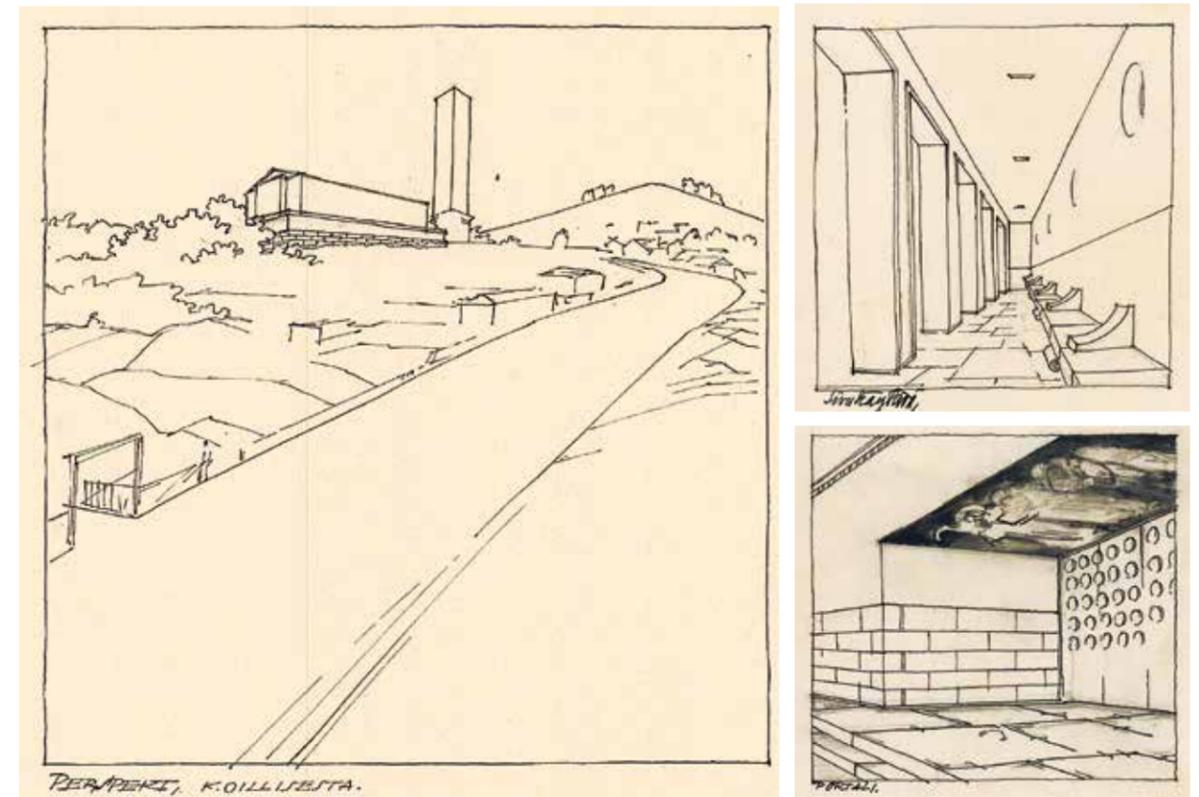


of *Kommende Baukunst*, that is, a German translation of Le Corbusier's book *Vers une architecture*.⁹ A drawing in the book showing a reconstruction of the Acropolis of Athens seems to have made an impression on Aalto. The page of the book had both a floor plan of the Acropolis and a perspective view of the Propylaea towards the Erechtheion, with the statue of Pallas Athena in between.¹⁰ To the right was the Parthenon. Aalto sketched a similar composition for Töölö Church: a long flight of steps rose up the hill between the terraced walls. The church was on the right and on the left stood a large statue of Christ or an apostle, instead of Pallas Athena. Despite certain similarities with the Acropolis, Aalto's composition was actually much stronger. In Athens, the temple rests on the top of the Acropolis, whereas in Töölö it pushes dramatically towards the slope, just as Aalto had learned from Italy. Aalto placed a tall bell tower in the centre of the whole composition. At first it was circular in plan,¹¹ but later was changed to a square. The bell tower formed a gate

facing four different directions, one of which led to the church. On the opposite side of the church was a building that contained offices and staff residences, which opened up via an arcade towards the park. A fine collection of squares and terraces was created between the buildings and recesses. The overall look was of San Gimignano but in miniature.

The competition was won, however, by Hilding Ekelund. Aalto received only a purchase, although one of the competition judges, J. S. Sirén, the architect of the new Finnish Parliament House, recorded a dissenting opinion. He would have liked to have awarded Aalto's proposal the third prize. The merit of the winning proposal was that it already placed the first phase of the church on the central axis of the park and thus already established the backdrop for the park. Aalto's proposal, which he had given the pseudonym "Job", received high praise: "The proposal has considerable architectural merit, especially in terms of the overall grouping, which offers visually

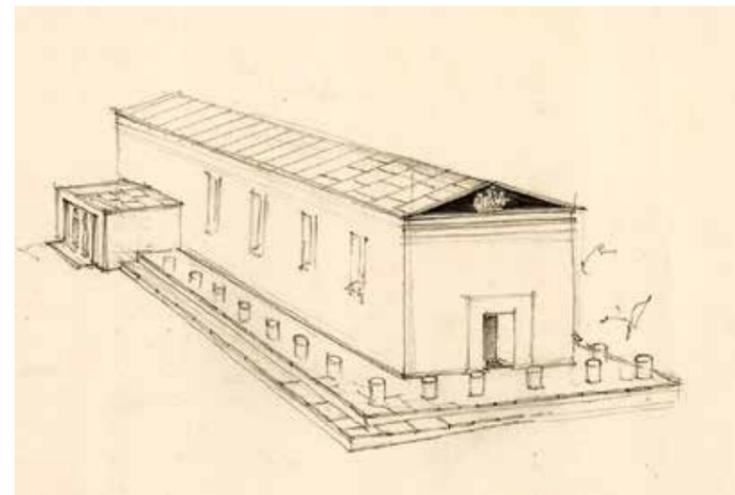


The competition proposal "Taulumäki", 1927. A view from the lower slope, and views of the side aisle of the church and the main entrance.



Aalto's donated design for Taulumäki Church, Jyväskylä, in 1925 or 1926 – in an Early Renaissance style.

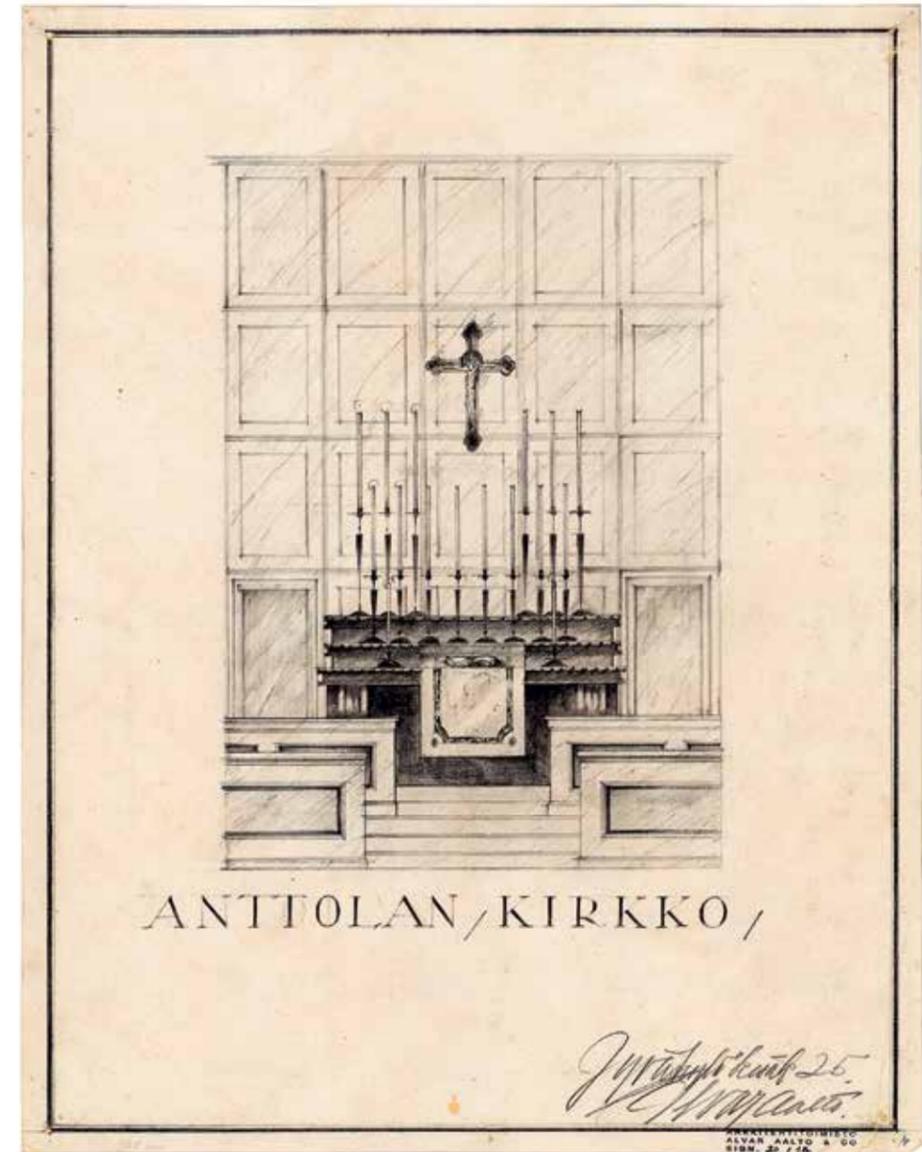
The competition proposal "Korinthus Felix" for Taulumäki Church, 1927 – this was Aalto's most strongly Greek-influenced church proposal, in which the cella is surrounded by column bases.



quite beautiful perspectives."¹² In the first phase, Aalto's building group would have remained fragmented, as the merits of the overall grouping would have been realized only after the construction of the large church, which to date (2020) has still not occurred.

A month later it was the turn of the competition for the design of Viinikka Church in Tampere. The plot assigned to the church was in the shape of an oblique right-angled triangle. The plot seemed to inspire Aalto, as in his sketches he grouped the buildings into free coordinate systems, following the boundaries of the plot. An equally relaxed coordinate system would not be seen again until Paimio Sanatorium. In his final competition proposal, Aalto returned to the orthogonal coordinate system, where the church, parish centre and vicarage bordered a square on three sides. The bell tower with a circular plan, which had first appeared in the sketch designs for Töölö Church, here remained in the final proposal. Initially, the tower had been searching for its place and had now found

it, slightly apart from the rest, at the end of the diagonal street. The church itself was a simple rectangle with a very shallow pitched roof. The only embellishment in the entrance facade was its noble proportions and the centrally placed main entrance portal. The nave comprised a single central aisle leading towards the chancel, with a mural covering the entire end wall. Daylight entered the interior through eight large square windows at the top of the side walls. In the organ loft, a large number of Spanish Trumpets protruded from the organ facade. Contrary to precedent, the pulpit was placed to the right of the altar in a separate niche, from which the preacher was visible also from the parish hall opposite. The parish hall formed a kind of atrium surrounded by the sacristy and parish clubrooms. The space could be connected to the church by opening a large folding door. The parish hall received natural light from a large glazed opening that overlooked the courtyard. The third building was the vicarage, in one corner of which lived the deaconess. Particularly notable



↵ The organ loft at the rear of the church is an impressive example of Aalto's ability to transform classic models from Renaissance architecture into integral parts of a Finnish rural church.

^ The altar design consisted of a tiered altar with tall candleholders on each level.



The quality of the light falling down on to the altar and the ambience in the space vary according to the time of day, the weather and the season. Textile artist Kirsti Ilvessalo designed the traditional Finnish wedding rug "Sunnuntaipäivä" [Sunday] in 1956, and it is used only for wedding ceremonies.

< The narrow marble tiles, the free-form altar railing and the impressive group of three crosses contribute to the character of the altar area. The textiles are by Greta Skogster-Lehtinen.