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CIAV Annual Meeting and Seminar
Finnskogen 2010

Theme: Vernacular Crossing Borders

Vernacular building is a way of expression that carries messages from one generation to another and a message of belonging to a culture. When people are taken to other places or they freely move, their culture and the way of expressing themselves is brought to a new environment. How does the vernacular expression answer to the new circumstances?

Built vernacular heritage is normally based on long traditions of the use of local materials and of their gradual refining processes. In our time ideas travel fast regardless the borders and they can easily be amalgamated to many local cultures. Are global markets a threat to the vernacular expression?

While saving some parts of the old and adopting some parts of the new the vernacular expression can become more dynamic and at the same time more conserved in the new circumstances. Is it true that cultures moving to new geographical areas are more conservative? How do we conserve in different countries the vernacular buildings that carry the same tradition?

The seminar will be held in Finnskogen area in Norway and Sweden. It has been the target of many studies for more than a hundred years because of its exceptional history, vernacular heritage and traditions that can be traced back to the origin of the settlers from Finland.

Lectures

The program and the talks start with the background for the migration, continue with description on the culture and its special elements, and finally description on the buildings and the landscape in the 'new' environment.

Are the 'migrants' more conservative than their ancestors?

1) Background, key note lecture on the built heritage of those people who stayed and five selected presentations on the sub-theme
2) Description of the culture, key note lecture on the built heritage of the settlers and five selected presentations on the sub-theme.
3) Description of the present day situation, key note lecture on the conservation of the built vernacular heritage across the borders and three selected presentations on the sub-theme.
4) Features of Vernacular Architecture. Four presentations on related subjects.

Lectures on cases from other parts of the world. How to identify traces of background, integration and amalgamation in the physical heritage as well as the intangible heritage?

The illustration on the seminar bags: woodcut by Tore Hansen: *Solvogn* (Sun Wagon)

Abstracts

The following abstracts are arranged following the presentations.

Index

Marc de Caraffe: The Logs of Canada

This presentation will deal with the changing meaning of log structures erected in Canada. It will look into various types of log constructions, including Native long houses on the West Coast, Euro-Canadian settlers' cabins, fur trading posts, rustic buildings in national parks, the largest log construction in the world, and preassembled resort cabins and lodges of the present time. After briefly considering the forces of culture, politics and economics that shaped these structures, this paper will look at the ethnocultural aspects of their builders and will make specific reference to influences coming from European countries and from the United States as they transformed a practical building type into an opulent structure of comfort and leisure reserved for the upper classes.

An overview of the various construction techniques for log structures will be presented in this lecture which will cover First Nations six poles assemblage, the French *poteaux sur sol*, *poteaux en coulisse* and *pièce sur pièce*, dovetailing and saddle notching, and red-river frame (an adaptation of the *poteaux en coulisse* technique), Swiss and Scandinavian influences as well as modern prefabrication techniques.

This overview will be followed by a discussion on the evolving meaning of log structures. It will address the issue of foreign influences that transformed a practical building type mostly used by settlers into an idyllic rustic cottage. This presentation will conclude by stating that the image of a romantic log cabin located on the shore of a remote lake, an iconic image of Canadian architecture, is more the result of foreign influences than the natural evolution of a building type.

Jens Christian Eldal: Octagons on the Prairie: Vernacular Churches migragated from Norway

The case for this paper will be a group of octagon churches in The Upper Midwest built by Norwegian immigrants during the 1850s and -60s. This was a group of churches which is not much known any longer, neither in America nor in Norway. A source from 1863 said such churches were common among the Norwegians in America, but only five octagons have been found to this day out of a total of ca. 150-200 Lutheran churches believed to have been built by Norwegian-American congregations at that time. In Europe, and especially in Norway, such churches had been common for a long time. In Norway they were most numerous during the period 1810-1840 when approximately one half of all new churches were built with an octagon plan. This also means that the octagon was a familiar and thought-to-be modern shape for churches for large groups of these first Norwegian immigrants in America before 1860. Being used mainly by local master builders without academic training, the octagon church plan was now usually a vernacular phenomenon.

In America octagon churches had been very scarce and had only been built in the eastern parts by the Dutch far back in the seventeenth century and later very seldom in a few cities during the beginning of the nineteenth century. Since long they were not being built in America when the Norwegian mass immigration started in the 1840s. However, there was an American fad for octagon dwelling houses caused by a book published in 1848 and 1853 which may have eased the transplantation of the octagons for the Norwegians.

However, as churches these new octagon structures were definitely a Norwegian thing. As most of the other early Norwegian-American churches they did not last for long. During the 1890s they were all gone and replaced by new buildings of ordinary longitudinal shapes. The source material for the study of the octagons has discussable qualities. Nevertheless, we know enough to define the main forms, i.e. the church concept, as Norwegian, while the constructions often were American with American techniques and some American detailing. In one case it is possible to trace a particular church in Norway as a prospective model for the American one.

Aspects to be addressed:
Necessary strength of cultural importance/significance.
The challenge of new ecology: Materials and climate.
The challenge or support by the new cultural ecology: Meeting with similar or different designs (forms), craftsmanships or technologies. Diluting the heritage.
The challenge of the new society: Degree of contact and interaction. Conserving the heritage, amalgamation or drowning in the melting pot?

The presentation will be based on new research of a material which will be published for the first time during autumn 2010 in a wider context of cultural history. The version proposed here will concentrate on the aspects of vernacular architecture crossing borders.

West Koshkonong Church, Dane County, Wisconsin, from 1852-1853 is well known from photographs. This photograph is taken after the rather unsuccessful attempt to demolish the church with the use of dynamite in 1893. It gives valuable information about construction details.

Crow River Church, Kandiyohi County, Minnesota from 1870. It is a drawing by a trained hand, but probably made from memory ca. 20 years after demolition of the building in 1891. Originally there was a steeple which was taken down already in 1883. Many of these immigrants came from three different congregations in Norway with octagon churches. If we can believe in the details shown here, we have enough information to decide which church in Norway was the model.

Louise Honman & Deborah Kemp: The Literate Vernacular. The manufactured ephemera of the Australian landscape

Earliest settlement in colonial Australia relied on structures built from imported building materials, prefabricated buildings and structures based on traditional European vernacular building traditions.

Rural and regional areas demonstrate through a number of building types the evolution of a vernacular that illustrates real colonial ingenuity and an often idiosyncratic interpretation that was informed by traditional British and European vernacular techniques. Many of these techniques can be rightly be defined as a vernacular tradition peculiar to Australia.
Three important historic periods are associated with this analysis of an Australian colonial vernacular.

Initial pastoral development; (1830 – 1850)
During the late 18th century and up to the 1850s there was a gradual outwards pastoral expansion from Sydney. This was a time of engineering and architectural sophistication in Europe, but in Australia the themes of isolation, hardship, vast areas, limited transport and a dependency on expensive imported industrial building materials is characterised by the development of particular vernacular responses.
Discovery of Gold and subsequent development of regional districts;(1850 – 1880)
Changes to the character of settlement associated with the influx of immigrants who came searching for gold in the 1850s resulted in a large number of vernacular structures being constructed. The use of written publications directed at assisting settlers had an enormous impact on the development of an idiosyncratic vernacular that incorporated industrial building materials with traditional vernacular building.

The Depression (1890 – 1930s)
The Depression of the 1920s saw a return to a dependency on traditional building traditions as well creative solutions drawing on found materials. This is seen as a continuation of an eclectic Australian vernacular tradition.

Exceptions to this evolution of European traditions is found in structures built by refugee groups escaping persecution. The migration of cultural groups tended to result in a replication of their traditional building practices with less eclectism.

These buildings are a fast disappearing ephemera in the landscape, with crumbling ruins evocative reminders of a vernacular that was manufactured and informed by tradition, industry and the written word.

Deborah Kemp and Louise Honman
Melbourne, Australia
30 November 2009

Elo Lutsepp: Heritage of New Settlers in Estonia. Preserving Rural Architecture with Russian and Swedish Influences

The specific expression of Estonian rural architecture has developed mainly during the past 300 years, whereby architectural heritage of only past 150 years has survived till nowadays.

I am going to focus on bigger part of Western Estonia (including the islands), once the habitat of Estonian Swedes as well as on the western shore of Lake Peipsi which has been settled by Russian Old Believers. All these regions are characterized by architectural heritage different from traditional Estonian rural architecture.

The political changes in the 20th century have interrupted the continuation of building traditions. The Soviet occupation brought along the departure of Swedes and Finns from Estonia. The most viable architectural heritage is that of the Russian Old Believers' as they stick strongly to their traditions. Even today on the western shore of Lake Peipsi people keep building traditional covered farmyards.

The Republic of Estonia, having re-gained its independence, offered the descendants of former owners the possibility to get back their land holdings. This creates a problem in Western Estonia where many Swedes have returned to their former homes. Unfortunately the survived buildings are in a very bad condition, demolished or rebuilt beyond recognition. The newly settled Swedes have now introduced the building tradition spread on the mainland of Sweden in the 1920s–1930s. Today, the regions that have preserved their traditional Estonian Swedish building tradition can be found only in the coastal areas of Noarootsi and Vihterpalu as well as on Vormsi Island (Wormsö).

The Russian settlement by Lake Peipsi has been extended during the Soviet period. Getting mixed with representatives of different confessions has diversified the general appearance of villages. Tight commercial and economic connections with St. Petersburg in the 1990s offered possibilities for renovation or rebuilding. Therefore a lot of valuable architecture and its details have been demolished. However, during the economic changes during the past ten years, these regions have become a periphery. Decreasing catch from Lake Peipsi has caused the extinction of an ancient industry. The local inhabitants are forced to search for jobs in bigger cities. The majority of local inhabitants is made up by elderly people, but unfortunately they are not able to maintain their buildings.

During the cooperation of the Estonian Open Air Museum and the Estonian Academy of Art during the past ten years, the survived traditional architecture in Noarootsi region has been measured and, drawings have been made. Together with students of Narva College at the University of Tartu inventorying of traditional architecture has been carried out in two villages by the Lake Peipsi – Varnja and Kasepää – which have better preserved their building traditions. According to the results of the latter, precepts for maintaining the heritage have been handed over to the Board of Heritage. The present state of buildings has been described and registered on photographs, the valuable architectural details have been listed.
The architectural heritage of Vormsi Island needs thorough investigation in the coming years.

This is the ultimate time to take steps to preserve the architectural heritage of these peculiar regions.

Elo Lutsepp, Estonian Open Air Museum, Programme Rural Architecture and Landscape, Project manager

Dr. Olga Sevan: Wooden Houses in the Russian North and Their Paintings

There are apparent parallels between peasant wooden houses and there paintings from Russia and those of the Northern Europe - Sweden, Norway, and Finland etc. Similar geographical conditions, the history of cultural and trading contacts with the Russian North (Archangel and Vologda region) produced common traits in that form of peasant art. Those interrelations could be proposed as a subject for international research project, which will result in finding new data and comparisons and to create international contacts for further work in the field of peasant paintings and to develop a method and models for international cooperation.

Painting on wooden surface and interiors are one of the most important forms of folk art in Russia. Both in Urals region, in Siberia and in the Russian North paintings on the façades and in the interiors of peasant houses were much spread. The question of the time when those paintings first appeared on the external walls of the peasant log houses is still opened. In the 19th century only battened walls were decorated with paintings, but use of battens in peasant constructions spread in the 19th century at the earliest. That means decorating peasant log houses with drawings is apparently a novel phenomenon. The earliest paintings of peasant houses in Archangel Region date from the 1840es though painted constructions are mentioned in the sources of the 17th century. Both facades and interiors of church buildings were also decorated with drawings.

Colorful paintings decorated façade frontons of the houses, so called battened 'hemming' of pendent roofing and balcony base, shutters and outside architraves. Interiors were decorated with drawings partitions especially those partitioning off the stove, movable pieces of furniture, cupboards, or in some cases doors and walls. Peasant artists decorated distaffs, birch bark boxes, shaft-bows, sledges, and even cemetery crosses. Sometime they both produced utensils and tools and then covered them with paintings. That is why paintings of the northern peasant home in different parts of the regions form interrelated style complexes. The same artists often decorated interior elements of local wooden churches such as beams for ceiling panels or 'heaven' and for the iconostasis, lecterns and carved images, doors and portals. Paintings were done by professional or peasant artists. Sometime they organized artels of 'dyers', or worked as a family, or practiced seasonal working far from home.

From the artistic point of view, those paintings represent independent and well elaborated part of folk art. One can discover several historical territories in the Archangel and neighboring Vologda regions where different types of painting existed in former times and are still observable. Those territories are namely the *Poonezhye* and *Kargopolye*, the area called *Povazhye*, and basins of North Dvina, Pinega and Mezen' rivers.

Author prepared the monograph about these unique paintings of the dwelling houses in the Russian North and it published last year.

Dr. Olga Sevan
Russian Institute for Cultural Research
Russian ICOMOS, ECOVAST

Orestis Vavatsioulas & Marikitta Diamantopoulou: From Tradition to Sustainability. Preserving Mediterranean Vernacular Architecture and Landscape Heritage

Issues and actions that focus on maintenance of vernacular architecture and landscape heritage, in particular on the environmental protection, are nowadays objects crossing borders and determining factors of sustainable development.

This paper will present a Mediterranean Program, a vernacular "crossing borders" collaboration, aiming to reinforce the operational action carried out by public and private bodies, operating in the Mediterranean-Basin islands with particular reference to the sustainable development and the protection and valorization of the historical-cultural heritage of the local tradition.

Our contribution, as conservator architects of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is to discuss about the protection and revival of the agricultural settlement of Atsipapi, in the mountainous island of Naxos, the restoration of the paths and the spring area landscape improvement. Furthermore it is to present the settlements environment, the terraces cultivation, a uniting element of the Mediterranean landscape and additionally to take in to account recent concerns about environmental-friendly techniques, as for example dry stone constructions. The site of demonstration, Atsipapi, is a ruinous village, consisting of distinct and typical buildings, surrounded by vegetable gardens and vineyards in a self – sufficient agricultural settlement.

We would like to present the objectives of the above trans-national Mediterranean cooperation on the one hand, and on the other, to discuss about the Greek participation in the program and the efforts that have been made to preserve vernacular architectural heritage in the mountainous Naxos, a contribution to the main scope of the program, as well as a support to the sustainable development on that particular area. Furthermore it was in our scopes to act for the safeguard and valorization of the vernacular architectural ensembles and the inseparable landscape, aiming also to promote cultural activities and actions directed to awake the local public opinion with regards to sustainability. In order to achieve our objectives in that pilot project, acting for the Ministry of Culture, cooperating and collaborating mainly with the Municipality of Mountainous Naxos, we carried out various activities: studies, surveys, researches, professional training in old techniques, meetings of experts etc. We acted in partnership with other public and private organizations in Greece and the other Mediterranean countries involved in that program.

By directing our attention to the present, which is often destructive for the landscape and the vernacular heritage one can rediscover tradition and carry on to the future our heritage of sustainability.

Netta Böök, Marko Huttunen, Katja Savolainen: Restoration camps for traditional wooden buildings

Traditional Finnish wooden buildings are based on the principle of log construction and the use of pine. The most common type of log construction has been the so-called corner jointing technique. A large variety of log buildings built with traditional techniques can still be found, ranging from churches and schools to urban housing and farmhouses.

Due to a shortage of modern building materials, the knowledge of log construction and the corner jointing technique was still utilised after the Second World War. Shortly afterwards, however, traditional wood construction skills underwent a decline in Finland. Architect Panu Kaila was among the first who wanted people to pay more attention to the issue and began courses during the 1970s for architecture students at Helsinki University of Technology on traditional construction and its restoration.

Our architect workgroup, consisting of Netta Böök, Marko Huttunen and Katja Savolainen (the Savo Society of Kallio), continues this tradition. We teach architecture students about the research and restoration of traditional wooden structures both in lecture courses and on restoration camps. The theory and building research information from the lectures is transformed on the camps into practical work, where students learn by building themselves. The camps are held on exemplar sites of vernacular building, particularly interesting in terms of both architecture and cultural history, and where the buildings are situated in their original locations.

In 2010, the camp is held at Lindalstorpet in Svullrya, Grue Finnskog, to study the vernacular building tradition of the Finns who settled in the region since the 16th century. It tells about the adaptation of the Finnish building tradition to a new environment and partial blending with the local building culture. The Finnish and Norwegian building traditions come together in terms of the placement, forms and details of the buildings. Also of particular interest to research are the last smoke cabins still in use and in their original state which can be found in the region.

In preparation for the restoration camps, we undertake a pre-study of the site based on fieldwork, existing published material and archival research. Finnish archives offer unusually valuable material because since the 1870s onwards Finnish folk culture has been collected as part of the nationalistic construction of Finnish identity. Photographs as well as numerous descriptions and drawings by non-professionals of traditional structures and specific issues such as the selection of wood, etc. can be found in the archives. We also study other examples in the neighbouring districts of the restoration site, as well as the “signature” of the builder or builders.

We choose the buildings or structures to be repaired so that they offer tasks requiring different levels of skill from the students, such as, for example, the renewal of shingle or birch-bark roofs, as well as minor log construction or the replacement of logs. In the restoration work we follow traditional building techniques that have been ascertained during the pre-studies. If the original structure cannot be authenticated with certainty, the problem is solved by discussing how the original builder would have strived to do the work and what tools would have been available to him. An old master builder is usually invited to the camp to teach the students, for example, the skill of making split planks.

On the restoration camp we document, together with the students, the buildings, the building structures and the stages of dismantling and restoring them by means of drawings, photographs and text descriptions. On the basis of the compiled material, we draw up an illustrated restoration report which in turn also functions as teaching material.

Netta Böök, Marko Huttunen, Katja Savolainen, architects (M.Sc.)
Aalto University, University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, Department of Architecture

Per Martin Tvengsberg: When the Finns moved to other places, how did the varnaculare expression answer to the new circumstances?

They did not cross any cultural border. There were no new important circumstances inflecting on their traditional processes. Huuhta continued to be their basic maintenance and cultural heritage, and this continued until huuhta did not sustain any longer.

Huuhta - swidden cultivation extension; inside the circle 1500 A.D., entire streak 1600 A.D. and stippled 1700 A.D. After the warm centuries of the Middle Ages in North Europe (the Little Optimum), the decline of climate occured about 1300 A.D. Some migratory Finnish tribes accelerated their moves in the big virgin spruce forests of Carelia and came to Savolax about 1500 A.D.

The first creature not afraid of fire, homo erectus, discovered the advantage by applying food plants growing in the ashes succeeding forest fire, and so became the powerful being ahead of animals, and hence experienced how to manipulate fire. Swidden cultivation has consequently been the common system of farming; a work cycle ensuring the continuance of the desired ecology and altering the habitat to the benefit of man. Therefore, fire and its control is closely related to the development of culture, and so to its social implications of basic significance to cultural history.
Accordingly hunting - gathering - fishing economy is not the precursor for agriculture. This has been the main nourishment only in climatic marginal areas without forest.
Swidden cultivation is here defined as the cultivation of human food plants in the ashes of burnt vegetation, mostly forest. Tribal wanderings in abundant forest was the usual survival. Axes for felling trees and sickles for harvesting were the only tools required. But this altered the forest or created extensive regions of cultivated land and meadows, assisted by pasturing animals, and continuing for the benefit of the European colonisation, applying restrictions on

native fire clearance to the benefit for European farming, until forest destruction in the so called "third world".

The first step in the swidden procedure was to select the most beneficial site in the forest. Skilled young men were selected by the noita, and sent out to recognice and mark out the best forest. A klan had many such marked forests. The next step was to clear the forest by axe, and so let the site dry. Before midsummer the second year noita was responsible for the burning after dry weather, and sowing in the ashes followed by rain afterwards. The half burnt biggest logs were used for the fence around the site. An accurate timing of the burning - sowing procedure, or rather a correct prediction of the approaching rainshower was of crucial importance. Thus sophisticated methodes have been developed in different cultures.
The size of the cultivated area was the most variable factor. Decreasing crop in times of climatic deterioration, was compensated by a corresponding expansion of the swidden acreage and vice versa. Accordingly climate fluctuation had an even influence on swidden cultivation. The clearance of the forest and the successive cultivation inside the fenched site was the precursor for domestication of animals, development of stock - raising and trapping of wild animals. Consequently domestication of animals developed later in human history than cultivation of food plants. Wild animals broke in through the fence to reach the wanted food. This occured especially in periods when the climate was deteriorating, and natural food was insufficient. As the Finns moved north and west as far as the spruce forest ranged, the reindeer herds accompanied them, eating grass on niitto aho, and so domestication of the reindeer increased due to interaction with the Finns. This had also happende during earlier climate deteriorations, last time in the Viking Age. Can be it is not so surprising, that DNA family trees suggest that Scanians (skåninger) and Saami are very closly related.

Rye sod first autumn. Moderate growth continued in varm periodes during winter. NB. matchbox below to the left.

Compared with stationary field farming huuhta could give extremely big harvest, but it fell off radically under inferior circumstances. Cultivation experiment carried out with at least 130 years old swidden rye, has stated that harvest can be more than 12000 fold. One seed grew a big sod consisting of 162 straws, and each straw carrying an ear containing 75 seeds. I found these seeds 1973 in an old riihi in Grue Finnforest, Solör.
The Finnish huuhta cultivation has been an important cultural feature, maintaining ethnic boundaries between the Finns and their Scandinavian interacting neighbours.

Hans Johnsson: Changing building traditions among the Forest Finns

This article deals with the changes of the building traditions among the Forest Finns and is based upon two major fieldstudies which took place in 1999 and in 2006.

The changes are examplified through the floor plans. The changes and variation of floor plans seems to have developed as a cross-border phenomena, which makes it difficult to categorize and organize their homes according to the specific culture of the Finns. The one unchanged factor is the placement of the smoke oven and the context of the room in which it was placed. The development of different floor plans is a part of assimilation and modernization in Finnskogen. The changes and variation of the floor plans can be found on borth sides of the border. This makes it difficult to separate them or to compare them with the traditional floor plans of the Forest Finns.

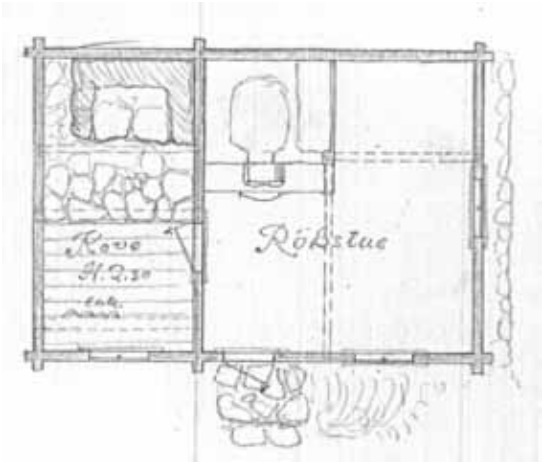

*Figure 4. Building with smoke room built around 1850. This was the most predominant room design on the Norwegian side of the border, with an entrance that led directly into the smokehouse (*Akershusisk plan*). In the upper left-hand corner of the building is a fireplace. Measurement by Ludwig Mattson 1916, Nordiska museet.*

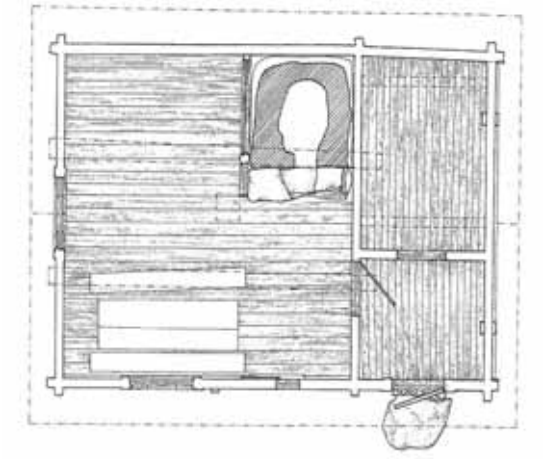

Figure 5. Plan of the smoke house at Keckåsen, Sweden. Drawing by Mirjami Vihma, Finland. The entrance to the smoke room is through a narrow hallway.

Birger Nesholen: The situation for preserving cultural heritage from the Forest Finn culture in Norway

The Finnskogen-area along the Norwegian/Swedish border was inhabited by Finns from the inner part of Finland in the 17th century. This people was called *'metsäsuomalaiset'*, Forest Finns. Many elements in the Forest Finn culture were very different from Norwegian and Swedish culture at that time; the slash and burn cultivation, the language, the shamanistic world wiew, the heating technology in buildings etc.

Up till 1980 very few buildings from the Forest Finn culture in Norway were preserved outside museums – and even few buildings at museums. The buildings outside museums were all moved from their original places and rebuilt in traditional folk museum areas. The aim had been to show these types of building at the museum, and not necessarily to have them in use as functional buildings. Some of the buildings had been moved with too little practical knowledge to secure essential details for their function and technique.

From 1980 there developed a new interest for the Forest Finn culture, based on knowledge through facts. It was no longer sufficient simply to see the buildings; people wanted to understand them, and to know how the technology worked.

At this time, most of the traditional building types with smoke oven heating (smoke cabins, smoke saunas and *riihis*) had already disappeared, and many of those which still existed were in rather bad condition.

To secure sufficient buildings as future documentation, the museum found it necessary to preserve, restore and ensure maintenance of buildings onsite.

Thanks to the economic recession in mid-1980s, it was possible to get financial grants to secure roofs of some 30 buildings, and also to restore more properly some of them. Our priority was primarily complete environments of buildings, and buildings of special importance of value for the cultural heritage. The project lasted four years. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage (*Riksantikvaren*) and the Arts Council Norway (*Norsk kulturråd*) also contributed financially to the project.

This project did not preserve all the buildings the future would need and want as documentation and sites for this minority culture. So the museum worked to get finances for a more long term continuity in the restoration and preservation of the cultural heritage. But from mid-1980s till about 2006 this became more difficult. In 1998, the Forest Finns were given status as one of the national minorities of Norway, and the Norwegian Government ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in February 1999. We thought this would open some doors, but it did not have any immediate positive effect.

Only after 2007 the museum has again experienced more acceptance and support in the practical effort for the cultural heritage for Forest Finn culture in Norway. Unfortunately, we lost some buildings during those 20 years.

Birger Nesholen, The Museum for Forest Finn Culture in Norway

Netta Böök: Finnish houses and Soviet life: Finnish building heritage in areas ceded to the Soviet Union

In my presentation I discuss the Finnish building heritage in those areas west and north of Lake Ladoga that were part of Finland in 1812–1939 (and 1941–1944) but which after the Second World War were ceded to the Soviet Union and incorporated into the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic. The area of the Karelian Isthmus that was incorporated into the Leningrad Oblast is not part of the presentation, though developments there also correspond to the ones described here.

The western and northern areas of Lake Ladoga, known in Finland as Ladoga Karelia and Border Karelia respectively, were for a very long time the core areas of the Karelian people. However, increasingly greater numbers of Lutheran Finns settled down in the areas after Sweden conquered the territory in the 17th century.

The vast majority of the population lived in the rural areas or villages. The tradition of log construction based on a corner-jointing technique still continued in many of these places until the 1930s. The traditional house type in the northern part of Border Karelia, inhabited by Orthodox Karelians, comprised, like the typical north Russian peasant house, of both residential and utility spaces, including spaces for livestock. Further south, in Ladoga Karelia, the farmhouse comprised, as in the Finnish building tradition, of many separate buildings and was often situated solitarily amidst its surrounding fields. The buildings in the villages, however, were often architectonically in a more contemporary style.

Even though Stalin had plans to later incorporate the whole of Finland within the Soviet Union, ceding "Karelia" to the Soviet Union required the evacuation of its entire population to Finland. Despite extensive destruction caused during the war, a considerable number of buildings from the Finnish era remained in use. Soviet workers from Belarus, the Ukraine and the Vologda region were resettled in the area. The new settlers' own building traditions were cut off from their origins, and they had to adapt to new strange circumstances and an alien building tradition where there was no one to show them how to master it.

Buildings from the Finnish period were utilised purposefully and adapted to the needs of Soviet society. In agriculture there was a transition from private farms to the Kolkhoz and Sovkhoz farms. In the period 1950–1991 the population was centralised in the name of production efficiency and the buildings of the villages or individual farms classified as 'unviable' were moved to larger villages or demolished. The animal shelters of the farms were deemed unnecessary and could be demolished because the cattle were concentrated in the Sovkhoz farms.

The move away from the communist system in 1991 led to the abandonment of the Sovkhozes and high unemployment, and thus to the economic depression of the rural areas. The repair of buildings, which had previously been the responsibility of the state, was no longer carried out. At the same time began trips by Finns to visit the remains of the houses that they had been forced to abandon, the area having been closed off to foreigners after it was ceded to the Soviet Union.

Nowadays, due to the unrestricted flow of information, it has been possible to research in Russia the history of the Finnish building tradition in the ceded areas. In addition to buildings designed by well-known Finnish architects, also the rural building heritage from the Finnish

era has been reassessed. Individual buildings have received building protection by the Russian Federation. The old milieu of the former village of Kurkijoki in Ladoga Karelia is the first extensive rural building ensemble proposed by Russian building heritage experts to receive protection status.

Presently there is a willingness between the Republic of Karelia and Finland to establish cooperation in the research, protection and restoration of the Finnish building heritage in the region. There is also tension and disputes between Finns and the present inhabitants over the symbolic ownership of the buildings. For the Finns there is an intrinsic value in the buildings remaining in their locations and as they are, while for the present inhabitants more important is their use value.

(Translation from Finnish into English by Gareth Griffiths and Kristina Kölhi)

Netta Böök
architect (M. Sc.)
Helsinki University of Technology

Ola Storsletten: Rejection and acceptance. Exchange of architectural ideas between the Finns and the Norwegians

In the 17th Century Finnish settlers migrated through Sweden to the eastern part of southern Norway. Among the cultural expressions the Finns brought with them was a log built vernacular architecture that in many ways was similar to the Norwegian but also included peculiar houses like the bathing house, *sauna*, and a house for drying grain, *rie*. A characteristic element in the Finnish living house, *røykstue*, was the massive stove of stones with no chimney that was heated once a day even in the wintertime. In the contact between the Finns and the Norwegians both sides stuck to their traditional building tradition for a surprisingly long time. The result was two different cultures living side by side for a couple of hundred years.

A well known example is the above mentioned Finnish stove that was both far more effective and less fuel consuming than the Norwegian fire place. The main reason why the Norwegians did not adopt the Finnish solution is that the fire place was used for various activities where light was essential while the Finnish stove only gave little light. The Finns on the other hand had other possibilities for getting light while the heat from the stove was used in different ways.

A less known example is the roof construction in the heated houses were the Norwegians often preferred a layer of turf on the top that both isolated the building and kept down the birch bark that was used against rain water. The Finns used an isolated ceiling too keep the heat in the room. The bark on the roof was hold down by sticks or halved logs, in a similar fashion to their other buildings. In this case, however, it is possible that they had a gradual influence on the Norwegians. Later the use of wooden constructions on the roofs seems to have been more common in the eastern part of southern Norway than in the rest of this area. Also the traditional ceiling in living houses in Østerdalen can be a result of Finnish influence.

Another little discussed example is the store houses for human food and clothes. In Norway the *bur* or *loft* is generally raised on a wooden sub construction that lifts the house above the ground, *stabbur*. In the medieval time, however, the store houses were built on a low foundation of stones. Since the additional sub constructions seem to have been introduced during The Little Ice Age one hypothesis is that they were used for preventing mice and rats from using the crust to get into the houses. The food was normally stored on the first floor. In Norway the Finns had store houses that are very much like the Norwegian *lofts*. Most of the buildings are placed directly on the ground, but store houses for food that are raised on short poles are also known in the Finnish area. In this case the similarity can be homologue and not a result of cultural contact.

A rare example of what seems to be an instant acceptance from the other culture was when the Finns built their cellars where the potatoes were kept more or less like the Norwegians. Apparently the Finns adopted the Norwegian solution because they themselves had no tradition for storing potatoes.

Nawit Ongsavangchai: Shophouse of Kaohong Market Town. Dwelling beyond Borders

Before the coming of road networks, an area in the Central Plain of Thailand could be reached by the web of channel network. People who take farming and agriculture as their walk of life live in the villages among the rice fields and connect with the outside world by boats. Their livelihood was in the context of subsistence economy. After Thailand entered into the Bowring Treaty with England in 1855, Thai economy had greatly expanded and common people long living in the subsistence environment gradually shifted into the modern trade society. In this period, many communities were established beside the channel network as hubs of transportation and trading centers for rice and other agricultural products, while floating markets were formed along the bank of the rivers. Packet boats conveyed farm products and also passengers from these communities to Bangkok then exported to other countries and brought back modern commodities to sell to local people. Most successful merchants were Chinese being good at doing business and turning local trading communities beside the river into market towns. They always own the rice mill in these market towns and built shophouses as permanent dwellings for living and trading in one structure for renting to the local people. Short after the Bowring Treaty, many market towns were gradually developed in the Central Plains by using channel network as a means of transportation for trading, while wooden shophouses were built in these market towns as well.

This paper aims to clarify the formation of market towns along the channel network in the Central Plains of Thailand, planning and development process of market towns and spatial organization of their architecture, shophouses, by raising Kaohong market town on the banks of the Suphanburi River as a case study, as a part of series of researches to discuss the formation and transformation of shophouses in Thailand. Different from the typical shophouses in urban areas, shophouses of Kaohong market are built of wood instead of concrete. Colonnaded walkway in the front of shophouses is not found but there is long balcony combining all units of shophouses into one building on the front of the second floor. The balcony functions as the passageway for shophouses' dwellers when the ground floor is flooded which usually occurred in the past. Strangely enough, the row of shophouses is not parallel to the river which is commonly observed in other market towns and makes each front of shophouses opens directly to the waterway. Mainly, block of shophouses and other structures in Kaohong market is placed perpendicularly to the river.

Shophouses of Kaohong market town seem likely to have a simple spatial organization but no shophouses are identical in spatial arrangement. The original spatial organization in shophouses is the composition of two-storied structure in the front part and open well in the rear part but extension and alteration were done by dwellers mainly in rear spaces. According to the extensions, shophouses gradually acquire wider floor spaces over the open well area which finally turns the shophouses into complete two-storied structures along the depth without open well.

From the seaside settlements around Southeast Asia where Chinese immigrants widely founded their communities in the new world, in Thailand, they gradually moved from seaside towns to the inner cities. They came with building skill of their indigenous dwellings making shophouses are the common building typology of urban Thai or even in the hard to reach local market towns along the channel network of central Thailand.

Fig 1. Kaohong market town on the bank of the Suphanburi River

Fig 2. Rows of wooden shophouses in Kaohong market town

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Julia Mundo-Hernández[1], Ma. Cristina Valerdi-Nochebuena[1], Julia Hernández-Alvarez[2], Jorge Sosa-Oliver[1]: Influence of Demographic Movement in Housing Quality in San Andres Azumiatla, Puebla, Mexico.

San Andrés Azumiatla is a town with 8 thousand inhabitants in the State of Puebla, Mexico. Although this town is only 12 Km away from Puebla city, the 4th largest city in the country, it is a very undeveloped town in terms of education, economy, social issues and health. Like in many non-developed communities in Mexico, people from San Andrés Azumiatla often immigrate to the US in order to find temporary jobs. On the other hand, most of the people who stay in San Andrés Azumiatla work in the city of Puebla. This fact added to poverty and a growing need for housing has led people to build their houses with many different construction materials, causing a lack of identity, health problems due to poor design, and a short period of life of these constructions. Nowadays, it is still possible to see vernacular housing architecture in San Andrés. The main aim of this paper is to present an analysis of the influence of demographic movement into the characteristics of new housing in comparison to vernacular housing. A research tool to be used on site has been developed for this purpose. During site visits all housing types will be registered under the following aspects: materials, construction system, typology, colours, orientation, functionality, ventilation and lighting strategies. Conclusions will determine whether vernacular or new housing construction in San Andrés Azumiatla responds to the needs of the inhabitants, and to which extend vernacular architecture has been lost due to the influence of people who are constantly going away and coming back to this town. This research is being developed by the Architecture Faculty and the Nursing Faculty of the University of Puebla.

Photos: San Andrés Azumiatla (Mundo, 2009)

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Kersti Berggren: Conservation across borders, conservation of conflicting cultures within borders

“We are all settlers. Some of us become the majority, and thus being able to dominate. I will discuss and compare the challenges of finding a solid model to conserve and preserve the vernacular heritage of Finnskogen that crosses borders, with the challenge to find a solid model for the same task in Kosovo, with conflicting cultures within borders".

I discuss one case relating to the practical challenge in “Finnskogen” where we have to find a model for how to conserve and preserve the cultural heritage that crosses the border, not only between Sweden and Norway, but also within the different county borders of Sweden (which in this case has its importance). The model will deal with institutional capacity building, organizing of authorities, legal issues, grant systems etc, etc.

I will then demonstrate in another case the challenges we face when cultural heritage of different communities co-exist within the borders of a nation, but clash into conflict.

I build my comparison using my experience as a project leader for the Swedish NGO Cultural Heritage without Borders, and the work I did for them in Kosovo.

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Josep Metslang: Restoring Settlers Vernacular Built Heritage

The Estonian architectural heritage can be divided into two very different branches: local or native and European or international. The native farm architecture of local origin is simple in its essence, natural, traditional and quite conservative. In the course of time farm buildings, especially the barn-dwelling, have become a significant sign in Estonian native culture.

Historically the rural architecture is influenced by three newcomer groups: the Estonian Russians, Estonian Swedes and a small Finnish influence. All these groups have specific architectural traditions, which are in danger of disappearing.

Russian settlements in the coast of lake Peipus are still active: the first settlers arrived here in 17th-18th century, and the Estonian Russian generations populate many villages still today. Since medieval times trough-out west coast and smaller islands, the Estonian Swede vernacular architecture differs from Estonian traditions in many ways. In north in Juminda and Pärispea peninsulas, a trace of Estonian Finnish 18th century building tradition still prevails.

The problem with these three groups is constant destruction of built heritage, with a lack of maintenance and restoration skills. Even as the lake Peipus region Russian Estonian buildings are still populated, the older houses are completely changed or demolished to make way for new. The Estonian Swedish and Finnish population has vanished long ago, their buildings are often destroyed, only few good examples still exist. The problem is a lack of knowledge and skills how to preserve these special type of houses with complete authenticity, respecting individual building details and methods.

The Rural Architecture program has been working since 2007 under the Estonian Ministry of Culture „Rural Architecture and Landscape. Study and Maintenance. Development plan 2007-2010.“ Situated in the Estonian Open-Air Museum, the program is a center for researching the vernacular architecture in different parts of Estonia, to popularize local built heritage and to support preserving the heritage trough studying, valuating and maintenance consulting.

The research so far has applied field work to study individual buildings in detail, to consult restoration with owners and specialists. The aim of the Rural Architecture program is to research historical and present day information and distribute this to the public. A part of the research is to study different restoration methods trough workshops and training.

All the research results are focused on preserving local built heritage, among others the Peipus region Russian, coastal Swedish and Finnish areas. It is necessary to maintain a consulting center to give an open access to research work, literature, training, and to find and educate specialists capable to restore older buildings. It is necessary to distribute restoration field work results, to keep a dialogue with owners and building specialists, in order to preserve local architecture and its authenticity.

Estonian Russian Saare village on Piirissaare island. The milieu is disappearing; the preserved buildings need much attention.

Estonian Swede and Finnish houses are still to find in the western and northern coastal areas. Some buildings are restored while preserving authentic details.

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Estonian Open-Air Museum, researcher
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Tallinn, 26th November 2009

Gerardo Torres: Temporal boundaries in the Mexican Vernacular House

Geographical expressions of Vernacular house in Mexico are diverse due to the vast territory (almost 2 million km^2) where they take place. Cultural roots of Mexican vernacular architecture (1150 B. C.) are numerous as well: Olmeca, Teotihuacan, Maya and Tolteca Culture are just a few examples of the several cultures that developed there.

Territorial boundaries were nevertheless cultural ones and vernacular house in Mexico exemplifies this: a cultural outcome with pre-Hispanic and Spanish influences as well, that after 500 years of colonial times, and 200 years of a nation with independent life, still survive. This cultural diversity is reflected in the more than 12 Million indigenous population, which represent 10% of the total, distributed in approximately 85 groups with own traditions and languages.

Mexican vernacular house can be seen then not just as a *product* that express local building resources limited by physical borders, but also as a *process* in which several cultures go trough, leaving a trace of the several historical times. What are the traces that represent these "temporal layers", and how to define the limits of them are the questions that motivated this work.

Taking as an example a Mexican region with indigenous Nauha influence, twenty municipalities from Valle de Toluca, Mexico were researched. From these, pre-Hispanic features of forty cases were documented and analyzed. For this, an analytical framework was developed, that is based on building aspects and symbolical and non material expressions too.

As in many parts of the World, vernacular heritage in Mexico faces the riks of destruction as a consequence of external influences which weaknes gradually local cultures and traditions. However, the research allow us to conclude that, in spite of modifications and destruction, pre-Hispanic elements in the vernacular house have not disappeared but do still remain. Several symbols and rituals still shape the spatial configuration of the house and represent the existence of an intangible heritage that underlies the architecture of the Mexican vernacular house; a unique example where territorial and temporary boundaries become one.

Examples of vernacular house with Nahua influence, Estado de Mexico, México.

Gerardo Torres, PhD, IPN Mexico, CIAV-ICOMOS Member

Marwa Dabaieh: Back to the future of dying vernacular past. Conservation of Desert Vernacular in Egypt,Practical Study of Balat Village in Dakhla Oasis.

The existing desert vernacular settlements around the world are sometimes endangered facing either a deterioration threat or risk dilemma and are in other times even vanished .The problem primarily happens in the urban areas surrounding old vernacular settlements that are growing and developing based on nothing but economics paradigm. As a matter of fact, the deportation phenomenon of desert vernacular communities -specifically in the western desert in Egypt- are due to development of activities and other motives, such as city revitalization, is dramatically harming the traditional vernacular cores of such cities, towns and old dwellings. Another big problem is that, due to its geographical as well as quantitative vastness, desert vernacular heritage is rarely recorded or listed, and important parts have already been lost.

Desert vernacular architecture was always a product of a natural cycle of sustainable building tradition. People inherit the traditional way of building from their ancestors and the oral un-documented knowledge was transferred and developed from generation to generation along the years. Inhabitants respond to their surrounding environment and climate through trial and error in a way satisfying their needs and aspirations. This natural cycle is about to vanish due to the fact that inhabitants are leaving their houses to deteriorate or they demolish them to build modern concrete houses instead. People are seeking for modern life facilities that their old houses don't satisfy any more. This paper is based on a PhD research that will reveal the know-how of desert vernacular architecture in Egypt taking Balat village in the western desert as a case study. It is mainly focusing on how to adjust traditional techniques to new life demands in a way that keep and preserve these beneficial traditional techniques. The research outcome is a manual and a checklist for a contemporary vernacular building model based on the argument mentioned above. The manual will be designed based on intensive questionnaires and interviews to come up with wish-list for inhabitants need. That will be tested by a virtual and physical model built in site. By this way we are preserving the sustainable desert vernacular architecture as it used to be for centuries and helping to keep the old beneficial values naturally developing. It is a new vision for the future of old and contemporary vernacular desert communities through conservation by modeling. This research is still in progress, a preliminary studies and investigations were done to support the research hypothesis. This research targets planners, architects, conservation architects, anthropologists, theorists and inhabitants in desert communities.

Marwa Dabaieh

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