

# Wivi Lönn's Influence on Finnish Architecture

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ENGA14 Finnish Institutions Research Paper (Hopkins)  
English Translation and Interpreting (ETI) Curriculum  
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Finland is a country known for gender equality in all different sectors of society. Finnish women gained the right to vote as early as in 1906<sup>1</sup>. In the 1860's, Finnish women were given the right of access to higher education<sup>2</sup>. They were also among the first in the world to be allowed to attend architect schools and to work independently as architects<sup>3</sup>. The first Finnish female architects graduated in the 1890's. Since the 1980's, the growing interest in these women and their work has produced much interesting material. One of these pioneers, the first Finnish female architect to have started her own office in 1898, was Olivia Mathilda Lönn, also known as Wivi Lönn.

This paper studies the life and career of Wivi Lönn from the end of the nineteenth century up to the 1960's. It answers the following questions: When and why did architect schools start accepting women in Finland? How and why did Wivi Lönn become the first Finnish female architect? What are her major works and their characteristics? What has been Wivi Lönn's influence on Finnish Architecture?

## Young Wivi Lönn Decides to Become an Architect

Olivia Mathilda Lönn was born on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1872 in Tampere (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 33), an industrial city in south-western Finland<sup>4</sup>. She was the second child of four in the family which lived in a house by the Lake *Näsijärvi* near the centre of Tampere. Young Wivi Lönn attended *Tampereen Suomalainen Tyttökoulu*, the Finnish Girls' School in Tampere. Lönn's father, brewer Emanuel Wilhelm Lönn, had been one of the founders of the school. When he died in 1888, Lönn's mother, Mathilda Lönn, was faced with financial problems because she now had to take care of four children alone. This may have been one of the reasons why Wivi Lönn, who turned out to have great mathematical and drawing talents, decided to choose a field that was very unusual for women at the time – architecture (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 278; Kivinen, **Tampereen** 33, 35).

Wivi Lönn's mother supported her in her unconventional choice (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 34). In 1892, Wivi Lönn enrolled together with thirteen male students in *Tampereen teollisuuskoulu*, the Tampere Industrial School, which had just received authority to accept female students. (Kivinen, *Wivi* 22; Kivinen, **Tampereen** 35-36). In an interview for the magazine *Kaunis Koti* [*Beautiful Home*] in 1963 Wivi Lönn explained her choice by saying: 'Why did I happen to enter the Industrial School? I had the construction business in my blood, I was drawn to it. People did wonder, though. The public opinion was a bit different then' (Tuunanen, **Wivi**).

The Tampere Industrial School trained students in the machinery and building trades. Since Wivi Lönn had a secondary-school background contrary to her fellow students, she was far in advance of them in theoretical subjects. She did only one year of the industrial-school course and was clearly the best student. Therefore one of her teachers, Georg Schreck, recommended in 1893 that she should move to the capital city of Finland, Helsinki, and enter *Polyteknillinen opisto*, the Polytechnic Institute of Finland as a special-entry student (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 278).

In 1887, the institute – which had been founded eight years earlier – had started accepting students who had completed the Matriculation Examination<sup>5</sup>. However, before 1901, a woman was allowed to take the examination only by requesting special permission. Without the Matriculation Examination, the students had to pass the entrance examination. The third option was to apply as a special-permission (or 'extra') student, like Wivi Lönn did. The special-permission students had to be over 16 years of age and

have sufficient background knowledge in the subjects they wished to study (Vähäpesola 21; Jallinoja, *Women's* 14).

In 1893, Wivi Lönn started studying at the Polytechnic Institute, which was the only Finnish architect school of the time. In addition to architects, the institute trained engineers specializing for example in machinery and chemistry. At the time, the vast majority of the students were men. The rules of the institute did not prohibit women from enrolling, but they spoke only of male students because it was not considered possible that women should wish to enrol. Between 1879 and 1885 only seven women had taken individual courses in arts – which were also in the curriculum – but they were non-degree students. However, women soon started to show growing interest in architectural studies, which is thought to be due to the fact that in Finland architecture was beginning to be seen as art, in which women had always been interested (Vähäpesola 20–21; Suominen-Kokkonen, *Naisarkkitehti*, 157).

When Wivi Lönn graduated as an architect from the Polytechnic Institute in 1896, she was the fifth woman in Finland to do so (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 278). The first female student to graduate as an architect was Signe Hornborg<sup>6</sup>. She graduated in 1890 and is presumably the first woman in Europe to have graduated from a school of architecture (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Naisarkkitehti* 156-157). However, she did not go on to work as an independent architect like Wivi Lönn (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 38-39). After graduation, Signe Hornborg worked as an office-architect in the offices of Elia Heikel and Lars Sonck<sup>7</sup>, and did some free-lance -projects as well (Helenius et al. 30).

### **The Start of Wivi Lönn's Career in the Era of National Romanticism**

After graduation, Wivi Lönn worked for two years in the offices of her former teachers, Onni Tarjanne and Gustaf Nyström, before setting up her own studio in 1898 (Kinnunen 48). When working in Tarjanne's office she took part in designing for example the Finnish National Theatre. The famous architectural trio Herman Gesellius<sup>8</sup>, Armas Lindgren<sup>9</sup> and Eliel Saarinen<sup>10</sup> also worked at Gustaf Nyström's office (Haapio 98-99).

At the time of Lönn's early career, around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Finnish architecture was going through a transition. During the preceding decades, Historicism<sup>11</sup> had been the prevailing trend, but in the world of architecture, new styles were emerging. Art Nouveau, Jugendstil and National Romanticism<sup>12</sup> became in fashion when nationalism and the independence movement intensified. An important turning point was the year 1900, when Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen designed the Finnish pavilion at the Paris World Exposition in the style of a medieval stone church and castle, and the pavilion was decorated with frescos painted by Akseli Gallen-Kallela<sup>13</sup>. International esteem resulted in the breakthrough of this new style in Finland. Simultaneously, National Romanticism was the driving force in music, arts and architecture. The heyday of national romanticism in Finland was ephemeral; it lasted only a few years, but produced many prominent works<sup>14</sup> (Haapio 99; Ronimus-Poukka).

On Gustaf Nyström's recommendation, Wivi Lönn was given a grant to study brick and granite architecture as well as school construction in Europe and in the British Isles. With its noteworthy granite architecture, Scotland was the main destination of Lönn's trip in the summer of 1898, and she toured schools in the Aberdeen area (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 279). She also visited Germany in the same year (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 49).

In her travel notes of the summer of 1898 (Kivinen, *Nuoren* 27), Wivi Lönn wrote about her impressions of the Scottish architecture. She described in her notes how she saw granite buildings everywhere. She also said she hoped one day granite would commonly be used in Finland because this excellent building material abounded in Finland. Lönn also noticed that pilasters, columns and molding were rarely used; instead, rhythm was created by using both smooth and rough granite surfaces on the façades. Important points in a building's façade could be enhanced with a beautiful ornament, which against

the otherwise simple wall surface looked very decorative. Variation in colour was achieved by using lighter and darker grey, or grey and red granite in the same façade. This description matches quite well for example the façade of the Tampere Fire Station, which Wivi Lönn designed in 1905 (pictures 7 and 8).

### **General Characteristics of Wivi Lönn's Works**

Wivi Lönn – who lived to be 94 years old – was a prolific designer; she designed over eighty buildings in all. In Finland, they include public buildings, private houses, villas, blocks of flats, industrial buildings, banks, churches, and an observatory. In addition, she renovated eleven manor houses. She also designed buildings abroad, for example the Tartu Student House in Estonia and Villa Finlande in Biarritz, France. Together with Armas Lindgren, she designed the Estonia Theatre in Tallinn in 1913 (*Index of buildings*).

As a whole, Wivi Lönn's designs were clear cut and consistent. She always wanted to find an economical solution to the entirety of a project, paying attention to building materials, the functionality of the building in its intended use, and especially the efficient use of space. She took care of the construction supervision, and made the structural calculations herself. Hence, she was respected for her professional and engineering skills, and her eye for economical solutions (Haapio 100).

The façades of Lönn's designs were ascetic compared to the previous styles; there were not as many decorative elements in them. A tower was often the prominent feature of the building. The gables were often ornamental in order to make the overall impression a bit lighter. Lönn used natural materials like wood, stone and bricks. Plastering was scarcely used. She gained a reputation as a designer of schools and other public buildings, and was successful in many architectural competitions (Haapio 100-101). She has designed over twenty schools in different parts of Finland, four of them in Tampere (*Index of buildings*).

Because Wivi Lönn's designs comprise a large number of buildings in Finland and abroad, special emphasis is here placed on her designs in Tampere and on her public buildings, especially the schools. What are Wivi Lönn's major works, where are they situated, and what are their characteristics? What stages did her career consist of?

### **The Early Years in Tampere, 1898–1911**

Wivi Lönn's life and career can be divided into three stages according to where she lived: the early years in Tampere and the later years in Jyväskylä, Central Finland, and in Helsinki. Her career got off to a flying start when as early as in 1898 – at the mere age of 26 – she was commissioned to draw plans for the Finnish Girls' School's new building in Tampere, her home town (Kivinen, *Wivi* 22). This was the same school she had attended as a young girl; the school now needed larger premises to accommodate the growing number of students. The years Lönn worked in Tampere were the heyday of the Art Nouveau style, and she became one of the most famous designers of this new style (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 42–43).

#### **The Finnish Girls' School**

On her trip to English and Scottish schools, Wivi Lönn had learned a design principle according to which the school rooms were grouped around open halls full of light, which was new in Finnish school design. She found the atmosphere in English and Scottish schools agreeable, and noticed their tidiness and clean air. In Finnish schools, the pupils' outdoor clothes were kept in the corridors that connected the classrooms, which made the air stuffy. Consequently, she designed a specific clothes room in the basement of the new school building. The influence of her trip is also visible in the English Gothicism of the façades and the vaulting of the interiors (Kivinen, *Wivi* 22), as can be seen in pictures 1 and 2. The tower and the pointed arches of the windows on the north façade are examples of the Gothic features. Inside the building, the vaulting makes the interior cosy

and allows in light and fresh air. The open halls were a feature that other Finnish architects soon started to use in their designs also – after politely asking for Lönn’s permission (Haapio 101).



Picture 1. (left) The Finnish Girls' School in Tampere (1902). [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

Picture 2. (right) The vaulting gives the interior a homelike atmosphere. Photo by Kari Kannianen. URL: <[http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/1\\_tyttolyseo/dsc02118b.jpg](http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/1_tyttolyseo/dsc02118b.jpg)>.

### The Aleksanteri Primary School

Already as a student, Wivi Lönn had started participating in architectural competitions. During the early years of her career, she continued to do so and soon began to establish a reputation by winning many of these competitions (Haapio 98). At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, winning competitions was considered the best publicity for an architect. The entrants used pseudonyms so that women, who were still at that time on the margins of the profession, could also have a chance of success. During her career, Wivi Lönn won six invitational competitions in all; together with Armas Lindgren she won a place in every competition she entered (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 279).

Wivi Lönn won her first competition in 1903 when an invitational architectural competition for *Aleksanterin kansakoulu*, the Aleksanteri Primary School in Tampere, was announced. However, the success of a woman was not accepted without protest by the other participants, who criticized Lönn’s plan and questioned her professional competence. The controversy even resulted in public debate in the local newspapers. Regardless of the controversy, the jury of the competition asked Wivi Lönn to make the drawings of the new school (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 47–49).



Picture 3. (left) The main entrance of the Aleksanteri Primary School on the north end of the building. The building’s style is National Romantic, but with quite few ornaments (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 50). [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

Picture 4. (right) The Aleksanteri Primary School (1904). [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

The Aleksanteri Primary School was completed in 1904. At the time, boys and girls studied separately, and therefore Wivi Lönn divided the general layout into two parts, in an H-shape. In addition, the building had many modern features, like central heating and a ventilation system installed by Högfors factories. The design is also said to have some qualities common in German primary schools of the time. Boys and girls also studied

separately in Germany, and the general layout of the Aleksanteri Primary School, the plan drawing, resembles that of German schools of the time which Wivi Lönn had seen when she was in Germany in 1898 on her study tour to European countries (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 49).

Four years later, in 1908, Lönn won the competition for the Tampere voluntary fire-brigade building, but this time her entry was not implemented (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 279). After calculating the building costs, her plan was considered too expensive. She agreed to make the necessary alterations to her plan in order to cut the costs and left a new entry to the board of the Voluntary Fire Brigade. However, the decision about the project was postponed, and the board ultimately decided in January 1910 to ask a well-known master builder to design the new building (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 61–62). According to Kivinen (62) and Haapio (102–103) Wivi Lönn was displeased with the decision and suspected her entry was rejected because she was a woman.

### The Household Management School in Tampere

In 1902, Wivi Lönn was asked to design a new building for *Tampereen talouskoulu*, the Household Management School in Tampere. She made the first draft in the same year and completed the plan in 1904 (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 51). In this design, the teaching facilities were needed for completely different purposes than in the other school designs, and consequently she did not use the large hall spaces this time (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 242).

To prepare for the commission, Lönn travelled to Sweden in order to get acquainted with the most modern kitchens of the time (Kivinen, *Wivi* 25). Another good example of her dedication was the fact that she even spent two weeks as a student at the school in order to understand what was expected of the design (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 51). The Household Management School building was built in 1905 and has a romantic, Art Nouveau style façade with a ‘Hämeenlinna-castle<sup>15</sup> tower’ (**Tampereen palvelualan**; Kivinen, **Tampereen** 52-53). Both on the façade and inside the building, there are ornaments that depict for example vegetables and fish, to reflect the use of the building (Haapio 102).



Picture 5. (left) The square tower of the Household Management School (built in 1905). The sign of a restaurant operating in the building has Wivi Lönn's silhouette on it. [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

Picture 6. (right) The main entrance of the Household Management School with the name sign and the ornaments on the façade. [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

### The Tampere Fire Station

The third oldest professional municipal fire brigade started operating in Tampere in 1898. It employed twenty-two firemen who lived and worked in rather small, rented premises in the centre of the city. It soon became obvious that the brigade needed more space and



more functional facilities. To this end, six architects from Tampere were invited to enter a competition to design a new fire station in October 1905 (Katajamäki 10, 12). Wivi Lönn won with a Jugend style plan in which she had designed the central part of the building in a flattened arch form in order to preserve the natural form of the courtyard. She had placed all the facilities in one unit and used as material pale, plastered bricks, some granite in the façades and reinforced concrete in the central structures. The building was completed in 1908, and it is located in the centre of Tampere (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 242).

In her plan, Wivi Lönn had given a lot of thought to the functionality of the building; she included in it the dwellings of the firemen, a swimming pool, a sauna, a fully equipped gymnasium, and a cafeteria (Fellman). The jury of the competition stated: 'In the plan, the interior space is efficiently utilised. The apartments are well organised. The family section has a separate set of stairs, and placing the cook's rooms within the family section speak in favour of the plan.' A conclusion can be made of the statement that Wivi Lönn had seen the true nature of the building – the fact that the fire station was not only a workplace but also a home (Katajamäki 13).

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Emergency Services in Tampere, Olli-Pekka Ojanen, the building has been used as a fire station ever since it was built. It was originally planned spacious enough and has served well all through the changes from horse-power to vehicles, and still continues to do so today (Ojanen in **10 Finnish Architects**).



Picture 7. (left) The Tampere Fire Station with its granite walls (1908). [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

Picture 8. (right) The building was designed in a flattened arch form. The lookout tower dominating the façade is decorated with a frieze that depicts the battle between water and fire (Haapio 103).  
[Photo by Sari Pommelin]

### The Tampere School of Commerce

The invitational competition for *Kauppaoppilaitos*, The Tampere School of Commerce, was organized in December 1910 (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 53). Once again, Wivi Lönn won the first prize, and the school was completed the following year, in 1912. In this design, the classrooms were again placed around a hall which could be used for many different purposes: as 'a recreation room' but also as 'a room for morning prayers' (Haapio 102).

The building's façade primarily represents Classicism; originally, it had grand arches in the gables (Haapio 102). As these were removed in the 1950's when an extra floor was added to the building, it has nowadays lost part of its original character (Tuunanen, **Wivi**). On the west-facing façade, there is a semi cylindrical staircase (pictures 9 and 10). With its rectangular shape and its red-brick architecture, the building is said to have been influenced by Danish models. Just prior to the competition in 1909, Wivi Lönn had twice visited Denmark, and this may explain the Danish influences in the design (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 54, 242).



Picture 9. (left) The Tampere School of Commerce in its original form. Source: The digital photo archives of the museums of Tampere and Pirkanmaa. URL: <<http://siiri.tampere.fi/search.do?page=2>>.

Picture 10. (right) The building in March 2014 with the renovated top-floor and the roof. The Central Fire Station building can be seen at the background. [Photo by Sari Pommelin]

### Other Works Designed during the Tampere Years

Together with Armas Lindgren, Wivi Lönn won the architectural competition for *Uusi Ylioppilastalo*, the New Students' Union House in Helsinki, which was built in 1906 (Haapio 105). In addition, she designed the *Kuokkala* manor in Jyväskylä in 1904 for a family friend, Julius Johnsson. The building dates from the same time as the Household Management School in Tampere, and they resemble each other both in planning and in appearance (Kivinen, *Wivi* 25).

In 1906, Wivi Lönn designed the Ebeneser training institute for kindergarten teachers at Sörnäinen in Helsinki. The building was completed in 1908 (**Ebeneser**). This commission was an important step in Lönn's career, because it brought her fame among various Finnish women's organisations. This fame in turn resulted in new commissions. One of these organisations was the Helsinki Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which in the early 1920's commissioned Lönn to design its large central building (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 280).



Picture 11. (left) The New Students' Union House in Helsinki (1906, together with Armas Lindgren). Photo by Kari Kanninen. URL: <[http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/14\\_ylioppilastalo/yotalo\\_1.html](http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/14_ylioppilastalo/yotalo_1.html)>.

Picture 12. (right) The *Kuokkala* Manor in Jyväskylä (1904). NB: The resemblance to the Household Management School in Tampere (pictures 5 and 6). Photo by Kari Kanninen. URL: <[http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/3\\_kuokkala/kuokkala\\_2.html](http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/3_kuokkala/kuokkala_2.html)>.

### The Years in Jyväskylä, 1911–1918

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wivi Lönn was running a successful architectural firm in Tampere; the firm employed several architects, master builders and draftsmen. In addition, Lönn did building inspections. Life was hectic, and she had time to do her own designs only during night time and on Sundays (Haapio 103-104, Kinnunen 47).

As a result, Wivi Lönn decided in 1911 to move to Jyväskylä in Central Finland 'in order to seek a more peaceful working environment' (Kivinen, *Wivi* 25). Lönn's brother lived in Jyväskylä and encouraged her to move there. One of the reasons for her decision to leave Tampere may have been the criticism she had to endure from her male colleagues; criticism that was directed at her gender, not her designs. The colleagues seem to have thought the young female architect with her own successful office disturbed the market by competing with them for work opportunities. A telling example of the attitudes of the time was the statement: 'somebody should marry her so that she would no longer be competing' (Arell 165).

For these reasons Wivi Lönn moved to Jyväskylä and built a house for herself and her mother, who had been sick and bedridden for twelve years (Haapio 104). The house is situated in the prestigious *Seminaarinmäki* area in Jyväskylä. Seminaarinmäki was named in the 1860's after a teacher training institute called *Jyväskylän seminaari* situated in this area.

Lönn's house is surrounded by a large garden and a greenhouse which originally had central heating and provided the household with a continuous supply of fresh produce. The gable of the main building faces south. The house has simple lines but large, complex windows. In the middle, there is a bay window with a small balcony on top. During her Jyväskylä years, Wivi Lönn's architectural office was situated behind the bay window and the large window with a round arch beside it (picture 13). Every detail in the house has been carefully thought out in order to make it both functional and beautiful. This is a hallmark of all Wivi Lönn's designs; they can be described as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, total works of art (Arell 87, 88, 166).



Picture 13. (left) Wivi Lönn's own house in Jyväskylä (1911). Photo by Kari Kanninen. URL: [http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/13\\_kotitalo/kotitalo\\_9.html](http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/13_kotitalo/kotitalo_9.html).

Picture 14. (right) The house is surrounded by a large garden. Photo by Kari Kanninen. URL: [http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/13\\_kotitalo/kotitalo\\_5.html](http://www.kirjasto.oulu.fi/wivilonn/tyoluettelo/13_kotitalo/kotitalo_5.html).

While living in Jyväskylä, Wivi Lönn got new influential friends, especially the family of the commercial counsellor Johan Parviainen, who wanted to build an industrial community around his enterprise, *Joh. Parviaisen Tehtaat Incorporated*. For this purpose, Johan Parviainen had bought the uninhabited island of *Säynätsalo*, which had a total area of more than three hundred acres (Andersson).

In 1925, after the death of Johan Parviainen and his two sons, the commercial counsellor's daughter Hanna Parviainen became the sole owner of the enterprise. In the 1920's and the 1930's, when already living in Helsinki, Wivi Lönn designed on the commission of Hanna Parviainen an office building, a kindergarten, an old people's home, a hospital, an apartment building for workers and engineers, and made a plan for the residential district of *Muuratsalo* on the Säynätsalo Islands in Jyväskylä (Haapio 104, Kinnunen 48).

During her Jyväskylä years, Wivi Lönn also continued to design schools around Finland (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 280). There are schools designed by Wivi Lönn in almost all of Finland's larger cities (Suominen-Kokkonen, **Lönn**).



## The Years in Helsinki, 1918-1966

After living for eight years in Jyväskylä, Wivi Lönn moved in 1918 to Helsinki, which remained her home for the rest of her long and productive life. She stayed active designing until the 1940's (Helenius et al. 37). In 1918, Lönn bought a house in *Kulosaari*, Helsinki, and renovated it for herself (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 281). Kulosaari is an island near the centre of Helsinki. It is a secluded and wealthy area with its beautiful free-standing villas by the sea.

Although living in Helsinki, Wivi Lönn continued to design buildings for her native town, Tampere. In 1924 a large warehouse was built in the heart of the city for Tampereen Verkatehdas, a factory producing mainly industrial fabrics (**Verkatehdas**). However, this building was demolished in 1981 when a shopping centre was built in its place (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 78-79).

Wivi Lönn's most productive years were the early decades of the twentieth century; in the 1930's her output decreased (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 281). However, she continued travelling widely over Europe. Between 1897 and 1938, she made at least thirty-four journeys to European countries, for example to Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Hungary (*Journeys abroad*).

In the 1930's, modernism and functionalism began to gain a foothold in Finland. Wivi Lönn sympathised with the rationalism of this new style, even though her own designs at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had had more romantic and decorative features (Suominen-Kokkonen, *Wivi* 281). For example, the Tampere fire station represents this romantic and somewhat more decorative style with its sweeping granite façade and the frieze of the outlook tower, whereas the Tampere School of Commerce a few years later has a more clear-cut rectangular layout, and the red bricks are left visible. This shows that the romantic Jugend style was beginning to take new forms (Kivinen, **Tampereen** 54). It seems Wivi Lönn's designs had both features of romanticism and an inkling of the forthcoming functionalism.

Wivi Lönn's last work was the *Tähtelä* observatory in *Sodankylä*, Northern Finland. The previous observatory complex had been destroyed during World War II (Kivinen, *Wivi* 26). Wivi Lönn designed the new buildings between 1944 and 1945 (Kanniainen). The complex was inaugurated in September 1950. Wivi Lönn, who was then 78 years old, was present at the occasion (Kivinen, *Wivi* 26).

## Recognitions and Honours Given to Wivi Lönn

In 1959, Wivi Lönn was conferred the honorary title of professor<sup>16</sup> for her life's work. This is a title conferred on distinguished persons for their merits and achievements. In connection with this, Alvar Aalto<sup>17</sup> described Wivi Lönn's life's work as follows:

'This career in a beautiful way accords with the view alive abroad that in Finland the creative work of women has from very early times been one of the country's cultural foundations. The occasion is of course at the same time a mark of honour towards the country's woman architects, whose standing in today's world is without equal.' (Kivinen, *Wivi* 26)

The Finnish Association of Woman Architects, *Architecta*, was founded on Wivi Lönn's seventieth birthday in 1942. She was invited to be an honorary member of the association in 1952. As a token of respect for Lönn's achievements, Architecta commissioned sculptor Aarre Aaltonen to design a medal to commemorate Lönn's eighty-fifth birthday in 1957 (Helenius et al. 37). Based on the portrait relief on the medal, sculptor Mauno Kivioja designed Wivi Lönn's commemorative plate, which was placed by the main entrance of 'her first work', the Finnish Girls' School in Tampere, and unveiled in October 1986 (**Wivi Lönnin muistolaatta**; Ronimus-Poukka).

## Wivi Lönn's Significance to Finnish Architecture

Wivi Lönn was a pioneer in Finnish Architecture; she was the first Finnish woman to have worked independently as an architect. Mathematically and artistically talented, and encouraged by her mother, she chose a career that was not common for women at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At that time, the public opinion was not always in favour of women entering the profession. Together with other pioneers she paved the way for future generations of female architects. The Finnish Association of Woman Architects was founded on Lönn's seventieth birthday in 1942, commemorating the inspiration Lönn had been for the Finnish female architects.

In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wivi Lönn became known for winning numerous architectural competitions both in Finland and in Estonia. She mastered designing a building, engineering, making the structural calculations, supervising the construction site, and even brick-laying. She designed buildings in which aesthetic, human, functional, and economical aspects were taken into account. Through all this, she gained the respect of her colleagues. In designing, she had as her starting point the needs of the users of the building, and then incorporated functional, economic and aesthetic aspects into the plan.

Wivi Lönn was also a cosmopolite. She went abroad to many European countries in order to bring back fresh ideas to utilize in her designs. These new ideas enriched Finnish architecture, especially in the field of school designing. Her reputation as a school designer spread throughout the country; even today thousands of Finnish pupils still go to schools designed by Wivi Lönn. Other architects soon followed her lead, for example in designing open halls into school buildings.

Especially in her home city, Tampere, Wivi Lönn influenced the architecture significantly. She contributed greatly to the Art Nouveau image of Tampere, an image that is unique to Tampere compared to other Finnish cities. She designed many of Tampere's central buildings; her hand can still be seen in many of her beautiful buildings which continue to serve the Finnish people still today.

## Notes

1. In New Zealand, women were given the right to vote in 1893; in Australia the right was given in 1902.
2. The first institution to allow women was *Jyväskylän seminaari*, a teacher training institute in Jyväskylä, Central Finland.
3. In the United States, there were even earlier pioneers, for example Louise Bethune, who founded an independent firm partnering with Robert Bethune in 1881. She learned architecture while working as a draftsman in the company of Richard A. Waite in Buffalo, New York.
4. From 1809 to 1917, Finland was an autonomous grand duchy of the Russian Empire. Finland became an independent republic in 1917.
5. The Matriculation Examination is an examination taken at the end of *lukio*, the Finnish equivalent to the American high school and the British upper secondary school. For more information about the Matriculation Examination in Finland, see Tiina Harju's research paper. URL: <<http://www15.uta.fi/FAST/FIN/A14PAPS/th-exam.pdf>>.
6. Signe Hornborg's (1862-1916) works include the Fireman's building in Hamina, on the south coast of Finland, and the Nervander apartment building in Pori, on the west coast of Finland.
7. Lars Sonck's major works include for example the Richardsonian-influenced Tampere Cathedral and the Kallio Church in Helsinki.

8. Herman Gesellius (1874-1916) was one of the members of the famous architect trio Gesellius-Lindgren-Saarinen.
9. Armas Lindgren (1874-1929) was one of the members of the architecture firm Gesellius, Lindgren, and Saarinen founded in Helsinki in 1896. In the 1910's Lindgren collaborated closely with Wivi Lönn (Estonia Theatre and the New Students' House in Helsinki).
10. Eliel Saarinen (1873-1950) was a Finnish architect who became famous for his National Romantic buildings in the early years of the twentieth century. His designs include for example the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki (together with Gesellius and Lindgren) and the Helsinki Central Railway Station.
11. In Finland 'Historicism' is also called 'the Empire' and 'the Biedermeier'.
12. These three names refer interchangeably to the architectural style that was prevalent in the early years of the 20th century. The classification of buildings into these style categories varies according to the source used. For more details about the era of National Romanticism, see Sanna Parikka's research. URL: <<http://www15.uta.fi/FAST/FIN/CULT/sp-natro.html>>.
13. Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865-1931) was a painter who is best known for his illustrations of the Kalevala, the Finnish national epic.
14. These include for example the National Museum (designed by Gesellius-Lindgren-Saarinen) and the Finnish National Theatre (Onni Törnqvist-Tarjanne) in Helsinki; the Helsinki Railway Station (Eliel Saarinen) and Tampere Cathedral (Lars Sonck).
15. Hämeenlinna Castle is a medieval castle in Hämeenlinna, Southern Finland. It dates back to the 14th century.
16. Here, the title 'professor' refers to an honorary title which is not tied to a certain academic post (cf. the academic title of 'professor'). In Finland, the honorary title of professor can be conferred on distinguished persons by the President of the Republic of Finland. The title can be conferred for merits and achievements on the recommendation of a person(s) or an organization or both together.
17. Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) was one of the most influential modern architects of the twentieth century both internationally and in Finland. During his long, prolific career, he designed private houses, low-cost housing, town halls, civic centres, cultural institutions, universities, factories and town plans. In addition to architecture, his works include furniture, textiles and glassware.

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## Followup Report

My paper discussed Wivi Lönn, the first Finnish woman to have started her own architectural office in the late 1800's. Despite her influence on Finnish architecture, she is perhaps not very well known among Finns or other nationalities, and therefore I thought it would be interesting to find out more about her life and career.

I addressed the topic by answering the following research questions: when and why did architect schools start accepting women in Finland, how and why did Wivi Lönn become the first Finnish female architect, what are her major works and their characteristics, and finally, what has been Wivi Lönn's influence on Finnish architecture. The basic structure of the paper was chronological; it described the different stages of Wivi Lönn's career.

I used as source material books, online sources, and for example a DVD introducing Finnish architects. There was quite a lot of material available, so I was able to find the answers to all my research questions. I think I also managed to find some new information about Wivi Lönn as a pioneer in architecture. For example, I was surprised to learn there are so many schools designed by Wivi Lönn in Finnish cities.

## What I Might Do Differently

All in all, I think the writing process went quite smoothly, because I had clear research questions right from the start. I wrote the paper in a relatively short period of time, which worked well for me, because this way I had the text fresh in my mind all through the writing process.

However, if I were to write the paper again, I could perhaps pay more attention to two things in particular. One is time management, and the other is the MLA citation style.

I would allow myself more time for writing the first draft of the paper. First, it takes a lot of time to first acquire the source material and then to go through it to find the relevant information. Second, it is quite time-consuming to digest the information and to write a coherent text based on it. Also, I would take some more time to get better acquainted with the MLA citation style before starting to write. Knowing the citation techniques well beforehand, I could have concentrated solely on the actual content of the paper. But as a whole, I am quite happy with the end result.

### **Ideas for Future Study**

It might be interesting to find out when and how women started entering the architectural profession in other countries, especially in the United States and in Great Britain. I actually contemplated addressing this question as well in my paper, but thought covering it would expand the paper too much. A chronological research about women in architecture (from the late 1800's until today) could also be an interesting topic. Studying written material as well as interviewing experts might be used as research methods. It could also be interesting to conduct original research, a survey in which people of different ages, genders and occupations would be shown the names and designs of certain architects and asked if they were familiar with them.

For a translator, the paper offers information for example about the names of different schools and institutes both in English and in Finnish. It also contains specific vocabulary that might be useful when translating texts about architecture.