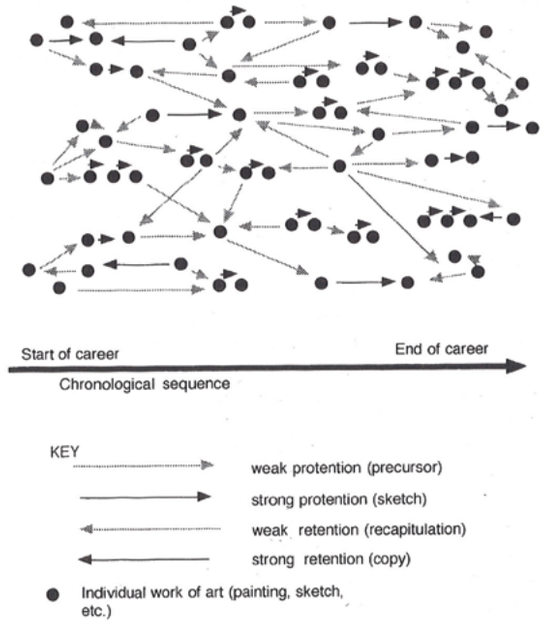


Fig. 120. *The artist's oeuvre as a distributed object. (Gell, A. 1998, 235)*

example the Maori meeting house as a representative of a building type, can be understood to be 'distributed' in space and time. This figure makes it possible to analyse how references have been made between the library and buildings by other architects. The notion that unites these figures is that *both* the works of a single artist and a category of buildings by different architects can be recognised to form one 'object' and belong to a set, i.e. to be 'distributed'. In both cases, the 'set of objects' is created through comparison: it is by virtue of resemblance that the library has been compared with other buildings. Thus, the point of interest is that in considering the works of Aalto as an oeuvre, or the vast number of other buildings with which the Viipuri Library has been associated, the scale of these comparison points is very different. Nevertheless, the underlying logic is the same: it is by virtue of resemblance that these categories are created. In the case of the library, I suggest that these two figures offer useful tools for considering how it is known and consequential beyond the actual physical structure located in the city of Viipuri/Vyborg.

The key term, which is important throughout Gell's theoretical frame is the concept of '*distributed object*', the idea that something can be simultaneously be perceived to be an entity while consisting of independent parts. Gell thus explains: 'all the works of Rembrandt could be considered, not a collection of separate objects, but *one* object with many parts distributed in many different places. A single object which is a set of subordinate objects is not hard to imagine; a twelve-piece dinner set is one such object, a chess-set another.'[18] In analysing an artist's oeuvre in this manner, Gell is in fact speaking of the extensive and abstract question of how we as humans can perceive objects to form categories, and this applies to everything, not just analysing art. The answer the Gell offers is that there need to be certain characteristics by which we recognise something to belong to a particular group of items. In Gell's terms, these criteria are 'invariant under transformation'. He thus concludes: 'What is "invariant under transformation" is what links any one Rembrandt work to all the others, but unless we can see what these invariants of structure are, we are not seeing this, particular Rembrandt, "as a Rembrandt", that is, as a component of an oeuvre. According to Gell, an 'educated perception' of a Rembrandt amounts to nothing else, because stylistic perception is the perpetual mode with which we deal with multiple or distributed objects of this kind. Gell goes as far as to conclude that in fact, stylistic theory is just an extension of the theory of perception itself.'[19]

[18] Ibid. 167.

[19] Ibid. This is also telling of why the main criticism aimed at Gell's theory has been aimed at his overly loose view of art.

A further term that Gell uses to describe this, is *synecdoche.* This refers to the notion that any part can be taken to 'stand for' the whole of which it is a part.[20] Gell suggests that synecdoche is a useful metaphor for thinking about the category of 'style'. He thus states: 'Style in art is like this in the sense that from one item in the corpus (or a selection of them) it is possible to construct the others to at least some degree. Of course, one does not know which features of a given object are the stylistically significant or informative ones except with reference to the corpus as a whole, so the analogy is inexact. Each object, seen in the light of all the others in its corpus, appears as a microcosm of the corpus because our perception of it is informed by our knowledge of the macrocosm it is a fragment of.'[21] Gell explains that style analysis looks for the 'structural invariants under transformation' which define objects of a higher hierarchical order than just the isolated object, such as a pair of scissors.

From the point of view of the case of the Viipuri Library, Figure 121 points to its role as an important early work by Aalto, a definitive design with many details which he used and developed in a number of other buildings. As follows, it should thus be possible to position all of Aalto's works position in this type of figure, illustrating the time when they were created, and their proximity or distance in rela-

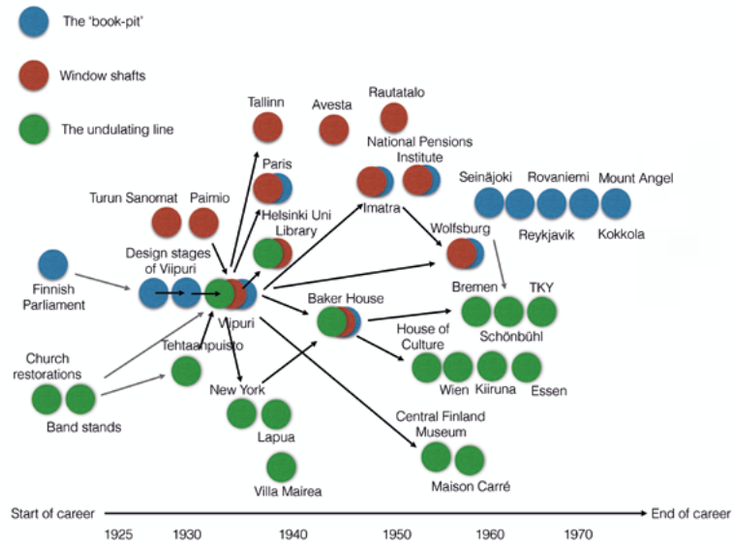


Fig. 121. *The library as a work of Aalto – an adjusted version of Gell's diagram 'The artist's oeuvre as a distributed object'. (By the author)*

[20] Ibid. 65-168. Part of the chapter is titled 'Synecdoche: Axes of Coherence in Stylistic Unities'

[21] Ibid. 166.

tion to all the other individual works. Gell sums up that 'the point of this diagram is simply to communicate the idea that we can imagine the artist's oeuvre, at the macro-scale, as one indivisible work, consisting of many physical indexes (works) but amounting to a single temporal entity, like a persistent thunderstorm which is made up of many quasi-instantaneous flashes of lightning.'[22] What I argue is that presented as a seminal early work, as a kind of key to Aalto's later works, the Viipuri Library has a more important role as a seminal index within Aalto's oeuvre.

The above figure is my version of Gell's figure *The artist's oeuvre as a distributed object,* adjusted for the case of the Viipuri Library. As can be seen, other indexes – works by Aalto – are positioned here in relation to the library. In order to illustrate my point, I have broken down the architectural themes discussed in the second chapter into more tangible design solutions. Here, the more exact design solutions, which can be found in a number of Aalto's buildings are the light shafts, the undulating (free form) line and the so-called 'book-pit'.[23] To add, the precise appearance of these solutions varies in the different buildings, nevertheless still remaining as recognisable developments of the same architectural theme. They are thus examples of 'invariants under transformation', requiring educated perception.

There are both previous and later works with which the Viipuri Library can be associated as bearing a resemblance. This figure exaggerates the position of the library, as the point is to make visible other examples with which it can be compared, and as I have argued, not all of Aalto's works are equally important as the Viipuri Library. In any case, many of his previous works can be seen in relation to the library as *protentions*, and as the library has a position as a seminal early work, a number of the works designed after it have the position of *retentions*, i.e. containing details which can be recognised as paying homage to the library. As examples of protentions, Aalto had been working on particular ideas earlier which can be interpreted as preliminary ideas making their appearance in the library. The restorations of wooden churches and the singing stages that Aalto had been working on before the library project are good examples of Gellian 'weak protention' (precursor). In other words, the association with the library is weaker than that of a sketch for it, while they can still be understood as precursory projects where Aalto was developing ideas or potential 'inspirations' which became relevant in the design process of the library.

[22] Ibid. 235-236.

[23] Admittedly, these solutions could be argued to have so many later versions, that the direct association with the library is debatable. The reason why I nevertheless claim that analysing the library as an important building with regard to these other versions stems precisely from its being an early work, with the recognisable presence of a number of these themes which later come to be recognised as representative of Aalto's designs, exploited in 'Aaltoesque' solutions by other architects later on.

As follows, for the other possible relationships of strong protention (sketch), the most evident example can be found from the library's actual design process, where the earlier sketches and versions produced for the same project can be analysed as developments leading to the final, realised building. Weak retentions can be recognised in a large number of Aalto's later buildings, where a particular detail or design idea reminiscent of the library reappears or is developed in a later building. In the Viipuri Library, Aalto used the conical light shafts across the entire ceiling to provide even light for the first time. More extensively, the use of light in Aalto's architecture represents a theme that he continued to vary to such extent, for example in different shapes of openings in the ceilings, that the relationship with the library as the potential original reference point becomes in many cases an extremely weak retention. The undulating line, which in the library is associated with acoustics, offers the best example of Aalto as the 'artist-architect' as he continues to modify this single theme into a vast range of functions and scales, from the Baker House's undulating façade to the New York World's Fair pavilion's undulating interior wall all the way to distant, weak retentions such as the undulating shape of the Savoy vase. Analysed as the use of terraced interior (different height floor in one space), the so-called 'book pit' can be regarded as a representative of a spatial theme, which Aalto also developed in a large number of his later buildings.[24]

To sum up the commentary on the alternative versions of Gell's figure *the artist's oeuvre as a distributed object* (Fig.120), I propose the main contribution for testing the figure in the case of the library is that thinking of specific design solutions illustrate on the one hand how Aalto developed different types of themes simultaneously, while on the other hand, these design solutions underscore the close relationship between particular buildings. Thus, I assert that it is more than likely that closer analysis of any known architect's oeuvre would be closer to my version of Gell's diagram, emphasising the point that it is likely for the works to form these types of clusters rather than being distributed evenly across the artist's career. Consequently, certain works, such as the Viipuri Library, stand out as a particularly strong protention for later works, which would then be strong retentions (not quite copies but containing recognisable themes associating back to the preceding work).

[24] In Gell's figure, the Viipuri Library could be recognised to be the dark dot in the middle, in the start of the career of the chronological sequence, while the other two black dots chronologically close to it would be the Paimio Sanatorium and the Turun Sanomat newspaper building. These are projects, which have been regarded to be similarly indicative of Aalto's turn towards functionalism. Especially in the case of the Paimio Sanatorium, the project overlaps with that of the library and the exact chronological order of Aalto's ideas is not clear, thus blurring the protention/retention relationship.

The Viipuri Library as an object distributed in space and time

Here, it is relevant to recall that Gell's goal is to make a point beyond presenting an artist's works in the form of a figure. A theme that Gell develops throughout his theoretical framework is the relationship between space and time, more specifically, taking both into account in his analysis. Thus, it is not enough to analyse artworks as spatial creations, and instead Gell continues to argue that 'the artist's oeuvre is an object which, so to speak, is '*made out of time*'. [25] In this way, the separate works of art can be taken as a set of indexes from which the artist's personhood and agency can be *abducted*. To put it differently, this refers to the notion that the library can be understood to 'represent'; stand as an index for Aalto and his skills as the artist. It is also worth noting that there is nothing very mystical in the ideas that Gell introduces. Instead, he explains: 'The ideas of "representing" (like a picture) and "representing" (like an ambassador) are distinct, but nonetheless linked. An ambassador is a spatio-temporally detached fragment of his nation, who travels abroad and with whom foreigners can speak, "as if" they were speaking to his national government. Although ambassadors are real persons, they are also "fictions", like pictures, and their embassies are fictional mini-stages within the state; just as pictures show us landscapes and personages who are "not really there". Although the Chinese ambassador in London does not look like China, or the Chinese government or people, he does have to be visible, and he does visibly represent China on official occasions. He does not look like China, but in London, China looks like him.'[26] This is what Gell calls 'the effect of motivating the abduction of agency on the basis of equation'.[27] In other words, the library can be described as 'representing' Aalto in a way analogous way to that of an ambassador 'representing' his or her nation. This is how the library 'abducts agency' from Aalto: to persons who encounter the building, it is a 'representative' of Aalto (the person) and a representative example of his works (other buildings that an educated recipient recognises as works of Aalto).

[25] Gell, A. 1998, 235-236.

[26] Ibid. 98. Original italics underlined. At the Library's opening, the *Karjala* newspaper's reporter indeed described how next the entrance there was the inscription 'Viipurin Kirjasto Alvar Aalto', as a kind of visiting card of the architect. *Karjala* 13.10.1935.

[27] Gell discusses this in the chapter 'Distributed person', see especially 1998, 196. Gell links this to the idea that there is a circular kind of exchange between the index and the prototype. Gell describes how there is an effect of 'similar mechanics', when different things are perceived to 'represent' the same, thus each emphasising a circular, self-reinforcing effect. This, however, would require lengthier discussion of Gell's chapter on the 'Distributed person', which I feel does not add significantly to the point I have aimed to make with the notion concerning 'representation'. See esp. Gell, A. 1998, 106-109.

I argue that the 'abduction [of agency]' is the Gellian term answering my early search for an appropriate term to describe how the Viipuri Library appears in a curious way to have a 'capacity' to attract different meanings and interests to a single place. The context of architecture, the context of history and the fact that the building is a public library have made it possible that interest in this library has not faded. However, since the opening of the building, the continued dissemination of information has played a vital role. This has taken place in all possible forms, from the early publications, and for example the 1938 MoMA exhibition, to the restoration project as part of which there were all kinds of events, exhibitions, and a variety of types of small objects produced to gather funds for the library. To stretch the argument, all the materials conveying information about the library, and later about its condition, are spatio-temporally detached fragments, which have served a purpose highly similar to that of an ambassador: Outside Viipuri/Vyborg, the materials 'represent' the building, Aalto, and his skills as an architect. In this way the materials abduct agency, re-affirming the canonised role of Aalto and the library as his work.

The role of time, and the idea that a category of artworks can also be recognised as created by a group of persons instead of an individual artist, leads me to Gell's fourth figure, which is a loan from Roger Neich's[28] work, originally titled *The Transmission of Selected Figurative Painting Traditions*. As already suggested in the introduction, in the context of architecture the Viipuri Library tends to be understood as particularly important for two reasons: as a key work of Aalto, but also an exemplary case of 'modern' or 'new architecture' being offered as a kind of 'provenance', as the back story explaining why the library is important as a piece of architecture. Within the context of architecture, the category of 'new architecture' most evidently positions the library beyond solely Aalto's oeuvre. I suggest that Neich's figure offers an appropriate tool for discussing the library as a 'distributed object' within the set of other buildings and styles with which it has been compared.

Gell renamed the original figure as the *Maori meeting house as an object distributed in space and time,* as it is quoted here.[29] His motivation to offer this figure is to give an example how a building can be taken to stand for a cultural 'building type'. The relevant notion that Gell makes concerning this is that it does not need to be one artist who can create a set of objects which are recognised

[28] Neich, R. 1996.

[29] Gell, A.1998, 255. The buildings to represent the other dots could be selected from Alfred Roth's (1939/1975) *New Architecture in 20 examples*, where the 19 other buildings are compared with the Viipuri Library as buildings which would similarly 'show the way to the future'. Other potential buildings with which the Library has been compared are, just to name some examples, Asplund's Stockholm City Library and the Zonnestraal Sanatorium in Hilversum (1926–1928) by Jan Duiker.)

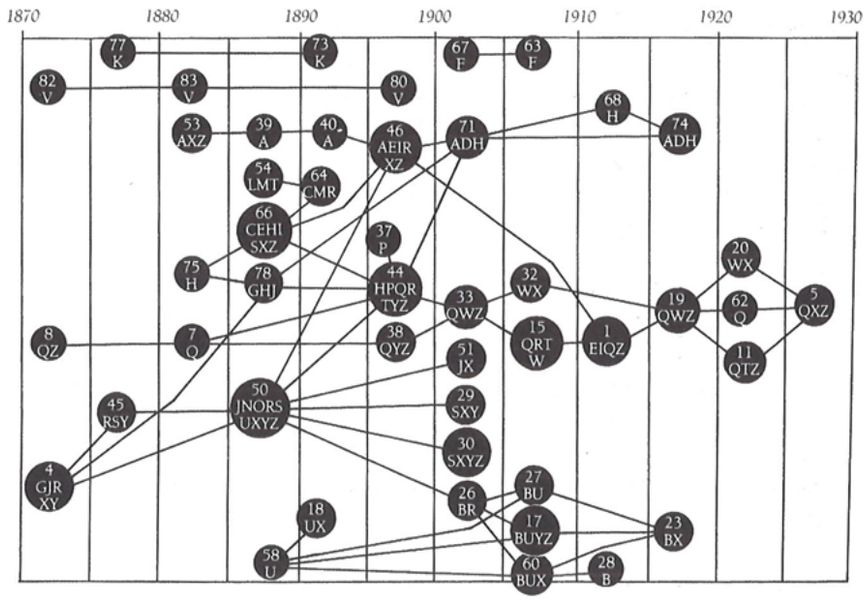


Fig. 122. *The Maori Meeting house as an object distributed in space and time. (Gell, A. 1998, 255 quoting Neigh, R. 1996)*

to form a 'distributed object', but equally it can be a group of people who play a part in creating this kind of recognisable set. In the case of the Viipuri Library, the context of architecture offers a most evident example for illustrating this notion: the idea that the library is presented as an example of modern or 'new' style, a building representative of its time. I suggest the idea of any object being taken as an innovation recognised as the physical emblem of new thinking of its time is a notion which is applicable more widely beyond art or architecture, for example in technology. The library however offers a most interesting example in that it is simultaneously presented in the context of architecture as a 'landmark' of Aalto's works and as a representative example of modernism internationally.[30] In other

[30] This would again be a topic of its own. For example, most famously Wittgenstein has written about the idea of 'family resemblance', i.e. the logic of determining that persons – or things – belong to the same category. To add, Gell discusses definitions of 'style' in a section titled 'Style and Culture'. My interpretation is that the Gellian view of what can be termed as 'style' focuses on the very ideas of relationships between entities and that there are some recognisable characteristics in material objects, which make them appear to be 'of the same family'. The essential difference is that Wittgensteinian 'family resemblance' does not involve the notion of 'invariant under transformation'.

words, it is a distributed object both as part of an artist's (Aalto's) oeuvre and an example of the architecture of its time (a key building of modern architecture).

What however makes this combination of the library's roles in the context of architecture interesting, is the passing of time. For the purposes of this research, the relevance of the Maori house is in the conceptual idea of the same physical object being recreated repeatedly, and the argument being that the building always represents the same unaltered idea. Indeed, this is reminiscent of the Japanese tradition to rebuild Shinto temples periodically, an example which has circulated in literature concerning definitions of architectural heritage. This Japanese example makes the same point that regardless of the physical building being reconstructed, it still represents 'the same' authentic idea.[31] This line of analysis highlights the role of time, most of all that time in fact becomes incorporated in the definition of distributed object. As an example, following the same logic of construction that is true to the original idea, it is possible to have, for example, a Maori house from the 1800s and a Maori house built yesterday, which are both

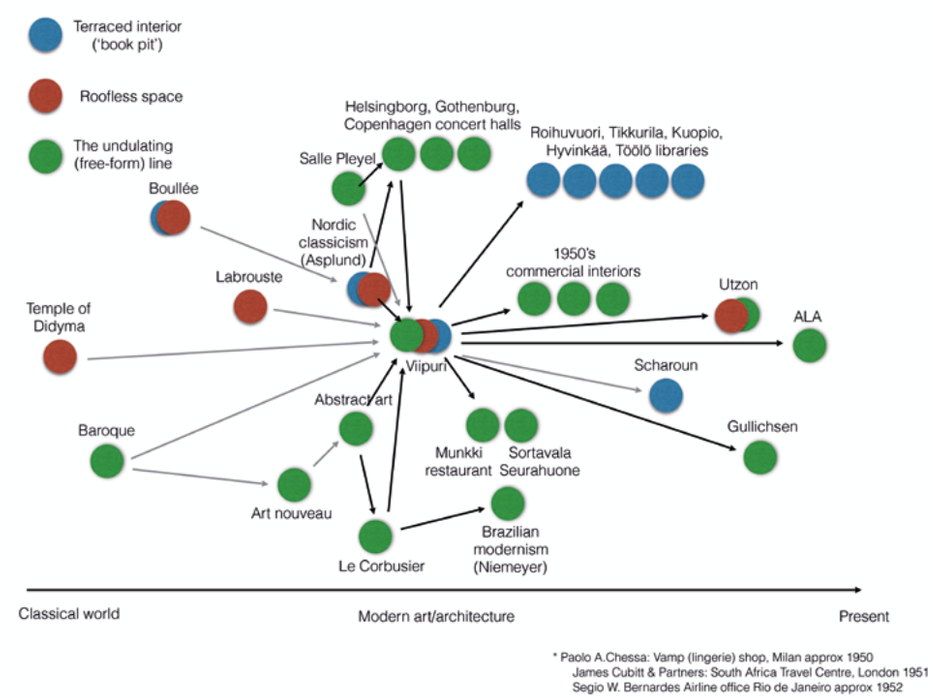


Fig. 123. *The Library as an object distributed in space and time – an adjusted version of the Maori meeting house diagram. (by the author)*

[31] This is a case presented in the previously referenced Nara 1994 conference publication, as an influential case affirming how skills and making can be internationally accepted as criteria of authenticity.

'the same', being true to the original idea. Or, alternatively we can think of the Viipuri Library as it was completed in 1935 and the restored library completed in 2013. Both cases contain the event of constructing/restoring, but because these have been true to the original idea, the physical form in the building at present is valued on a par with the one in the past: both are as authentic as the original structure.

In the above figure adjusted for the case of the Viipuri Library, I suggest again a version with reference to the three architectural themes of the terraced interior, roofless space and the undulating line, as variations of the same three design solutions as in the discussion of the artist's oeuvre as a distributed object. This time, the figure however offers some examples for considering how the architectural themes which characterise the library, have been recognised (by association) with other styles, in works of other architects and other buildings. Here, the three themes are somewhat blurred, the book-pit being transformed into the terraced interior, the light shafts to roofless space and the undulating line to free-form line. The reason is that when time, and the number of creators become extended, the resemblance between the examples becomes accordingly more distant.[32] To add, the point of all the figures is to offer only selected examples to convey the idea, and thus, only some Finnish libraries are named. Consequently, many other relevant points of comparison, such as the Västerås library in Sweden, and the Fredriksberg library in Denmark are not included. What I propose that the above adjusted figure illustrates well is the kind of 'imagined landscape' created by the context of architecture: time and place are contextual information in contrast to highlighting architects, buildings and particular architectural themes.

The notion that this diagram brings forth in an almost hyperbolical manner is the way how 'architecture thinks'. Namely, two points of information are emphasised above everything else: the role of artist-like architects and the buildings designed by them. While the original version of the figure (Fig. 122) was made to illustrate the relationship between individual buildings belonging to the category of one cultural type, my revised version offers examples of buildings and stylistic concepts which have been compared to the library in the field of architecture. What I suggest this illustrates is that while the relationship between the original Figs. 120 and 122; *The artist's oeuvre as a distributed object* and *The Maori Meeting house as an object distributed in space and time* was one of similarity, my versions of them (Figs. 121 and 123) are even closer. Namely, the examples form evident clusters, and are not distributed evenly in time and space. Therefore, whether the library is positioned in the context of Aalto's oeuvre or that

[32] As a note of interest, it is the more unassuming examples, such as the South Africa Travel Centre in London, and the Vamp Shop in Milan, both published in international architectural publications, that explicitly pay homage to the Viipuri Library as the direct original inspiration.

of other architectural reference points, the overall appearance of the figures is highly similar. As a test of Gell's theoretical notions, I suggest my versions affirm the point that he makes: in analysing how we form categories from individual examples, the logic remains inherently the same. Namely, whether we think of works created by one person, or cultural creations expanding in time and space, this difference between scales is hardly consequential.[33]

The issue which remains to be discussed is the relationship between the four thematic chapters, and the dilemma of how it might be that the issues which have been most acute at different points in time, still appear to have added to the library's importance, to its role as something 'more than just a building'. The following figure loaned from Gell's work speaks specifically to the dilemma of time, and allows me to address the problem of the separate contextual perspectives.

The dilemma of time

The diagram of time-consciousness is again a diagram, which speaks to all of the four thematic chapters, most importantly, in bringing all the four together. The diagram was originally drawn by the philosopher Edmund Husserl and Gell offers

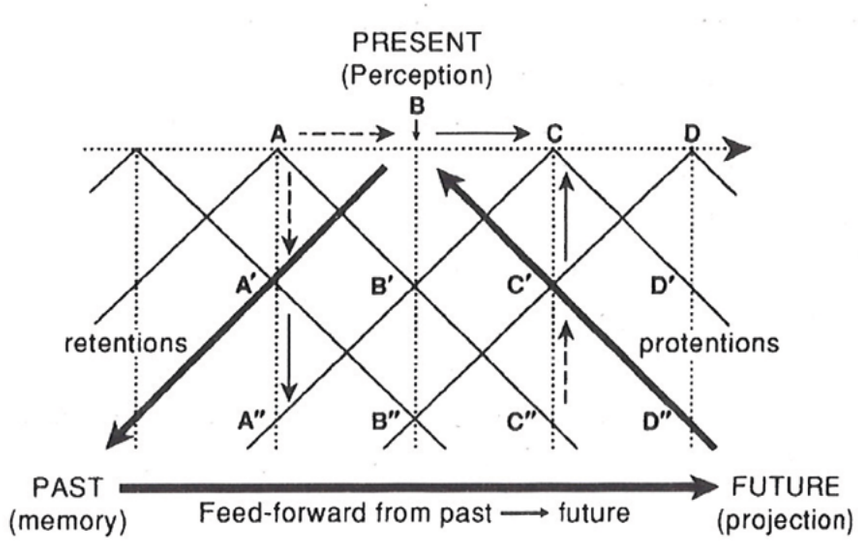


Fig. 124. *Gell's version of Husserl's diagram of time-consciousness. (Gell,A. 1998, 239)*

[33] This table is borrowed from Neich, R. (1996) and can be taken to further indicate of the flexibility with which Gell moves between time periods and types of examples.

it in his discussion on how it is possible to take into account the relationships of art works *in time,* as his art-historical version of the philosophical dilemma of events and tenses. With regard to this research, the dilemma concerns specifically the relationship between recognisably different, separate events.[34]

To explain what the dilemma is about Gell offers a hypothetical situation: 'Tomorrow I have a doctor's appointment. I protend this event, today, as a future event, which will (probably) transpire, but I do not know, for instance, what the doctor will say or what treatment he will recommend. By the day after tomorrow, tomorrow's doctor's appointment will be a past event (of which I will have a memory, or retention) having transiently been a 'present' event (tomorrow). Obviously, this event (the appointment) is the 'same event' whether today is 'today' (15 October 1996), or yesterday, or last week, or tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, or whatever day you please. Yet this unique event, on these various days, has the contradictory properties of presentness, pastness, or futurity.'[35] Gell thus asks how can this be, without a contradiction arising. The answer is that 'events' of this kind do not possess attributes of pastness, presentness and futurity in a once-and-for-all way, but only transiently, depending on the 'point of view' we have on the event in question from a certain 'now' moment which continually shifts. Therefore, Gell analyses, the same event, as a possible future event, as a present event which is being experienced, and as a past event which can be recalled, remains a single event, but as our temporal perspective on the event shifts, the event undergoes a series of *modifications* from the standpoint of the cognitive subject. The same event is seen through various thicknesses of future and past time, which, Gell tells us, alter its appearance, its temporal patination so to speak.

In order to expand and illustrate the 'dilemma of time', Husserl made use of this diagram which Gell quotes in *Art and Agency*. The horizontal line A —> B —> C —> D corresponds to the succession of events or 'states of affairs' occurring at 'now' present moments strung out between the past and future. Gell thus explains: suppose we are at B: our perceptions up to date at B. The temporal landscape at B consists of the now-present perceptual experience of the state of affairs at B plus retentions of A, as A´, shading into pastness. A´(A seen from B) is a *modification* of the original A - what A 'looks like' from B, that is, attenuated or diminished, but still connected to the present. Perhaps one can think of the 'modification' of A as it sinks (diagonally to the left on the figure) down into the past (A —> A´—> A´´—> A´´´...) as a gradual loss of verisimilitude affecting the perceptions entertained at A as these are superseded by the perceptions enter-

[34] In his work, Gell uses the word 'event' in many places, but it is not emphasised in any specific way as a specific term.

[35] Gell, A. 1998, 238.

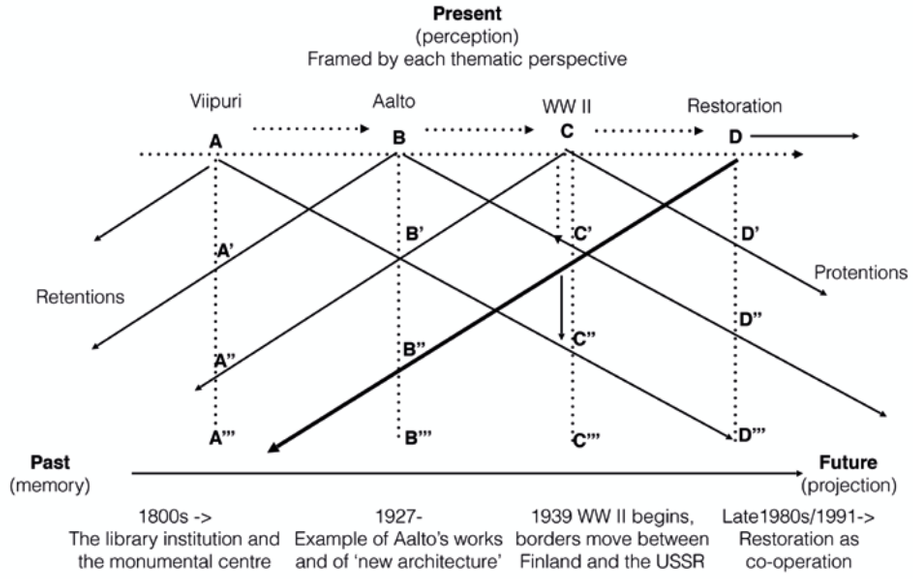


Fig. 125. *The four thematic chapters positioned in the diagram of time-consciousness. (by the author)*

tained at B, C, D, etc. Our perceptions of the state of affairs as it is at any one 'now' moment do not become inapplicable immediately, Gell points out, but only gradually, because the world does not change all at once and in all respects.[36]

For the case of the Viipuri Library, I propose the four thematic chapters of this research, presented in chronological succession fit to the 'present' moments of Husserl's diagram. Thus, thematic chapter one being in the present position of A, chapter two at B, chapter three at C, and chapter four at D.[37] First the series of events began from Viipuri, the need for a public library and visions for future building projects, as result of which the library came to be realised. This is point A. The second chapter, titled the architect, focusing on the context of architecture is at point B. Notably, in terms of chronology the thematic chapters one and two overlap. However, I assert that what is more important is the separation of perspectives, and this is also why in my version of Husserl's diagram the spacing between A, B, C and D is symmetrical. As Gell formulates, the events are seen

[36] Ibid. 238-239.

[37] This could, in fact, be expanded to describe the separate events within the chapters, but the main point remains the same.

in a different light depending on the time perspective of the person making the interpretation, the 'standpoint of the cognitive subject'.[38]

In the fourth and last thematic chapter the discussions concerning the library and its restoration are taken to a meta-level in the sense that the 'material' reference points by which the library's importance is articulated are larger, and more abstract than the building alone: Aalto and his fame, the library as an example of modern architecture, the city of Viipuri and 'lost Karelia'. What I find to be most intriguing in respect to this is that outstandingly different contexts, such as Aalto's architecture and 'ceded Karelia' all become discussed together within the issue of the restoration.

From the point of view of my argument, the relevance of this diagram is in that all the events in a sense coalesce in the discussions concerning the restoration at point D. Looking from the present moment of D, we thus see a series of modifications of the past events: from our perspective of D, we see moment C as C', B as B'' and A as A''', as the past events gain 'temporal patination', falling diagonally down into the past. The argument I draw from this is that while a large part of the details have been forgotten, these major themes remain relevant and remembered, and are used in arguments concerning what is to be done in the present. As a single event, the fact that in 2010 the president of Finland appealed the prime minister of Russia to take into consideration the library evidences that it cannot be only the city of Viipuri, the architect, the events of World War II or the need to restore a library building. Instead, it is the sequence of these events and perspectives associated with them which have contributed towards the library having become discussed as something more than just a building.

To add, the reason why I find this diagram most fitting is that while the perspectives fall into the past, *they still remain identifiable* separate events. Furthermore, as the thematic chapters also evidence, different persons are committed to their respective perspectives, and for example those motivated by the context of history and those by the context of architecture remain separate, even at the point in time when these different views are brought together in the discussions concerning the restoration of the library. Thus, this diagram provides a useful summary for keeping in mind that at point D, when the restoration takes place, all the previous events still have an effect, regardless that many of the micro-historical details are no longer actively remembered. To take the analysis further, this diagram in fact offers also an illustration of the four thematic chapters as the main body of this work. Events such as, the Viipuri of the period, Aalto establishing himself as a known architect, WW II and a restoration project in Viipuri do

[38] Also here the diagram drawn as completely symmetrical makes sense for explaining the idea of the dilemma of time, and allows the same diagram to serve as a format for analysing different examples.

not necessarily have anything in common at first glance. However, what this work does, is to introduce an entire chain of events, which have one thing in common: the library. This way, I argue it is also possible to make visible what the life of the library is made of.

At a more abstract level, I propose that a use for this diagram is that it offers an illustration for how the perspectives of the four thematic chapters play down the importance of chronological time. In other words at each point in time, a different perspective has dominated, and both past and future has been analysed from their respective standpoints. In the present moment D, it is not possible to see moment C, but C', as a modification. As Gell describes it, the events undergo a series of modifications: from the perspective of today, some details are remembered as part of the events, some details have fallen into oblivion seen from the 'thickness of past time', the temporal patination affecting what is visible at our present moment.

There is still a fifth figure in Gell's *Art and Agency* which is useful for summarising the idea that while the thematic chapters each represent each their own period perspective, the library 'abducts agency' from all these preceding events. This is helpful for articulating the notion of how meanings associated with it can be understood to have accumulated in time.

The Index

Gell's figure titled *The index as the pivot of the art nexus* offers a visualisation for analysing further the relationship between recognisably different interpretations associated with the Viipuri Library. Most of all, I argue that for the library to have remained interesting to many, a case of interest beyond architecture enthusiasts, it has been seminal for the building to have played a part in different contexts, and induced perspectives which might appear even discrepant. The most evident differences in interpretations con-

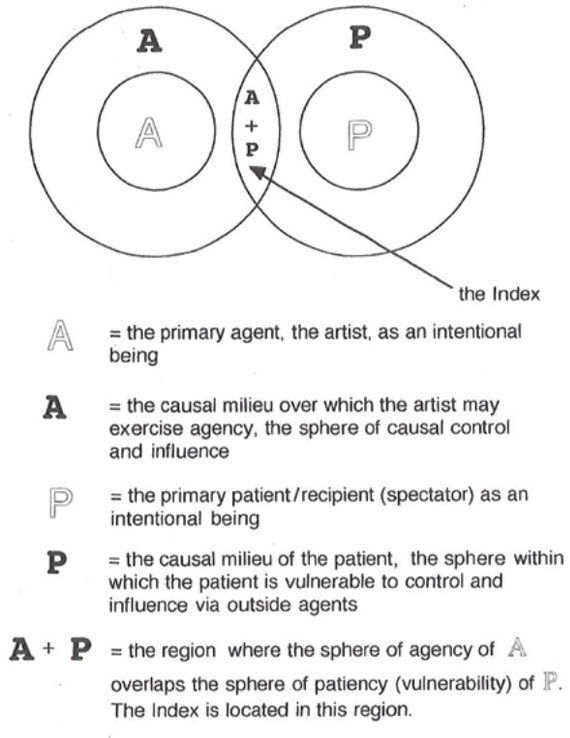


Fig. 126. *The index as the pivot of the art nexus (Gell, A. 1998, 38)*

cerning this building have their roots on the one hand in the historical separation after 1944, after which two separate strands of history evolved, one in the Soviet Union, the other in Finland and among the international architectural community. On the other hand, it appears that from the very beginning there has been a division between the views of professionals and the so-called general public. This division is most explicit in the newspaper writings concerning the restoration of the library.

In respect to Fig. 126, I suggest the two spheres of A marking the position of agent, and P, marking the position of patient are illustrative of the relationship between two different interpretations. However, if we take as an example the views associated with the restoration, the standpoints of those motivated by the building's architectural value and views expressed by those motivated by the context of history (typically articulated by the 'general public)', can each be seen in the position of agent or patient. This is because the power relation is not fixed, but the positions vary from situation to situation: the persons involved expressly aim to convey information, even correcting and changing someone else's understanding, for example by pointing out that the library still exists and is repairable. A + P is where the two interpretations meet. The index, i.e. the library, is located in this region. Here, the library stands as an index for the prototypical ideas of the different views. The key notion, however, is that the library can be an index for several different prototypical notions at once. For example, standing for Aalto and his skills as an architect, or the library being associated with Finnish-period Viipuri, and even 'lost Karelia'.

Gell offers a number of examples illustrative of possible positions for artist, recipient, index and prototype (as described in Fig. 119) in regard to the diagram above. One, however, is perfect for thinking of the processual nature of how different meanings have accumulated for the library as the index. This has to do with the idea that positions can change even during a single event. Gell explains that as an example, Prototype-Agent —> Recipient-Patient / Recipient-Agent —> Prototype-Patient can form a pair. In this, prototype and recipient alternate between the positions of agent/patient.

In the first case, the prototype, represented in the different 'original' meanings associated with the Viipuri Library, is the agent and affects the recipient, which is thus in the position of patient, in Gell's formulation: Prototype-Agent —> Recipient-Patient. To recapitulate, recipients are persons who have visited the building, encountered materials concerning it, have themselves written about it or even contributed in the restoration, that is, have been in one way or another influenced by the building. However, the positions can change, as happens in Gell's formulation. It is possible that the recipient becomes the primary agent, for example by establishing new information about the building, and in this way affecting the interpretation of the prototypical idea, which thus becomes a patient. In Gell's

formulation: Recipient-Agent —> Prototype-Patient. In between A + P is the index: the library. Further, I propose that this figure can be extended to the different contexts, because as time passes, the 'prototypical' notions for which the library stands as an index begin to accumulate. The point I want to make with this Prototype-Recipient / Recipient-Prototype pair alternating between the positions of agent and patient is that *the process works in both directions*. What I claim to be the consequence of this changing of agent-patient positions is that the reception of the library has become a *process*. As I have suggested earlier, the reception of the library did not take place only originally upon the building's completion, but the entire existence of the library can be understood as a process of continued reception. And it is the continued reception which has made it possible that the library has remained meaningful, and different perspectives have become accumulated for it as the index.

This also harks back to the relationship between prototype and index introduced in Gell's *Art Nexus* table (Fig.119) This is illustrative of what I regard as the other main dilemma associated with the Viipuri Library. The first dilemma was that notions of extremely different scale and type have simultaneously become associated with this building. The other dilemma, however, is that on one hand the library appears to be meaningful in itself, while in the four thematic chapters, as part of the 'social-relational matrix' of the events, the library is the index. In other words, in many cases the library appears to be a kind of vehicle, something which makes it possible to articulate abstract notions beyond the physical building.

Indeed, an overarching notion, relevant across this entire research, is that in each thematic chapter at each point in time there appears to be something most acute and important taking place; something that happens irrespective of the library, but in which the library plays a part. However, I propose that Fig. 121 (in Gell's original version Fig.120) and Fig. 123 (in Gell's original version Fig.122) illustrating the artist's oeuvre, and the other of an object distributed in space and time, indicate a solution for this second dilemma. I assert that the dilemma exits only if we think of the abstract large scale. However, the contents of the four thematic chapters show that the 'large and abstract' comes to be created in retrospect. In the 'real world' events, however, unravel in the respective 'present' moment, and at each point, the issues to be tackled are of smaller scale. For example, in retrospect determining the appropriate site for the library looks like a large and complicated project which lasted for at least a decade, from 1923 until 1933. However, as the thematic chapter illustrates, at the time decisions were made one at a time, and most of the steps during the process were painstakingly small, with hardly any progress at all. Consequently, it is only in retrospect that the contexts have grown larger. It is in our present moment that Aalto's career has

ended, making it possible to consider it as one 'oeuvre', or similarly, we can now discuss World War II as if it had been a single event.

The dilemma which, however, remains still unaccounted for, is how is it possible to understand simultaneously the library to be important in itself, and as an object which motivates 'abductive inferences', serving as a kind of vehicle for expressing more abstract notions about issues such as Aalto's oeuvre and Finnish Viipuri as a 'lost city'? The solution that Gell offers is that this dilemma exists only if the answer needs to be either/or.

The representative index

The Gellian solution, and my conclusion for the dilemma associated with the library is in the concept of index as defined by Gell: '*The stipulation I make is that the index is itself seen as the outcome and/or the instrument of, social agency*'[39]

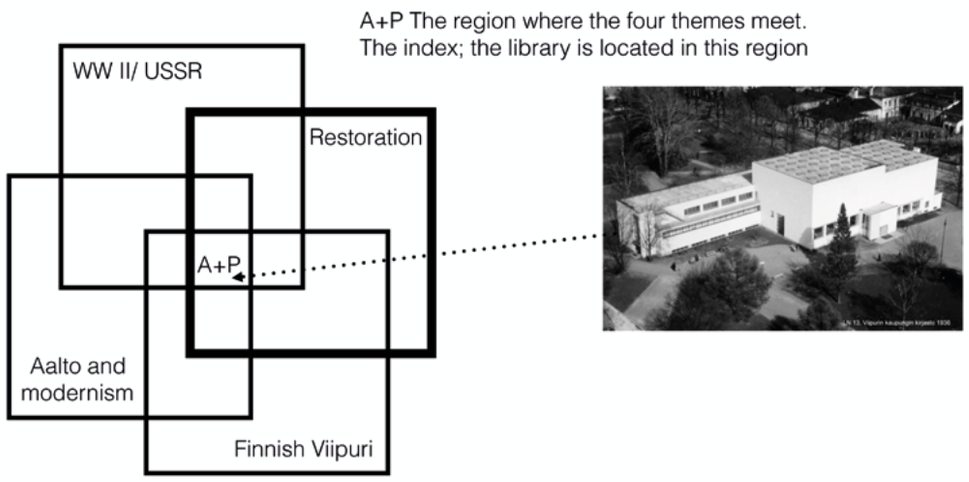


Fig. 127. *The Viipuri Library as a representative index - an adjusted version of Gell's diagram ´the index as the pivot of the art nexus´. (by the author) (photo: Etelä-Karjalan museo.)*

Here, the index is the library, the object, which stands for notions beyond itself. However, the key is in that the index can be analysed as *both the outcome*, for example the outcome of Aalto's design process, which the building then comes to represent, *and the instrument*, for example, the library having become an instrument affecting perceptions about Aalto's works, what an exam-

[39] Chua, L. and Elliot, M. (2015, 15) agree that this much is true, but what they find to have often been glossed over, or perhaps overlooked, is another vital aspect of the index.

ple of modern architecture looks like, or later that also modern architecture can be accepted as heritage to be preserved. Again, the library as an index makes it possible to articulate ideas that are much more abstract and larger than the building alone. In respect to the notion that the library appears to have a kind of 'capacity' to bring together different meanings, for example that the library is of importance because of its architecture, but also due to its specific location, Gell introduced the concept of 'abduction of agency'. This points to the notion that a particular object 'contains', in a sense 'kidnaps', meanings that are attached to it in the *social-relational matrix* of which the object is/has been a part. What I suggest is that the prototypical notions of Finnish-period Viipuri, Aalto and his oeuvre, World War II and 'lost Karelia' are all present simultaneously in the last fourth thematic chapter.

According to Gell, a single image (in this case the library) can stand as an index of different relations at the same time. As has been discussed in association with the positions of prototype and recipient changing between the positions of agent/patient, in this way, the library is simultaneously an index through which its accumulated meanings are mediated to the recipients, who thus are patients in relation to the library. Yet, at the same time the recipients also have power over the meanings of the library, because it is they who have 'made it'. Namely, the recipients who originally created the need for a public library in Viipuri, and since they are the ones who produced the materials, made it an internationally known building, worked on its restoration and so on. In sum, in the process of events there has been a continuous relationship of different persons influencing matters and making their interpretations about the library, but also being impressed and influenced by the library themselves.[40] I propose that together with this it is helpful to recall the solution for the dilemma of time. Here, the solution was that events are not 'once and for all', but are interpreted from different present moments. To put it differently, each thematic chapter which has brought forth a different perspective on the same case of the library, tells a different story of what issues were most relevant at the time. None of the past events, as our present standpoint will not offer a perspective which would be 'once and for all'.

I argue that it was in fact most important for the library that different meanings were associated with it, and that there are different perspectives which have not faded into a single homogeneous, smooth background history. It is through the presence of the different perspectives that interest in the library has been sustained. In other words, for the library to have become and remained meaningful, it would not have sufficed if it had been only a building in Viipuri/only a library building/ only an early work of Aalto/only an example of 'new architecture'. It is thus the segment of events, and the continued reception of the library, which

[40] Gell, A. 1998, 40.

made it possible for the library to achieve a role as something more than 'just a building', to become an issue for the president of Finland and the prime minister of Russia to discuss as a matter of concern for both countries, culminating in the exemplary restoration of the building.

To return to the proposed dilemma, this suggests that the library is an 'instrument' for expressing views concerning broad and abstract perspectives. However, I assert that as an index, the library has agency, and is consequential in itself: it is axiomatic. This recalls Gell's formulation that it is possible that in some cases indexes exert agency with respect to themselves (index-agent – index-patient). To take the interpretation further, considering the library's canonised value as a building, it is possible to think that it is the building itself or the related disseminated information which continue to re-establish its fame as a kind of self-enforcing process. As Gell puts it, the index can be the 'cause' of itself.[41] Upon being enquired by a documentary filmmaker why the library is so important, the secretary of the restoration committee, Maija Kairamo, exclaimed, 'It's the Viipuri Library!', implying wonderment as to why anyone could not perceive the buildings' axiomatic value.[42]

Building on Gell's theoretical framework, I offer my own term: *representative index*. It was inspired by Kenneth Burke's 'representative anecdote', as well as the fact that while Gell does not emphasise 'representation' as a term, it is nevertheless a word Gell uses throughout his work. The motivation for calling the library a 'representative index' is that I propose that the entire life of the library is *characterised by being both the outcome and instrument of social agency*. While many buildings or artworks attract long-sustained attention and raise strong feelings, it does not appear as common that a single physical object receives attention over decades, eventually culminating in the exemplary restoration of the building through the cooperation of two nations and being completed in 2013.

To conclude, Gell's theory supports the notion that the library does matter as the physical entity which it is. However, as a physical entity the library is a product of the social-relational-matrix of which it has been a part; it is the product of the crossing points of a specific place-time but also of contextual perspectives. The intriguing point here is that having gone through different ways of how the library can be analysed as being 'distributed', the reverse aspect of this is that the building remains a single object. Thus, what the figures make visible is how all these distributed parts discussed here can be seen to have coalesced into this one building. The circle closes when the library 'abducts agency' from the prototypical ideas which it is 'made of'. As one case which brings together heterogenous historical events and discrepant notions, it has achieved a role as something more

[41] Ibid. 41-42.

[42] Hovinheimo, L. 2014.

than a building. Being both important in itself and as an object which makes it possible to articulate more abstract and complex notions beyond it, the library can be defined as a 'representative index'.

Conclusion

This research presented the 'genealogical' life of the Viipuri library in four thematic chapters. The case of the library was then analysed through the lens of Gell's theoretical framing introduced in his book 'Art and Agency An Anthropological theory'.

My original hypothesis was that the building has a special role in the context of architecture, in the context of history and as a library. The context of architecture is evidently strong. The context of history associates this building with the city and the geo-political history of the area. Of the three, I have found the library context to be the weakest, as it remains often only implicit. Rather, the fact that the library has been, and remains a public building has stood out as consequential. Having researched the existing materials, I recognised four major themes consisting of smaller events. Here, it is useful to summarise the main contents and notions brought forth in the four chapters.

In the first thematic chapter, 'The City', the library existed as a concept and an intention. The main materials used were original archival documents from the city of Viipuri, and materials of the period. After the period of the monastery libraries, establishing a library remained for a long period a civil society project. As such, the consequence was that numerous individual persons had small collections in their privately run libraries. The Finnish library institution with established legislation and funding was only emerging. In 1923, when the city received Maria Lallukka's bequest, the city officials took over the issue. From their point of view, the most acute question to be resolved was to find a suitable site for the library. This marks the first transformation in the chain of the 'reception' of the library. The site issue was associated with the project for a monumental city centre, and defining a 'heart of the city'. Of all the public buildings envisioned for the park area marking the heart of the city, the library came to be realised in 1935. As a project in the city, the realised library ended the need to establish new, separate libraries, and instead brought together the different language and even social groups in the new building.

In the second thematic chapter, 'The Architect', Alvar Aalto held the role of the auteur. Here, the main materials were architectural publications, newspapers of the period and original materials from the Aalto Foundation. A large part of this chapter also introduced what Aalto said and did at the time. It became evident that Aalto referred to the library as part of establishing himself as an internationally known architect, and to articulate his ideas of the role of archi-

tecture in society. Thus, Aalto had an active role in making both himself and his buildings known. It is in this chapter where the 1927 architectural competition for the library, and Aalto's design process after he had won the competition were presented in more detail. Notably, in the city, the site question dominated the discussions. Meanwhile, Aalto had the chance to work on his design most of the time in Turku, only paying visits to Viipuri. Finally, it was argued that analyses of the library by professional architects and architectural critics have focused on the themes of light, space and acoustics. Furthermore, it was already as part of the earliest reception that the library was defined as a seminal work by Aalto, and a key example of 'new architecture'.

The third thematic chapter titled 'The Lost Library' begun from 1939, the beginning of the World War II. By this stage, the library had been in use only for a few short years. As the object of study is the library, the materials used in this chapter brought forth the micro-historical perspective: the active periods of the war were introduced more briefly, because it was the moments in between when the library was used. The main sources referenced were Finnish and Soviet newspapers, periodicals and books. The segment of history which remains perhaps less known internationally, is that the Soviets took over 'ceded Karelia' between 1940–1941. The library was then taken into use as a Soviet library. However, Finns returned late in 1941, retreating only in 1944 when the area was permanently annexed to the Soviet Union. As a result of this, there was both Soviet and Finnish war-time use of the city and the library. The Soviet materials described the organisation of the library, and the meticulous inventory of the contents. The Finnish materials, instead, revealed how the immediate surroundings of the library had changed: what had been the secondary side, opening toward the Church Park, was transformed into a cemetery, and became an important site for a variety of events, from military gatherings to showing the site to foreign newspaper reporters. After 1944, the separation, however, became emphasised. Finns evacuated the whole population, and the Soviet inhabitants were brought in from as far as possible to ensure there would not be contacts across the border. To Finns, the annexation of this part of Karelia, and along with it the city of Viipuri, signified a traumatic event, creating the concepts of 'Karelian evacuees' and 'lost Karelia'. In contrast, the Soviet inhabitants had the physical city from which to decipher its past. The last part of this chapter described the emergence of the internationally spread misunderstanding that the library had been destroyed in the war, and all that remained of it were texts, images and drawings.

The fourth thematic chapter, 'The Restoration' introduced the Soviet plans to either restore or alter the library's appearance, and the beginning of contacts with Finland. In this chapter, surviving information from the Soviet architects who were responsible of the library during the Soviet period were seminal. It is no longer possible to interview them, and thus it is through writings and earlier interviews, that this moment in the past was possible to access. A significant part of this chapter however brought forth information from Finnish newspapers, most of all *Helsingin Sanomat*. The reason was twofold. First, the technical side of the restoration has been made available in two English-language books by the Restoration Committee. Second, as my interest in this research is in deconstructing how and why this particular library achieved a role as something 'more than a building', it is the quantitative mass of Finnish newspaper writings which stood out as an entire body of material on its own. Three main issues emerged from these texts. First, the restoration was written about mostly to inform about the situation, promoting the need to restore the library. Second, the issue was taken up on the 'opinion' pages, where individual persons began to discuss whether it might be possible to buy the building, or reconstruct it somewhere in Finland. This is when the Finnish architects involved with the restoration began to participate in the discussion. As the views were so different, there was no easy solution. At this stage, also professionals in different fields took part in the discussion. As one terminal point aiming to negotiate between the different perspectives was the art project called 'What's the time in Vyborg?'. This chapter also illustrated that while the importance of numerable international bodies that contributed to the cause of the restoration, also funding it, cannot be ignored, it was nevertheless the few individual persons involved with the hands-on restoration without whose personal dedication the project would not have been possible. In 2010 the prime minister of Russia granted funding to complete the restoration of the library. This transformed the issue once again. There was no longer need to publicly debate the restoration. The Finnish architects were responsible for supervising the work, and providing the designs and drawings. The work was done with Russian workers as far as possible. This chapter ended with a note on what has remained in between the lines, how it was possible to complete the restoration between Finland and Russia.

I found Alfred Gell's theory to be most useful for tackling the question of how the library appeared to have a 'capacity' to bring together different perspectives. Originally, I searched for terminology, and ways to articulate the more complex notions associated with the library, but also to recognise aspects which might be applicable more widely beyond this specific example. Further, as has also been pointed out earlier, Gell's theory offers a useful, if at times dauntingly complex, analytical tool. In this work, I have sought to reach beyond using only selected terms or a small part of Gell's theory. In introducing the theory and testing it in an in-depth case, it has been possible to analyse the case, and bring forth ideas which might otherwise have even remained unnoticed. At the same time, I believe that using a theory puts it to the test, making it possible to develop it further and literally give it life. This is a theoretical framework which I found to raise new

ideas, for seeing the case of the library in a completely different light than I would have done without the framework.

From Gell's theory, I took up the notion that the library is an 'index', a physical object which in a sense stands for ideas beyond it. Namely, the library is a 'representative' of Aalto's works, an example of 'new architecture', a building realised in Finnish-period Viipuri at a time when the city grew significantly, while it has also been associated with the geopolitical area after World War II. The key argument is that humans, and other kinds of 'agents' are not the same. However, this does not mean that material objects, or the built environment would not have agency. In the four thematic chapters, as part of the social-relational-matrix, the library has had an effect on events. I argue that the most important point is the two-way relationship: the events have accumulated the library's importance as a building, while the library quite literally gives form to ideas which otherwise would remain abstract, or would not even be possible to articulate. The library has been both the outcome and the instrument in the events described in the four chapters. As I have used the term in the chapter focusing on the theory, the library is a representative index.

This research has offered one approach to the case of the library, and one approach to Gell's theory. Different research questions, for example bringing to focus the technical aspects, would make the story look entirely different. While many materials have been included, there would have still been paths to follow up. For example, the records on the gathering of funding for the project, i.e. the economic side of the restoration is one line of enquiry which could provide fruitful insights. Another broad area of research is the city of Vyborg and the annexed Karelian area after the Second World War, concerning which there is an emerging research interest. I hope this study will induce further questions and research in associated themes, and that Gell's theory will offer food for thought also for future researchers, in particular in the fields of architecture and the built environment.

Epilogue

The restoration of the library has now been completed, and the building is likely more popular than it has ever been, actively used by the inhabitants of the Russian city of Vyborg and visited by tourists around the world. Both the project and the architects involved have been awarded a number of international prizes. Maija Kairamo, born in the year of the library's completion in 1935, has stated that she has retired. Tapani Mustonen has become recognised as an unrivalled expert of restoring Aalto's buildings and modern architecture more widely. However, Jussi Rautsi, who was introducing the library's situation to Elissa Aalto in 1991, pointed out that one should not consider the case to be closed now that the restoration is complete. Instead, Rautsi exclaimed: 'This is where the story begins.'[43]

[43] Jussi Rautsi, personal communication.

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Lallukka Foundation
http://lallukkasaatio.net/

LOGAV Leningrad Regional State Archive in the City of Vyborg https://archiveslo.ru/logav
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The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York
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Informants

During my research, I have discussed the topic with several persons with relevant knowledge. These represent informal exchanges rather than organised interviews. Some of these informants I have met with number of times, some only once. I am most grateful to all these persons for their time and valuable insights.

Eric Adlercreutz, architect, chair of the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library
Robert Beauregard, Professor, Columbia University, New York
Kenneth Frampton, Professor, Columbia University, New York.
Marja Granlund, Licenciate, financial councillor, Ministry of Finance
Kristian Gullichsen, architect, (interview with Jussi Rautsi)
Eila Hirvonen, a library user in 1930s
Liisa Hovinheimo, documentarist, film director
Maija Kairamo, architect, secretary general of the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library
Anja Kervanto Nevanlinna, PhD, art historian, architect, University of Helsinki
Mikko Mansikka, architect, director, Ministry of Environment
Maire Mattinen, architect, National Board of Antiquities
Jon Maury, MSoSc, researcher, Helsinki City Planning Office
Mary McLeod, Professor, Columbia University, New York
Tapani Mustonen, architect, the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library, President of Europa Nostra Finland
Vezio Nava, architect, the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library
Riitta Nikula, Professor emerita of Art history, University of Helsinki
Simo Paavilainen, Professor emeritus of Architecture, Aalto University
Jussi Rautsi, environmental counsellor, Ministry of Environment
Liisa Roberts, artist

Appendix 1. Finnish library buildings before World War II

University of Helsinki Library (today National Library), C.L. Engel 1833–1844
Helsinki Public Library (today Rikhardinkatu Library), Theodor Höijer 1879–1882
Turku City Library (today part of the Main Library, donation Fredric von Rettig), K.A. Wrede 1899–1903
Kuopio Museum and Library (today Kuopio Museum), J.V. Strömberg 1902–1907

Kallio Library, Helsinki, Karl Hård af Segerstad 1909–1912
Tampere City Library (today Old Library House, donation Emil Aaltonen), Jussi and Toivo Paatela 1922–1925
Viipuri City Library (donation Maria Lallukka), Alvar Aalto 1927–1935
Oulu Museum, Library and Archive Building (today Northern Ostrobothnia Museum), Oiva Kallio 1929–1931
Vaasa City Library (today Main Library), Ingvald Serenius 1932–1936
Åbo Akademi Book Tower (donation Gösta and Gertrud Branders), Turku, Erik Bryggman 1934–1935

Appendix. 2. Spaces for books by Aalto

There are also several library spaces in private buildings, as Maison Carré and Villa Schildt, which contain similar design solutions, but are not included in this list.

Viipuri City Library, Finland (today Russia) 1927–1935
Competition entry for the University of Helsinki Library extension, Finland 1937 (not realised)
Avesta town centre, Sweden 1944 (not realised)
Johnson Institute library, Sweden 1944 (not realised)
Imatra cultural centre, Finland 1949 (not realised)
Student dormitory library, Cambridge, United States 1947 (not realised)
Woodberry Poetry Room, Cambridge, United States 1948–1949
Säynätsalo Library, Finland 1949–1952
National Pensions Institute library, Helsinki, Finland 1952–1956
Jyväskylä University Library, Finland 1953–1955
Wolfsburg Cultural Centre library, Germany, 1958--1962
Seinäjoki City Library, Finland 1960–1965
Competition entry for the Leverkusen cultural centre, Germany 1960 (not realised)
Rovaniemi City Library, Finland 1961–1966
Academic Bookstore, Helsinki, Finland 1961–1969
Nordic House, Reykjavik, Iceland 1963–1968
Helsinki University of Technology Main Library, Espoo, Finland 1964–1969
Mount Angel Abbey Library, Oregon, United States 1964–1970
Kokkola City Library, Finland, 1966–1971 (not realised)
Jyväskylä University Library, Finland 1969–1970 (not realised)
Midwest Institute of Scandinavian Culture, Wisconsin, United States, 1974 (not realised)

Appendix 3. Aalto´s writings and interviews 1921–1939.

The list is as complete as possible.

Writings marked with * have been published in English.

Helsingin Sanomat 24.9.1921 Suomalainen taidenäyttely Riiassa (interview)
Iltalehti 12.11.1921 Miten kaupungintaloa rakennetaan
Iltalehti 18.11.1921 Taideteollisuutta Atheneumissa. Suomen taideteollisuusyhdistyksen näyttely
Iltalehti 25.11.1921 Eemu Myntin näyttely
Iltalehti 28.11.1921 Vanhaa Viipuria
Iltalehti 2.12.1921 Kordelinin hautakappelin lasimaalaukset
Iltalehti 14.12.1921 Vanhat ja uudet kirkkomme [Our Old and New Churches*]
Iltalehti 16.12.1921 Rydmanin taidekokoelma. Myyntinäyttely Strindbergin taidesalongissa
Kerberos 1921 no 2 Min vän kapten af Looping
Kerberos 1921 no 3 Eldorado*
Kerberos 1921 no 4 En barnsaga vid brasan [A Fireside Story*]
Kerberos 1921 no 5 Mässan
Kerberos 1921 no 7 Ditt och datt. Några reflexioner
Kerberos 1921 no 8 Alt Riga och bi-ba-bo
Kerberos 1921 no 9 Farsen "Fra Girolamo"
Kerberos 1921 no 12 Benvenutos julglögg [Benvenuto´s Christmas Punch*]
Jousimies 1921 Maalarit ja Muurarit [Painters and Masons*]

Aamulehti 26.6.1922 Teollisuusnäyttelyn rakennustaiteellinen puoli
Arkkitehti 1922 no 2 Menneitten aikojen motivit [Motifs from Past Ages*]

Iltalehti 9.2.1922 Fanny Churbergin piirustusnäyttely Strindbergillä
Iltalehti 17.2.1922 Suomalaisia koteja
Iltalehti 23.2.1922 Helmi Biesen näyttely. Strindbergin taidesalonki
Iltalehti 24.2.1922 Hugo Strindberg-näyttelyn avajaiset
Iltalehti 27.2.1922 Arkaluontoinen rakennustaiteellinen pulma
Iltalehti 1.3.1922 Strix 25-vuotias
Iltalehti 7.3.1922 Hugo Simberg
Iltalehti 11.3.1922 Santeri Salokivi. Näyttely Strindbergin taidesalongissa
Iltalehti 15.3.1922 Anton W:sson Lindfors
Iltalehti 14.3.1922 Pekka Halonen. Näyttely Strindbergin salongissa
Iltalehti 29.3.1922 Mikko Oinosen syövytysnäyttely
Iltalehti 30.3.1922 T. K. Sallinen
Iltalehti 5.4.1922 Tänään kysyimme (interview)
Iltalehti 8.4.1922 Sukevan keskusvankilan rakennussuunnitelma. Arkkitehtikilpailun tulokset
Iltalehti 18.4.1922 T. K. Sallisen näyttely
Iltalehti 20.4.1922 W. Toppelius
Iltalehti 21.4.1922 Tri Arvid Baeckströmin esitelmät
Iltalehti 26.4.1922 Stenmanin taidenäyttelyt. Viljo Kojo – Anton Lindfors
Iltalehti 26.5.1922 Tampereen teollisuusnäyttely. Rakennukset valmistumassa (based on Aalto´s text)
Käsiteollisuus 1922 no 2 Oma talo. Miksi sen täytyy olla kaunis
Maaseudun Sanomat 31.5.1922 Tampereen teollisuusnäyttely. Arkkit. A. Aallon antamia tietoja näyttelyn rakennussuunnitelmista (interview, also in *Kauppalehti* 1.6.1922)

Iltalehti 14.5.1923 Vallis Gratiae. Mietteitä esityksen johdosta
Iltalehti 30.6.1923 Carl Petersen. Hänen vaikutuksensa Suomen rakennustaiteeseen
Uusi Suomi 8.7.1923 Suomen kaupungit Göteporissa. Huomattava kaupunkitaiteellinen näyttely Suomesta
Keskisuomalainen 11.12.1924 Kauppatori–kauppahalli–kauppakuja
Sisä-Suomi 9.1.1924 Ylös Ateenasta
Sisä-Suomi 11.1.1924 Katukulttuuria
Sisä-Suomi 13.1.1924 Kuk-kosh-khaa. Tutankhamonin lempivaimo
Sisä-Suomi 27.2.1924 Kaksi kaupunkia
Sisä-Suomi 12.12.1924 Kaupunkikulttuuria [Urban Culture*]
Kukkulakaupunki [The Hilltop Town*] (undated manuscript c. 1924)

Keskisuomalainen 22.1.1925 Eräs kaupunkimme kaunistustoimenpide ja sen mahdollisuudet [Temple Baths on Jyväskylä Ridge*]
Käsiteollisuus 1925 no 5 Kirkkotaiteestamme [Finnish Church Art*]
Sisä-Suomi 5.6.1925 Eräs asemakaavakysymys
Sisä-Suomi 28.6.1925 Keskisuomalaisen maiseman rakennustaide [Architecture in the Landscape of Central Finland*]
Sisä-Suomi 12.7.1925 Viitasaaren kirkko uudistetaan (interview)
Uusi Suomi 17.4.1925 A.C. Hienoston koruesineitä näytteillä
Abbé Coignardin saarna [Abbé Coignard´s Sermon*] (lecture at the Jyväskylä Student Union 6.3.1925)

Aitta 1926 sample issue Porraskiveltä arkihuoneeseen [From Doorstep to Living Room*]
Keskisuomalainen 9.11.1926 Kaupunkiemme torikysymysten järjestäminen. Arkkitehti Alvar Aallon ehdotuksia
Käsiteollisuus 1926 no 3 Maisemanrakennustaide
Länsi-Savo 8.4.1926 Anttolan kirkko uuteen asuun. Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto saanut korjauksen tehtäväkseen (based on Aalto´s text)
Mikkelin Sanomat 1.10.1926 Anttolan kirkkoa katsomassa (interview)
Rovaniemi 2.10.1926 Huomattavia uudistuksia Kemijärven kirkossa (based on Aalto´s text)
Sisä-Suomi 12.10.1926 Keuruun kirkonkylä järjestetään asemakaavallisesti (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Suomi 31.10.1926 Muuramen kirkko

Iltalehti 5.12.1927 Itsenäisyysmonumentti (interview)
Keskisuomalainen 1.9.1927 Suoja Oy:n piirustukset lopullisesti valmistuneet. Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto kertoo Keskisuomalaiselle (interview)
Sisä-Suomi 19.11.1927 Korpilahden kirkon uudistukset (based on Aalto´s text)
Sosialisti 10.12.1927 Pienasunnot – sosialinen ja taloudellinen kompastuskivi

Turun Sanomat 6.12.1927 Suomen itsenäisyyden muistomerkki
Uusi Aura 3.11.1927 Arkkitehtuurin elinkysymyksiä (interview)
Uusi Suomi 25.11.1927 Itsenäisyyden muistomerkki – stadion [An Independence Monument in Helsinki – The Olympic Stadium*]

Kritisk Revy 1928 no 3 Rationel biograf [The Rational Cinema*]
Rakennustaito 1928 no 5-6 Uusin Tapani-talo Turussa. Hiukan ennakkotietoja
Sisä-Suomi 18.8.1928 Mitä arkkitehti Aallolle kuuluu (interview)
Turun Sanomat 7.10.1928 Henki-Suomen liiketalon piirustuskilpailu (interview)
Turun Sanomat 14.10.1928 Turun Sanomain tuleva toimitalo (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Aura 1.1.1928 Uusimmista virtauksista rakennustaiteen alalla [The Latest Trends in Architecture*]
Uusi Aura 20.4.1928 Arkkitehti – maailmasta. Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto Tukholman vaikutelmistaan (interview)
Uusi Aura 21.4.1928 Turun arkkitehti
Uusi Aura 21.4.1928 Hieman Turun Suomal. Teatterin tulevan uuden kodin esittelyä (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Aura 29.9.1928 Milloin pääsemme uuteen teatteriin (interview)
Uusi Aura 21.10.1928 Nykyajan arkkitehtuuri ja kodikas sisustus [Modern Architecture and Interior Design of the Home*] (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Aura 9.11.1928 Uutta ulkovalaistustekniikkaa (interview)

Arkkitehti 1929 no 6 Lounais-Suomen maalaistentalo, Turku
Arkkitehti 1929 no 6 Standardivuokratalo Läntinen Pitkäkatu 20, Turku
Arkkitehti 1929 no 6 Turun 700-vuotisjuhla
Arkkitehti 1929 no 6 Lurcat
Arkkitehti 1929 no 10 Armas Lindgren ja me [Armas Lindgren And We*]
Helsingin Sanomat 17.6.1929 Messuilla loistava menestys (based on Aalto´s text)
Hufvudstadsbladet 10.3.1929 Byggnaderna för Åbo stads 700-årsfest (interview)
Hufvudstadsbladet 9.6.1929 Åbo-mässan inför sin fullbordan (interview)
Iltalehti 23.2.1929 Rakennushygienia – arkkitehtooninen realitekijä
Iltalehti 12.6.1929 Asiallisuutta, ei unelmia. Arkkit. Aalto kertoo Turun juhlasomistelusta (interview)
Keskisuomalainen 11.9.1929 Suurin mielenkiintoni kohde on probleemi: Ihmisasunto. En tule enää piirtämän koruhuonekaluja ystävilleni sanoo Alvar Aalto (interview)
Rovaniemi 23.11.1929 Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto, Kemijärven kirkon uudistustöitten suunnittelija, kertoo pyrkimyksistään
Sosialisti 9.3.1929 700-vuotisjuhlian rakennussuunnitelma on nyt lopullisesti valmistunut (interview)
Tulenkantajat 1929 no 3 Nykyajan Arkkitehtuuria. Alvar Aallon haastattelu (interview)
Turunmaa 10.3.1929 Turun 700-vuotisjuhlien ja messujen rakennussuunnitelmat ovat nyttemmin valmistuneet (based on Aalto´s text)
Turunmaa 17.2.1929 Varsinais-Suomen tuberkuloosiparantolan rakennustyöt voidaan aloittaa korkeintaan ensi vuoden alussa (interview)
Turun Sanomat 16.2.1929 Aalto kertoo (interview)
Turun Sanomat 17.2.1929 Arkkitehti Alvar Aallon luonnos Varsinais-Suomen tuberkuloosiparantolaksi (based on Aalto´s text, also in *Iltalehti* 18.2.1929 and *Sisä-Suomi* 20.2.1929)
Turun Sanomat 6.7.1929 Kaksi päivää aamiaista neljässä ravintolassa. Arkkitehti Aalto kertoo virkistysmatkasta Tukholmaan, mutta myös rakennustoiminnasta, jota hän sivumennen katseli (interview)
Turun Sanomat 22.10.1929 Suurempaa huomiota pienasuntojen tieteelliseen tutkimiseen (interview)
Uusi Aura 6.2.1929 Nähtyä ja kuultua (interview)
Uusi Aura 17.2.1929 1 palkinnon saanut ehdotus Paimion tuberkuloosiparantolaksi (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Aura 10.3.1929 Turun juhlain rakennussuunnitelma yksityiskohtia myöten valmis (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Aura 28.4.1929 Funktionalistinen rakennustapa kaupungissamme. Ensimmäinen sellainen talo valmistunut. Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto kertoo (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Aura 6.7.1929 Nykyaikaisen arkkitehtuurin suuntaviivoista

Uusi Aura 29.8.1929 Tukholmassa v. 1930 pidettävän funktionalistisen suurnäyttelyn johdosta syntynyt suuri riita (based on Aalto´s text)
Uusi Suomi 3.11.1929 Nykyisen rakennussuunnan kongressi (based on Aalto´s text, also in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Turun Sanomat*, *Uusi Aura* and *Åbo Underrättels*er 3.11.1929, *Aamulehti* 4.11.1929)
Åbo Underrättelser 13.1.1929 700-årsjubileet erbjuder vår stad utsökt chans (interview)

Arkkitehti 1930 no 6 Turun Sanomat, Turku
Arkkitehti 1930 no 6 Lars Backer
Arkkitehti 1930 no 8 Tukholman näyttely [The Stockholm Exhibition 1930*]
Byggmästaren 1930 no 2 Bostadsbyggelse på gammal stadsplan
Byggmästaren 1930 no 2 Valbart sovrumsantal i småbostad
Domus 1930 no 8-10 Asuntomme-probleemina [The Housing Problem*]
Åbo Underrättelser 22.5.1930 Det intellektuella Sveriges grepp på herr Medelsvensson. Alvar Aalto karaktäriserar utställningen i Stockholm (interview)
Åbo Underrättelser 25.5.1930 Stockholmsutställiningen [The Stockholm Exhibition 1930*]
Koristetaiteilijoiden liitto Ornamon vuosikirja IV 1930 Ajatelmia arkkitehtuurista
Pienasunto? 1930 Näyttelymme
Pienasunto? 1930 Pienasunto?

Arkkitehti 1931 no 10 acceptera
Arkkitehti 1931 no 12 O.Y. Toppilan tehdasrakennukset
Bauwelt 1931 no 25 Ein Brief von Finnland [A Letter from Finland*]
Bauwelt 1931 no 25 Beschreibung der Druckerei in Abo
Arkkitehti 1932 no 1 Zagreb. Sairaalaryhmän kilpailuehdotus
Byggmästaren 1932 no 14 Sanatorium i Paimio, Finland
Granskaren 1932 no 7-8 En utvecklingslinje
Granskaren 1932 no 7-8 Bostadssystem i USSR
Soihtu 1932 no 4 Hyvä asunto
Arkitektur och samhälle 1932 no 1 Bostadsfrågans geografi [Geography of the Housing Question*]

Arkkitehti 1933 no 6 Paimion parantola
Helsingin Sanomat 27.8.1933 Arkkitehtikongressi höyrylaivalla. Kongressissa oli pääkysymyksenä kaupunkien asemakaavaperiaatteitten analyyttinen tutkimus. Arkkitehti Alvar Aalto palannut uudenaikaisen rakennustaiteen kansainvälisestä kongressista Välimereltä (interview)
Tulenkantajat 1933 no 31 Nykyaikaiset arkkitehtuuripyrkimykset lähtevät ehdottomasti yhteiskunnalliselta pohjalta
Varsinais-Suomen tuberkuloosiparantola 1933 Rakennusteknillinen selostus

Arkkitehti 1934 no 6 Paimion parantolan asuinrakennuksia
Arkkitehti 1934 no 6 Norrmalmkilpailu
Tekniikan Ylioppilas 1934 no 2 Erään haastattelun haastattelu. André Lurcat Suomessa. Alvar Aalto ja ulkomainen orientointimme [Instead of an Interview. André Lurcat in Finland*] (interview)

Arkkitehti 1935 no 10 Viipurin kaupungin kirjasto
Form 1935 no 7 Rationalismen och människan [Rationalism and Man*]
Viipurin kaupungin kirjasto 1935 Rakennusteknillinen selostus

Arkkitehti 1937 no 5 Tallinnan taidemuseokilpailu
Arkkitehti 1937 no 8 Yksityistalo Aalto
Arkkitehti 1937 no 9 Suomi Pariisin maailmannäyttelyssä
Arkkitehti 1937 no 11 Ravintola Savoy´n sisustus
Byggmästaren 1937 no 32 Nationellt deltagande i internationella
Hufvudtadsbladet 24.3.1937 Helhet och Kvalitet. Entusiasm bor skapa vår Parisutställning. Provincialism dålig propaganda. Alvar Aalto om sina riktlinjer för Finland och Paris

Arkkitehti 1938 no 9 Rakenteitten ja aineitten vaikutus nykyaikaiseen rakennustaiteeseen [Influence of Structure and Material on Contemporary Architecture*] (also in *Rakennustaito* 1939 no 24-25)
Arkkitehti 1938 no 10 Sunilan sulfaattiselluloosatehdas

Arkkitehti 1939 no 8 Maailmannäyttelyt: New York World´s Fair. The Golden Gate Exposition [Comments on the 1939 World´s Fair in New York*]
Arkkitehti 1939 no 8 Suomen osasto New Yorkin maailmannäyttelyssä
Arkkitehti 1939 no 9 Mairea, Maire ja Harry Gullichsenin yksityistalo, Noormarkku [Mairea*]
Arkkitehti 1939 no 11-12 Portaaton kerrostalo, A. Ahström osakeyhtiö, Kauttuan tehtaat
Byggmästaren 1939 no 34 Finland i New York
Helsingin Sanomat 23.6.1939 Suurnäyttelyiden varjopuolena n.s. näyttelyväsymys. Suomen hyvä maine Amerikassa edellyttää harkintaa mainostuksessa. Amerikkalainen vainuaa omahyväisyyden sosiaalisesta propagandasta (interview)
Hufvudstadsbladet 23.6.1939 Extrema strömlinjen försvinner nog snart – den är icke amerikansk. Alvar Aalto hemma, landed med intryck from USA och Expo (interview)
Rakennustaito 1939 no 5-6 Havaintoja Amerikanmatkalta (published in Swedish in *Byggaren* 1939 no 3 under the title Förhållandena inom den amerikanska byggnadsverksamheten)
The Villa Mairea* (lecture at Yale University 9.5.1939)
The Human Side – den mänskliga sidan [The Human Side as a Political Option for the Western World*] (manuscript for *The Human Side* journal, summer 1939)
Suomi ja Pohjola [Finland and Scandinavia*] (lecture in Gothenburg, October 1939)

Appendix 4. Letters and additional materials concerning the library project, sent to Aalto. (AF)

Viipuri City Department of Finances, Viipuri 3.1.1934. Payment of 10,000 Finnish marks to Aalto.

Viipuri City Department of Finances 12.2.1934. Letter confirming payment of 15,500 Finnish marks for preparing new drawings of the library.

Viipuri City Department of Finances 9.3.1934. Request of receipt from Aalto for the submitted payment of 10,000 marks.

Viipuri City Department of Finances 16.4.1934. Letter confirming payment of 15,000 marks, requesting a receipt from Aalto.

Viipuri Board of Technical Works 2.2.1934, letter signed by Georg Fraser. The wish was expressed that the ground works would begin soon. Aalto is to come to a meeting to Viipuri on 16.2. Aalto's request to continue co-operation with engineer Packálen and the Voima- ja polttoainetaloudellinen yhdistys association is accepted as far as this is relevant.

Viipuri City Building Office 11.6.1934, letter signed by Väinö Löyskä. It is informed that the city architect has sent a letter to 'Voima- ja palttoainetaloudellinen yhdistys', with three offers attached for electrical wiring and technology, requesting to contact Aalto and give their statement on the offers received.

Viipuri City Building Office 24.9.1934, signed by Uno Ullberg. The city architect sends drawings of the book lift for Aalto's approval, accompanied by Kone company's letter.

Viipuri City Building Office 13.1.1935, signed by Uno Ullberg. The city architect sends a list of furniture to Aalto's office to confirm these accord the placing of furniture as Aalto has planned. It is reminded that the sum should not exceed that stated in the existing list.

Aarne Ervi's reply to the previous letter, 13.2.1936.

Viipuri City Building Office 2.5.1935, signed by Uno Ullberg. The city architect requests Aalto to confirm the bill the city has received from the Kopos company.

Viipuri City Building Office 9.11.1935, signed by Karjalainen. Letter to Aalto's office, addressed to architect Aarne Ervi, requesting payment for an outgoing phone call costing 12,70 Finnish marks.

Viipuri City Department of Finances 23.12.1935. Letter confirming payment of invoice for 10,000 Finnish marks, requesting receipt.

Viipuri City Building Office 15.1.1936, signed by Karjalainen. Reminder to pay the bill for the phone call, addressed to architect Aarne Ervi.

30.11.1938 unsigned copy of a letter from architect Aalto's office in Noormarkku. Enquiry to the Viipuri City Building Office, to confirm which company had provided the stone material for the library's main entrance. Attached a postcard for reply.

Viipuri City Building Office 1.12.1938. reply to the previous, confirming the company in question was the Suomen Vuolukivi Oy company.

Appendix 5. List of persons who worked at Alvar Aalto´s office during the library project

Source: Schildt, G. 1994, 314-317. The list is as complete as possible.

Aalto, Aino (née Marsio), architect, 1923–1949
Bäckström, (?) architect, 1928–1929
Bjaertnaes, Erling, Norwegian architect, 1927–1931
Cedercreutz, Jonas, student of architecture, 1934–1935
Custer, Alfred, Swiss architect, 1931
Dahlberg, Diedrich, architect, 1933–1939, 1941–1943
Ervi, Aarne, architect, 1935–1936
Harmia, Hugo, student of architecture, 1932?
Lappi-Seppälä, Jussi, student of architecture, 1933–1934
Rauta, (?) draughtsman 1929
Serenius, Ingvald, architect, 1920s or 1930s
Sipilä, Lauri, architect,1931–1933
Takala, Teuvo, model builder, 1923–1932, 1936, 1937–1939, 1956
Vetri, (?) architect, 1929
Wiklund, Lars, architect, 1929–1931
Wildhagen, Harald, Norwegian architect, 1927–1930

Appendix 6. Viipuri Library published in periodicals

Finnish Architectural Review 1928 no 3 (competition results)
Finnish Architectural Review 1935 no 10 (photographs, plans, sections, description)
Rassegna di Architettura 1936 January
Casabella 1936 no 97
Architect´s Journal 1936 September 10 (photographs, plans, sections)
The Architectural Review 1936 March (photographs, plans, sections, sketches, description)
Werk 1940 no 3-4 (photographs, plans, sections, details)
Arkitekten 1939 no 2 (photographs, plans, section)
Werk 1948 no 9
The Finnish Trade Review 1948 no 51
Finnish Architectural Review 1948 no 1-2 (photographs, sketches)
L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui 1950 no 29
Parthenon 1951 (photographs, plans, sections)
Revista Nacional de Arquitectura 1952 no 124
Casabella 1954 no 200
Zodiac 1960 no 7
The American Scandinavian Review 1965
Finnish Architectural Review 1976 no 7-8
Progressive Architecture 1977 April
Parametro dicembre 1977 no 62
Architectural Design 1979 no 12

Appendix 7. The members of the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library

Source: bound leaflet by the Restoration Committee October 1992: 'Alvar Aalto Viipuri City Library Restoration Project'. Drawings by Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd.

Elissa Aalto, architect, Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd
Gunnel Adlercreutz, architect, chairman of the Finnish Association of Architects
Kristian Gullichsen, architect, professor
Aarne Hollmén, managing director, Magnus Malmberg Engineers
Jaakko Iloniemi, director, Centre for Finnish Business and Political Studies
Mikko Mansikka, director, Ministry of the Environment
Valdemar Melanko, director, Institute for Russian and East European Studies
Paavo Mänttäri, architect, Alvar Aalto Club
Riitta Nikula, Ph.D, Museum of Finnish Architecture

Committee secretaries: *Vezio Nava*, architect, Alvar Aalto Club
Jussi Rautsi, senior adviser, Ministry of the Environment

Appendix 8.

The Russian architects having been responsible of the restoration
Petr Moiseeyevich Rozenblum 1950–1957
Aleksander Mikhailovich Shver 1957–1961
Sergei Kravchenko 1987–199?

The Finnish team actively involved with the restoration project in 2003
Source: Kairamo, M. 2003, 98.

Maija Kairamo, architect, secretary general
Eric Adlercreutz, architect, chair of the board
Leif Englund, architect, member of the planning team
Tapani Mustonen, architect, member of the planning team
Vezio Nava architect, member of the planning team

Appendix 9. Founding members of the Friends of Viipuri Library 25.2.1993

Source: The Restoration Committee's archive, AF

Aalto, Elissa, architect
Aarnio, Inkeri, head secretary
Castren, Paavo, assistant professor
Gardberg, Sverker, architect
Helamaa, Kirsti, architect
Hirn, Sven, professor
Inkinen, Erkki, director
Jaatinen, Martti, professor
Jokipaltio, Leena-Maija, MA
Klinge, Matti, professor
Lappo, Osmo, professor
Lassila, Sirkka, MA
Meurman, I.-O., professor
Mäkelä, Jukka, designer
Nava, Vezio architect
Nikula, Riitta, Ph.D
Osara, Ansa, Mrs.
Paloheimo, Katri, Mrs.
Paloheimo, Arvi, judge
Päällysaho, Kirsti, secretary of foreign affairs
Rautsi, Jussi, senior councillor
Schidt, Göran, Ph.D
Sipponen, Kauko, chancellor
Somerto, Pentti, director
Teräsvirta, Einari, professor
Torikka, Jalmari, reporter
Varhevuori, Pirkko, Mrs.
Virolainen, Johannes, Councillor of State
Väänänen, Yrjö, ambassador
Ziliaccus, Benedict, writer

Appendix 10. Restoration timeline

Main source: the restoration Committee's archive documents, AF.

1945–1955 The library stands un-used.

1961 The library opens after the renovation.

1970– Both Finnish and Soviet architects (e.g. Andrei Gozak) begin to express their concern toward the library's condition, promoting the idea that it needs to be restored. Toward the end of 1970s the issue is taken up with Viktor Ballin, director of the USSR Museum of Architecture.

1980 The Museum of Finnish Architecture and number of notable Finnish architects make a petition to minister Olavi J. Mattila (4.11.1980) that Finland would make an offer to restore the library. Preceding this the issue has been negotiated with the director of Haka, Antti Pelkola, Elissa Aalto as well as the Artek company.

1985 The persons responsible for the restoration design in Vyborg contact Finland through the Finnstroi company, to request the original architectural drawings and other materials. The materials are sent to Vyborg.

1986 The Museum of Finnish Architecture submits memorandum to Minister Kalevi Sorsa, where it is expressed that Finns could participate the restoration work under the economic exchange agreement between Finland and Soviet Union.

SAFA makes an appeal to the USSR Union of Architects.

A group of cultural persons of Leningrad, as linguist D.S. Likhachov, make an appeal to the USSR Ministry of Culture. The representatives of the Ministry visit Vyborg, and the earlier plan to renovate the building is given up. Decision is made to commission plans for restoration.

May 1986 Finnish Minister Gustav Björkstrand sends a letter to the Soviet Minister of Culture Pyotr Demichev (23.5.1986), expressing the wish to upgrade the classification level of the library. There is no response to the appeal.

June 1986 Head Consul Kaurinkoski visits Vyborg 23 June. The local experts inform him that they are not able to realise the restoration, expressing the wish that Finns would be invited to assist with the work.

1988–1989 USSR Cultural Foundation Leningrad section invites a group of Finnish museum experts to visit Vyborg in fall 1988. The Finnish Ministry of Environment sets up a Finnish-Soviet cultural heritage workgroup, with representatives from the Museum of Finnish Architecture (Riitta Nikula). Sergei Kravchenko is invited to visit Finland.

May 1989 Finnish architects and cultural persons make a petition to the President of Finland.

March 1991 An expert seminar organised in Helsinki by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment draws attention to the need of urgent repair.

June 1991 The Alvar Aalto Club, an association of former employees of Aalto's office, send an appeal to architects around the world.

July 1991 A protocol of intentions is signed in Leningrad by Mme Sidorova and Mr. Mansikka (director general of the Ministry of the Environment).

Autumn 1991 Consulting Engineers Malmberg estimate that the cost of the restoration would be approximately 27 million Finnish marks.

November 1991 An agreement is made between the Ministry of Environment and Alvar Aalto & Co. to start planning the renovation. Signed by director Mikko Mansikka, planner Jussi Rautsi, and architect Elissa Aalto.

1992 The Finnish Committee for the Restoration of the Viipuri Library is established under the initiative of Elissa Aalto and the Finnish Ministry of the Environment. A corresponding committee is established in Russia. An international fund-raising campaign is initiated.

January 1992 The Finnish Restoration Committee visits the library and negotiates the project with local authorities.

March 1992 A protocol of intentions is signed by Mr. Smirnov, Mr. Rachinsky, and Mr. Mansikka. It is agreed that a campaign to raise international funding will be started, and the architectural design will be done by Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd consulting with Russian experts.

June 1992 A press conference is held in Helsinki to announce the fund raising campaign. A brochure on the project is sent to different architectural associations around the world, and other relevant international organisations.

January 1993 The Restoration Committee introduces an emergency plan at the 700th anniversary of the Viipuri Castle. The most urgent measures are the renovation of the roof, the foundations and the basement floor.

February 1993 Friends of Viipuri Library, Viipurin Kirjaston Ystävät r.y., Viborgs Biblioteks Vänner r.f Amici Bibliothecae Viburgensis is established on 25 February. It is decided to commission a celebratory coin. Signed by Pirkko Vahervuori, Jukka Mäkelä, Sverker Gardberg, and Vezio Nava.

March 1993 It is decided that Alvar Aalto Architects Ltd will provide plans for renovating the roof and the basement floor. The Finnish National Board of Public Building will provide technical planning aid. The NBB company will take care of contracting.

May 1993 Two day seminar is organised at the Architectural Institute in St Petersburg on 21 May, and in the library on 22 May. Among the speakers are architects Gunnel Adlercreutz, Maija Kairamo, Kristian Gullichsen, Michele Mercling Katrina Jauhola-Seitsalo, and Sverker Gardberg. From Russia, the speakers are N. Popov from the Architectural Institute, architect S. Kravchenko, director of the Cultural Foundation A. Solovja, and Vyborg City Governor N. Petsov. Here, it is stated that Restaurointitekniikka Oy (Heikki Hänninen) is capable to conduct the restoration work. Also Haka construction company has made an offer. The Russians promise 25,000 rubles for the most urgent works.

1994 Emergency repairs are made. These include external drainage and sewage system repairs. The conservation and restoration of the glass wall adjacent to the entrance hall begins (completed 1996). The Viipuri Library exhibition begins an international tour.

1995 General principles and overall design for the restoration are established. Further emergency repairs are made. The Russian Federation includes the library in the list of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage.

1996 The small roof terrace by the main hall is restored, as a pilot project for restoring all the roof terraces.

1997 The renovation of the former caretaker's apartment begins as a case study project (completed 2000). The Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library is registered as a charitable society. It is the responsible planning the restoration.

1998 A ten square meter prototype of undulating ceiling is installed in the lecture hall.

1999 Repairing the roof of the lecture hall wing begins (completed 2001, financed by the Finnish Ministries of Education and of Environment).
The Getty Foundation grants funding for:
- research on the concrete structures;
- restoration design of the reading and lending hall roofs, including the skylights;
- documentation and measured drawings of the entire building;
- training and education program.

2000 The repair of the children's section entrance roof is completed, and heating systems of the lecture hall wing are renewed with funding from Russia. Restoration design of the reading and lending hall roofs (including the skylights) continues. The World Monuments Watch included the library on their list of 100 most endangered sites for the years 2000–2001.

2001 The repair of the lending hall terrace staircase is financed by Foundation for Swedish Culture in Finland. Conservation of the periodicals' reading room entrance doors is financed by Russians.
The Getty Grant Report is published.

2002 The repair of the lending hall roof is completed and the reading hall roof repair begins. (Financed by the World Monuments Fund, Robert Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage.) Restoration of the lecture hall window frames (completed 2008) and conservation and restoration of the children's section entrance doors are financed by Russians. The World Monuments Watch includes the library on their list of 100 most endangered sites for the years 2002–2003. The 88th council session of the IUA (International Union of Architects) suggests that Russian and Finnish authorities should have the library declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2003 The repair of the reading hall roof, the main entrance and the main hall terrace is completed. The restoration of the lecture hall windows and of the children's section entrance doors continues.

2004–2005 The restoration of the periodicals reading room is financed by the Russian Federation, and the entrance of the children's section by Helkama Forste company and the City of Vyborg. The Friends of Viipuri Library is merged to the Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library on 13.12.2004.

2005 The 70th Anniversary of the library is celebrated on 13 October. An international campaign to furnish the lecture hall withAalto furniture is organised in co-operation with Artek and furniture manufacturer Korhonen.

2006–2010 The restoration of the lecture hall is financed by Finnish and international, mainly Swedish, contributions and the City of Vyborg. The entrance hall and the adjoining corridor is restored with funds of the City of Vyborg. An internet corner is set up in the nook of the entrance hall.

2010–2013 The restoration of the library is completed in 2013 (final details in 2014). The works are financed by the Government of the Russian Federation. The Finnish Committee for the Restoration of Viipuri Library has an advisory role in the project and supervises, guides, inspects and reports on the restoration.

2014 The World Monuments Fund/Knoll awards the project a Modernism Prize for preservation of a modern landmark

2015 The restoration wins a Europa Nostra Award (http://m.europanostra.org/news/578)

Photo: Jussi Rautsi

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This research introduces the case of the Viipuri Library, designed by Alvar Aalto during the years 1927–1935. The library was built in Finland, but at the end of World War II the area was annexed to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of the Russian Federation. Consequently, this building has appeared in very different types of contexts, from architectural publications to histories of the war to newspaper articles. The questions this thesis addresses are why this library has aroused such interest, and what was the role of the physical building as part of these events. The theoretical frame is drawn from the anthropologist Alfred Gell's work *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (1998). The key notion is that as situations and interpretations change, material objects, such as the library, are not about assigned meanings, and their efficacy is instead rooted in their specific contexts. This way it is possible to analyse how the Viipuri Library has achieved a role as something more than just a building.

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