

Katarzyna Szulc

„THE POST-WAR DISPUTE OVER THE ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITY OF
FINLAND”

Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the historical and comparative analysis of three main squares in Helsinki: *Senaatintori* (Senate Square), *Rautatientori* (Railway Square), and *Kansalaistori* (Citizens' Square). Their localization, form and surrounding buildings document the major phases of the development of architecture in Finland. The creation of these squares and their architectural expression, is associated with the fundamental stages of the political history of the Grand Duchy of Finland, which was a part of the Russian Empire and the Republic of Finland, established in 1917. *Senaatintori* represents cosmopolitan, late European Neoclassicism. In terms of architecture, *Rautatientori* is an expression of the typical of 19th-century historicism, as well as an example of National Romanticism. *Kansalaistori* combines several periods of Finnish architecture and has been in a process of building from 1920s, and it still continues. I did not choose these squares only because of their architecture or styles, or because they are significant physical spaces of the city, but because they are important clusters of political, artistic, cultural and national ideas. *Senaatintori* marks a new beginning for Helsinki, when becoming the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1812. *Rautatientori* is a symbol of the dynamic development of the city and heralds the birth of the modern civilization, whereas the *Kansalaistori* is a sign of an independent country, a place that could become the main political, administrative, educational and cultural center of modern Finland. I believe that these three urban spaces along with the architecture around them, are the most complete reflection of the political content and artistic concepts that accompanied the birth of modern Finland and the creation of its cultural and national identity.