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**WHY IS THERE A TREFOIL MOTIF FROM KARJA
CHURCH IN PIKK STREET IN TALLINN?
BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE RESTORATION OF
THE IN-SITU GOTHIC PORTAL IN PIKK STREET 7,
HOW MEDIEVAL IS THE MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE
OF TALLINN OLD TOWN?**

*How cold is all history, how lifeless all imagery, compared to
that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble
bears! How many pages of doubtful record might we not often
spare, for a few stones left one upon another!*

John Ruskin¹

Although Tallinn is known for its authentic medieval architecture, the closer to details we delve, to view the medieval buildings from the perspective of particulars, or the history of things, following the method of its apologist Ivan Gaskell, the more variegated the picture becomes. And we could say that in Tallin Old Town there is only one medieval *diele* stone pillar in its original place in Suur-Karja 8, and yet, they can also be found in the *dieles* of Tallinn City Theatre

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Translated by Kristi Lahne.

¹ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Project Gutenberg, 2011), 169, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/35898/35898-h/35898-h.htm> [accessed 07.07.2022].

(Lai 23)², Tallinn City Museum (Vene 17)³, and a medieval residence reconstructed into the former cafe *Gnoom*, current *Peppersack* (Vana-Turg 6)⁴. Only one of these has survived through centuries, the other two have a more complicated history as artefacts. Therefore, when art history refers to a general stylistic history of a city, details often remain without thorough attention owing to the scope of the topic; however, delving into these details, or digging into the history of things – to use a modern term, we may find quite a few essential characteristics of the architecture of today's Old Town of Tallinn. To jump ahead, it may be said that what we see as the essential, everyday look of Tallinn Old Town, owes considerably to the work and even creativity of restorers. This article here looks at the architecture of the Old Town as a harmony of architecture of different eras and the creations of restorers, based on an example of a restored Gothic portal, asking among other things, how medieval is the medieval architecture of Tallinn Old Town. In heritage conservation, classical and Romantic origins have been recognised among other classifications.⁵ Idea is important to the former of those, and the visual canon of classicism promotes the building of palaces, manors, and postal stations again.⁶ For the romantic thought, every artwork is unique and this cognition is dependent on experience, i.e. a moment when we face the work directly, and it speaks to us in all its naked beauty and pain.⁷ The following story contains both, because even restored works of art, buildings, or architectural details speak to us in all their beauty and pain decades after the restoration works have finished.

When we discuss restorations of medieval architecture in Tallinn, then, as one of the most extensive examples, it is impossible not to mention St Nicholas' Church, although it is not exactly the subject of this article. I would not wish to give an overview of the restoration process of the building as a museum/concert hall back then; instead,

2 This originates from a secondary location of Mõürivahe Street 33, from an external corner of the courtyard building.

3 This originates from a medieval residence in Viru Street 11, demolished before World War II.

4 Its original location is not certain, but it is probable that some of the details originate from a demolished building in Pikk 61.

5 Juhan Maiste, 'Muutes tuleviku minevikku', *Vabadus mäletada*, comp. by Kadri Asmer (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2016), 185.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.



FIG. 1. HORTUS MUSICUS IN ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH. *TALLINNA ARHITEKTUUR* (TALLINN: EESTI RAAMAT, 1987), 44.

the reason for mentioning St Nicholas' Church here is a photo which in a way also contains an essential key to a better understanding of the following. *Tallinna arhitektuur* ('Architecture of Tallinn')⁸ was published in 1987, containing impressive photos of Tallinn architecture by the well-known cityscape photographer Gustav German. The book dedicates a pair of pages to the then recently restored St Nicholas' Church.⁹ Bright and white rooms fill the pages. One of those photos (Fig. 1) is most interesting from the perspective of this paper here. It is a photo of the early music ensemble Hortus Musicus performing in the church to mark the end of the restoration works. Initially, looking at the picture, it seems that the Middle Ages have been restored both in form (the church building) and content (music); however, what makes it of its own time is that in its brightness (the performers, too, are dressed in white) it is somewhat suggestive of Winckelmann's idea

8 *Tallinna arhitektuur*, comp. by and written by Dmitri Bruns, Rasmus Kangropool and Valmi Kallion (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1987).

9 Ibid., 44–45.

of the white classical architecture but not of Tallinn in the Middle Ages. Looking at the picture, we could say that it is a modern idea of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages with its Gothic architecture and woodwind instruments seems born-again on the photo, and if we remember that the Old Town as a whole used to be rather dirty, then this clean 'bright Middle Ages' in a room with great acoustics, paradoxically contradicting the official history's idea of 'the dark Middle Ages', seems to have contrasted the soviet greyness, and therefore had to be included in the presentable book.¹⁰ Thus, the photo depicts a kind of ideal and the quests for that ideal are also reflected in the restoration of the details discussed hereunder. In a postmodernist fashion, or today also commercially, there have been attempts to 'spoil' the 'white' ideal; take for example the so-called 'Olde Hansa Style' known in today's Tallinn (after the Middle Ages-inspired restaurant *Olde Hansa* and its sister tavern *III Draakon*). In the medieval Town Hall, restored by modern principles, as we step into the tavern *III Draakon* ('The Third Dragon'), whose interior has been designed in the past decade, we can see a modern vision of the Middle Ages from popular or commercial culture, where an attempt has been made to create 'the medieval feel' using reclaimed timber from different eras. It probably would not be wrong to use the terms academic and folksy for these two approaches. The restoration of St Nicholas' Church and the activities of Hortus Musicus were and are usually based on academic knowledge and its interpretations, while the so-called Olde Hansa-esque approach is more akin to a liberal theatrical fantasy. In the Western cultural sphere today, pop bands exist who play early music, interpreting medieval music through similar fantasy-filled stylisation – perhaps it is essential in our contemporary popular and commercial culture. The latter is also not without a certain superficiality.

Of course, obviously it is impossible to precisely restore what is lost, and different approaches are feasible; the real Middle Ages can only be illustrated by an empty page and thus both examples given above are interpretations. The following example is a look at attempts at filling the empty page in the art of stone cutting in Tallinn.

¹⁰ In the early 1990s, this author also took the book with him on one of his first visits abroad to Denmark to introduce Tallinn.



FIG. 2. GOTHIC PORTAL OF VENE 17. PHOTO: M. KÜTTIM, 2020.

The portal of the medieval house in Pikk Street 7 contains one of the more interesting restoration questions. Before we take a closer look at the restored portal, we must choose as a point of reference a suitable exemplar that has survived in its original form. One of the best examples of Gothic portals of Tallinn's medieval patrician residences that has survived in its original location and in its original form is the Late Medieval portal of the building in Vene Street 17 from the 15th–16th century (Fig. 2). Merchant Hans Viant had it added

to the building.¹¹ It is an imposing portal ensemble, with a décor of wimperg and lions and human heads, which has survived almost completely intact, with only the perron with decorative perron stones missing. In addition to the assumption that a perron most definitely belonged to such a house, the erstwhile existence of the perron is implied also by the wimperg's side shafts, which seem to begin in the air and are currently not leaning on anything. Originally, they probably leaned on the perron. Perhaps we would not be mistaken to presume that the perron stones depicted the family crests of Hans Viant and his wife, because those can be found on some stonework in the house and the depiction of the owner's crest was common on the perrons of Tallinn. Anu Mänd has also suggested that they had indeed existed on the perron stones.¹² Mänd also describes Viant's perhaps somewhat excessive love for using his crest, which in Novgorod had led to a conflict with the ambassadors of the city of Tartu, because Viant, while visiting Novgorod, had hung his coat of arms (*syn wapenth und signeth*) on the *dornse* window of the local merchant yard, which had obscured Tartu's.¹³

In the portal of Vene 17, we can see the authentic medieval architecture of Tallinn, its details have survived in the original location and form – *com'era dov'era*, as the Venetians say. We should also add that in its heyday, in the 16th century, Vene 17 was one of Tallinn's most expensive residential buildings.¹⁴ Therefore, our comparison here is an authentic as well as luxurious architectural detail.

However, the story of the façade of Pikk Street 7 is more complicated and it will be discussed next. About the age of the building. The first record of the property dates from 1476. It mentions a large and a small

11 For more about the story of the construction of the building, see: Krista Kodres, 'Vene tn 17 maja ehitus-, arhitektuuri -ja kunstiajalugu', *Keskaegsest kaupmehemajast muuseumiks. Tallinna Linnamuuseum 80*, comp. by Pia Ehasalu (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnamuuseum, 2017), 15–33; for the story of the restoration of the building, see: Risto Paju, 'Elumajast muuseumiks. Vene tn 17 renoveerimine 1961–1965 ja kohandamine Tallinna Linnamuuseumiks ning renoveerimistööd 1996–2000', *Keskaegsest kaupmehemajast muuseumiks. Tallinna Linnamuuseum 80*, comp. by Pia Ehasalu (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnamuuseum, 2017), 72–83; for a study based on one stone console, see: Risto Paju, 'Ühest hilisgooti raidkonsoolist Vene 17 majas', *Tallinna Linnamuuseumi Toimetised 1* (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnamuuseum, 2019), 181–195.

12 Anu Mänd, Hans Kaupmees, 'Vianti sotsiaalne karjäär, perekond ja kinnisvara', *Vana Tallinn*, 28 (32) (2017), 99.

13 Ibid., 89.

14 *Schatzung aller Häuser und Braupfannen Revels 1558*, Tallinn City Archives = Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, TLA.230.1.Ba18; This author is grateful to Ivar Leimus PhD, for bringing the archival to his attention.

house on the property. By the end of the 16th century, the estate was almost complete in its currently surviving extent.¹⁵ In the year 1476, owner Diderick Hunninckhusen relinquishes the large and small houses to alderman Hinrick Schelwenth. The latter was an alderman since 1457 and became the mayor in 1481. In 1499, the property is owned by his son. In 1502, Hans Schelwent relinquishes both houses to Hans Merckmann (also Merckman). The latter relinquishes the houses to goldsmith Hinrick Schramm, who had been an alderman of his trade and later also of the Canute Guild. In 1547, the building with all the furnishings went to Hans Finhagen.¹⁶ And this change of owners continues. In the list of names, it is remarkable that among owners there is a mayor and a Guild alderman – thus, in the 15th–16th century, which is the period of interest of this article, the building used to belong to the city elite. In addition, its location in Pikk Street, Tallinn's then main street, in the vicinity of the Great Guild Hall and other guild buildings, and right next to the Town Hall Square, indicates that it had been an imposing building in Tallinn.

Let us get to the portal in question now. As we stand on Pikk Street and take a cursory look at the Gothic portal of house no 7 (Fig. 3) and the two stone-framed windows on either side of it, it may seem that the medieval portal ensemble of Pikk Street 7 has survived just as well as the one on Vene 17; however, it has been chosen as the topic of this article because the Pikk 7 portal boasts one of the most interesting and extensively documented restoration stories of a medieval Gothic stone portal in Tallinn Old Town. How did it come about that these two leave the same impression at first glance?

In the drawing of the Pikk 7 building from 1821 (Fig. 4), a fully survived gable front house may be seen¹⁷, the façade of which still includes blind niches on a triangular gable, goods hatches, large windows opening into the *diele* and the ogival Gothic portal. By the commencement in 1978 of the restoration works pertinent to this

15 ENSV MN Riiklik Ehituskomitee VRV. Objekt: Tallinn, Pikk t. 7, Tellija: Vanalinna EV, Teostaja VRV. Sulev Mäeväli, *Arhitektuuriajaloolised eritingimused vanalinna hoonete rekonstrueerimiseks* (Tallinn, 1974), 1–2.

16 Leo Tiik, *Väljavõtteid Tallinna vanematest kinnisturaamatutest, Tallinna vanalinna kinnistuomanike loendid 14. sajandist kuni II Maailmasõjani*. Copy of the manuscript (Tartu, 1966–1970), 235 (quoted in accordance with the handwritten pagination of the copy in the Tallinn City Museum Library).

17 *Pikk 7. Fassaad 1821*, reproduction from *Vabariiklik restaureerimisvalitsus. Tallinn Pikk t. 7 Väliuurimiste vahearuanne* (Tallinn, 1978), National Heritage Board's Archive, ERAT.0.76.001.0003731.

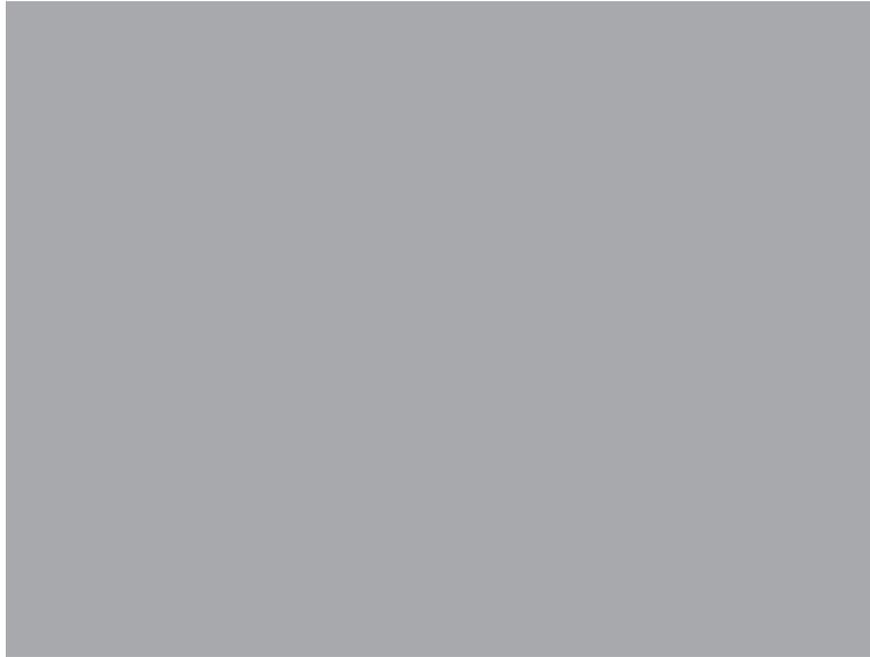


FIG. 3. GOTHIC PORTAL OF PIKK 7. PHOTO: M. KÜTTIM, 2020.



FIG. 4. ORIGINAL FAÇADE OF PIKK 7 ON THE REBUILDING PLAN OF 1821. NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S ARCHIVE.



FIG. 5A. FAÇADE OF PIKK 7 DURING RESTORATION WORKS IN 1978. NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S ARCHIVE.

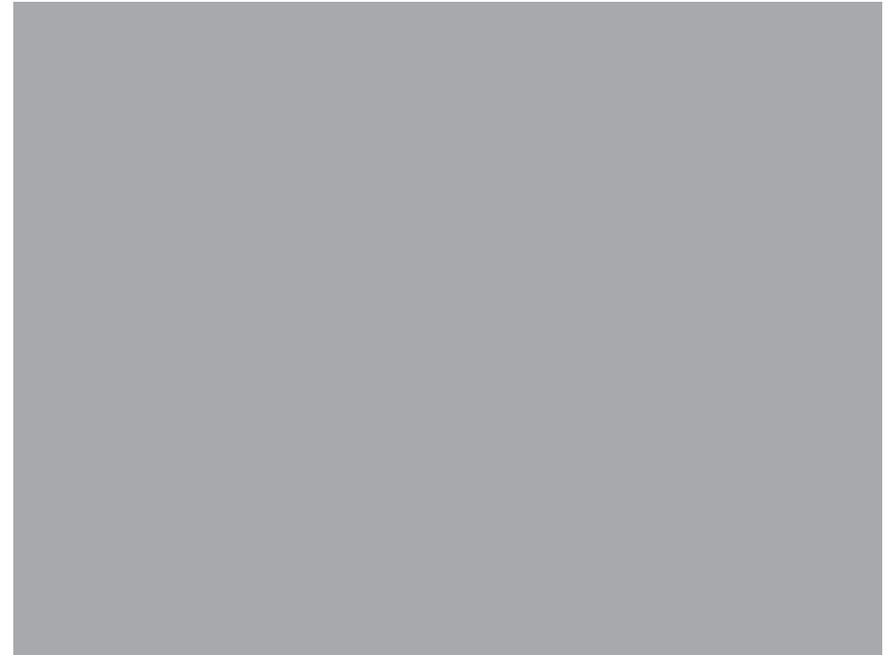


FIG. 5B. PORTAL DETAILS OF PIKK 7 FOUND DURING RESTORATION WORKS. NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S ARCHIVE.

article, the building had lost its sharp gable as well as other medieval details of the façade, some of which had been buried under later plasterwork, some had been removed (Fig. 5). Thus, pieces of the medieval portal were found during the works (out of the stone details found at the building site, after careful comparisons, a conclusion was reached that 34 stones belonged to the portal of the large house, 33 portal stones that fitted the construction chronology, plus one stone from the bottom part of the attached shaft, which was located in the building's secondary stonework¹⁸). It was decided that the impost and soffit fragments were too small for use and in order to achieve a uniform result, the impost and soffit had to be made completely anew.¹⁹ The design was based on the shape of the original details.

In 1980, discussions on the restoration of the portal describe a situation where many original stones of the portal have survived, which, apart from the base, provide a clear idea of the original look of the portal. An admission is made that based on the fragments and original stones it is highly possible to decide on the character of the profile of the arch, soffit and the impost band.²⁰ The portal of Kinga⁷²¹ was deemed to be particularly close in design, and a consensus was reached that the authentic material was quite enough for the restoration of the portal.²² Among other things it was decided that the artificially elongated socle should not be designed from a different material, such as concrete, that the use of different facture is considered, and that it would be proper to make the portal completely out of limestone. At the same time, the possibility was acknowledged that in principle new details of the whole portal can also be made of artificial stone (which was indeed done at the time – R. P.).²³ And finally, it was acknowledged that the research had uncovered many window jamb stones, based on which attempts should be made to reconstruct the windows of

18 Urban Planning Department (Tallinn), archive of the heritage protection department. ENSV MN Riiklik Ehituskomitee. Kultuurimälestiste Riiklik Projekteerimise Instituut. *Tallinn, Pikk tn. 7 Suur hoone. Portaal*, köide IX, 7–8.

19 Ibid., 9.

20 Urban Planning Department (Tallinn), archive of the heritage protection department. ENSV MN Riiklik Ehituskomitee. Kultuurimälestiste Riiklik Projekteerimise Instituut. *Tallinn, Pikk tn. 7 Suur hoone. Portaal*, köide IX, 4.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 5.



FIG. 6. PORTAL DETAILS OF PIKK 7 FOUND DURING RESTORATION WORKS. NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S ARCHIVE.

the vestibule (i.e. *diele* – R. P.).²⁴ Placing together the complete form of the portal based on the existing fragments, obvious similarities were discovered of the details of the portal in question with the portals of Suur-Karja 1, Suur-Karja 8, Vene 17 and Kinga 7, of which Suur-Karja 1 (before the relocation) and Vene 17 also boast the attached side shafts bordering the ornamental face, and, that the shaft nooks and a few shaft stones with damaged surfaces have survived in their original nooks on the portal of Pikk 7.²⁵

An historical testimony tells us that the portal was removed from the outer wall in 1822, and its stones were used in the formation of the new doorway.²⁶ The description of the situation at the time of research says that in the interior of the building, in the portal's interior niche construction, a limestone segmental arch lintel, and a stonework western cheek have partially survived in their 15th-century

24 *Tallinn, Pikk tn. 7 Suur hoone. Portaal*, köide IX, 5..

25 Ibid., 7.

26 ERAT.0.76.001.0004477; Eesti NSV Ministrite Nõukogu Riiklik Ehituskomitee Kultuurimälestiste Riiklik Projekteerimise Instituut. *Tallinn, Pikk t. 7 väliuurimiste aruanne*, comp. by S. Lindmaa (1979), 4–5.



FIG. 7. MASONED STONE DETAILS FOUND AT PIKK 7. NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S ARCHIVE.



FIG. 8. RESTORATION OF THE PORTAL OF PIKK 7 IN 1980. MARKED IN BLUE ARE ORIGINAL DETAILS USED IN THE RESTORATION. URBAN PLANNING DEPARTMENT (TALLINN), ARCHIVE OF THE HERITAGE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT.



FIG. 9. PORTAL DURING RESTORATION WORKS IN 1990. PREVIOUS WORK DONE BY RESTORERS IS VISIBLE AND GROOVES HAVE BEEN MADE FOR CONTINUATION OF WORKS. URBAN PLANNING DEPARTMENT (TALLINN), ARCHIVE OF THE HERITAGE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT.

forming.²⁷ The same folder also includes photos of original details of the impressive Gothic external portal's archivolt (Fig. 5 and 6),²⁸ found in the course of the works. In one photo²⁹ (Fig. 7), next to the stick-styled fragment of the interior portal, we can see a stone detail, whose function is unidentifiable at first glance, with a shape similar to a wimperg torus, and the drawing that lists the surviving original details of the portal contains the tip of the wimperg shaft (Fig. 8). However, its current location is not known to this author.

Looking at the restoration photos and the aforementioned drawing, we can see the extent of the survival of the original area of dressed

27 *Tallinn, Pikk t. 7 väliuurimiste aruanne*, 4–5..

28 *Ibid.*, photos 39 and 40.

29 *Ibid.*, photo 42.

limestone quadras of the wimperg above the portal. In the middle of the area, a limestone frame with a round opening has survived.³⁰ It probably contained a painted board akin to those that have survived on the façade of the building at Kuninga 1.³¹ Other possibilities include a stone relief or a plaster tondo, like on the weigh house in Town Hall Square.³²

The restoration, whose research outcomes have been used above, resulted in the restored stone-framed *diele* windows and the Gothic portal, the framing of the wimperg did not get restored at the time, it was done later (Fig. 9). This too is well-documented, and in addition to the official documents in the archive, information about the works can happily be found elsewhere. Some time ago, thanks to Elmar Kala from the Union of Estonian Limestone, this author came into possession of an interesting document, namely the handwritten memoir of one of the best-known stonework restorers Arne Joonsaar (1929–2010) called *Tagasipeegeldus* ('Reversed Reflection', 2007). It must be specified that it is a work- and not personal life-related memoir, and that makes the manuscript especially valuable to this author here. He writes about stonemasons with whom he has collaborated,³³ gives an overview of his tools, describes his work processes, etc. In addition, some of his more significant restoration works are described by chapters, such as the copy of the lion holding the small gable weathercock on the Tallinn Town Hall, Padise Monastery, Purtse Castle, the machicolation consoles of the Tall Hermann, etc. Among other things, there is a chapter on *the restoring of the ornamental face and attached shafts of the portal of the building at Pikk 7*. Its first sentence

30 With regards to its uncovering, art historian Aleksander Panteleyev recalls that they were lucky to borrow the electrical pneumatic hammer from the Polish restorers working on their first objects in Tallinn. The following situation had been reminiscent of the fence painting scene in *Tom Sawyer*, where all the workmen were standing in line to get to try out the new machine – the author's interview with Aleksander Panteleyev on 17.01.2021.

31 The façade of Kuninga 1 now contains copies, originals are stored in the collection of Tallinn City Museum (TLM 19857 G, 19858 G, 19859 G, 19860 G, 19861 G). See also Merike Kurisoo, 'Kuninga tn 1 fassaadimaalid', *Keskaegsest kaupmehemajast muuseumiks. Tallinna Linnamuuseum 80*, comp. by Pia Ehasalu (Tallinn: Tallinna Linnamuuseum, 2017), 303–309; Krista Kodres, 'Kaunistatud elamu. "Pildid" fassaadil', *Eesti kunsti ajalugu 2: 1520–1770* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2005), 131–132.

32 Both the complete items and fragments are currently located in the stonework collection of Tallinn City Museum.

33 This author's father Raivo Paju used to collaborate a lot with Arne Joonsaar as a smith-restorer.

reads: Why did I do as I did?³⁴ The sentence implies that there had been discussions regarding the restoration of the façade, concerning the conservation and methodology of the restoration of details and this is one of the main topics of this article. So – why, how, and what did they do?

Another supplemental overview in addition to the official evidence on the restoration of the portal is 'Muististe maja Pikk tänav 7' ('Pikk Street 7 – a house of relics'),³⁵ an article by Jüri Kuuskemaa. This restoration critique also contains information which helps to better understand the work done, and to see details as we stand in front of the façade today that we would not see without the background information. For this paper here, one passage from that article is of significance, 'The most important finds for the researchers were 20 masoned stones from the Gothic portal of the former "big house" and an ogival impression in the brickwork of the façade, marking its location. When the portal was dismantled in 1821, some of its stones were used as wall filler for making a simple square doorway. And from there they were now brought to light. Besides the portal stones, they also acquired some fragments of the jambs and mullion of the front hall windows adjacent to the portal. Based on the finds, a partial reconstruction of the façade arose as a possibility. The braver people supported the restoration of not only the portal area, but the whole façade, including the gable with ogival arched niches. /.../ And what to do with the authentic classicistic door, once we rebuild the Gothic portal, in which only a third would comprise authentic parts? Eventually, they found a compromise: **the portal and the porch windows are to be restored in the medieval fashion, the windows on the second floor are to be restored in the classicistic form they had before the fire** (which occurred in 1975 – R. P.), **but a new old-style gable will not be made. And so it happened** [author's emphasis – R. P.].'³⁶ It turns out that they even considered the restoration of the gable, which at first glance and to the uninitiated would have made the house in Pikk 7 seem like a better-preserved medieval dwelling than the house in Vene 17, which is used as a comparison

34 Arne Joonsaar, *Tagasipeegeldus* (Kodutrükk, 2007), 63 (one author's copy of the manuscript is in the possession of this author, a copy of it is in the Tallinn City Museum Library).

35 Jüri Kuuskemaa, 'Muististe maja Pikk tänav 7', *Õhtuleht*, 5 September 1983.

36 Ibid.



FIG. 10. SOLUTIONS GIVEN IN THE PROJECT FOR THE TOP AND BOTTOM PARTS OF THE ATTACHED SHAFTS. URBAN PLANNING DEPARTMENT (TALLINN), ARCHIVE OF THE HERITAGE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT.

in this article. Even though, as Kuuskemaa writes, they managed to finish the main parts for the Olympic summer, the restoration of the Gothic portal did not end there. Namely, back then, they also uncovered partially survived limestone wimperg quadras together with a round niche, which however were lacking the framing attached shafts, because they did not get renovated back then. Yet, today these shafts exist, so – when were they made? The answer to this can be found in further documentation and in Joonsaar’s memoir. In the 1996 report on the restoration works, Heino Uuetalu writes, ‘The restoration of the main portal was carried out from August to November 1995 by stonemason A. Joonsaar. The restoration works of the main portal were based on the 1979 project documentation compiled by the National Institute of Planning (RPI) of Cultural Monuments. The authors

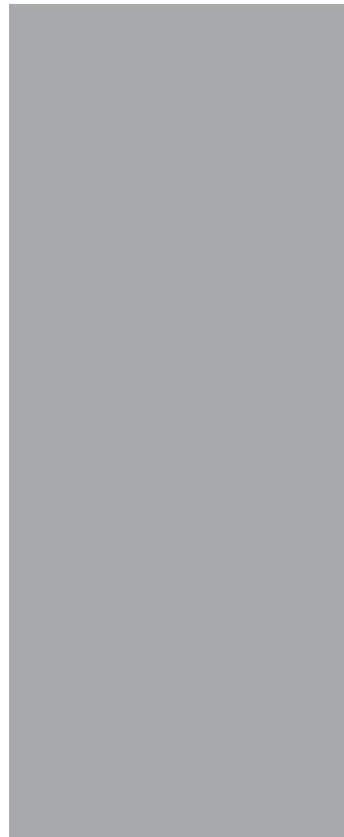


FIG. 11. SOLUTION BY A. JOONSAAR FOR THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF THE WIMPERG SHAFTS. JOONSAAR, TAGASIPEEGELDUS, 64.

of the portal restoration project are architect Karin Lüüs and art historian Silvi Landmaa /Pihlak/. Stonemason A. Joonsaar mostly followed the solutions proposed in the project. Unfortunately, Mr. A. Joonsaar’s “creative” approach appeared in the interpretation of the upper and lower finishes of the vertical toruses. Namely, the project’s solution was replaced by the unsuitable silent rose motif. The solution given in the project: [illustration; Fig. 10] /.../ According to the opinion of art historians, architect-restorers, and the author of these lines, the “silent rose” added by A. Joonsaar is unsuccessful. The restoration of the whole portal may be considered successful and in accordance with the required standards.³⁷

In his memoir, Joonsaar responds to the critique, and since his account is important from the perspective of this article and a good example of restorations of medieval masonry constructions, and the memoir is not available in public libraries,³⁸ it is fitting to present it in full here, despite its length and at times specifically technical precision. Abstracting it would lose the ‘voice’ of the erstwhile restorer. Its length and depth are its values, because with the help of this text it may be possible to interpret other analogical restoration works and decisions made at the time. Joonsaar writes (the text is accompanied and explained by sketches Fig. 11):

‘The repairing of the building at Pikk St 7 has been a difficult and lengthy process, which has taken over 20 years. Hindrances came in the form of stagnant theoretical opinions, lack of limestone necessary for the masonry, caprices of the subcontractors, etc. In 1995, Mr. Heino Uuetalu proposed that I participate in the repairing of the ornamental face and attached shafts of the portal. I agreed, of course, because the 20-year drag had worried me too in many ways. The work that had become hopeless had to be restarted quickly and finished. In the meanwhile, the Union of Estonian Limestone was set up, and I had the honour of being one of its founding members. In the meanwhile, Pikk 7 had gotten a proprietor. In the meanwhile, in Vääkivi they had started using mechanical extraction methods and given up on using

37 Urban Planning Department (Tallinn), archive of the heritage protection department. *Tallinn, Pikk tn. 7 hoone 1994/1995 aasta remont-restaureerimistöde aruanne*, comp. by Heino Uuetalu, 5–6.

38 This author was gifted an original copy by Elmar Kala, a member of the Union of Estonian Limestone, to whom Joonsaar had given it in 2007. Interested parties may view a copy of this exemplar in the Tallinn City Museum Library, the original is in the possession of the author.

explosives – raw material could be ordered from a specific stratum for a specific job. Prior to the commencement of the work, I searched for information on the details that could have survived as the portal was opened, especially considering the mentions of Hobuveski [it was the location of a repository of architectural details of the Estonian National Heritage Board and Joonsaar probably implies here that he was looking for the end detail of the attached shaft of the wimperg – R. P.]. Mr. Rasmus Kangropool denied the possibility of the existence of the tip and base stone of the attached shaft.³⁹ During our discussion he agreed that I will ascertain the shaft's profile and choose the shape of the top and bottom stones of the shaft [author's emphasis – R. P.]. I also had a casual conversation with art historian Silvi Lindmaa, which was meant primarily as a sign from me that the work is indeed starting. Additional pointers or restrictions were not proffered by Heino Uuetaalu, either. The masonry solutions given by the architect were unacceptable to me as a stonemason [the following points are illustrated by A. Joonsaar's handmade drawings – R. P.; Fig. 11].

1. The planned cornice of the ornamental face could not fulfil its technical duty. It was a collector of snow and rainfall, which would keep the plaster and masonry damp locally and by this corrode them. I chose a classic shape for the water nose of the cornice.
2. The cross section of the pillar was vague in the project. The true shape is depicted geometrically as $R=2''$. The shaft projects out of the wall at the height of $3''$. And that's how I did it.
3. The top stone of the attached shaft was designed unacceptably for the Nordic climate as a snow and ice collector. The installed top stones direct the water away from the stone. The surfaces have been dressed to sheen. The motif has been borrowed from Karja Church [author's emphasis – R. P.].
4. The bottom stone of the attached shaft was without a side view in the project, thus unspecified. I decided to use a console with a double rose motif, the geometrical structure of which I am familiar with. To accentuate the time of carving, next to the rose there is a rose leaf shaped as naturally as possible. The model for the flower is Olevimäe... masonry. I forwent the Marian rose found in Pikk 7, because its correct geometry was not known to me yet.

³⁹ This may be the masoned stone that can be seen in the aforementioned photo, it is possible that the detail has gone missing over the 20 years (R. P.).

5. The stones for the outer wall were originally neatly dressed, with the edges straightened (not semi-dressed, as claimed). The straight edge was necessary to achieve ribbon joints of uniform width, whose remnants were visible and measurable on the ornamental face.

From the quarry I chose the raw material from the same stratum that the original shafts and ornamental face stones had been cut from back in the day.⁴⁰ As a modern stonemason, I had a great opportunity to judge the capability and accuracy of the erstwhile stonemasons.

Observations:

1. The thickness of the raw material of the pillar was 120 mm. Neat dressing $4''$ (102 mm). The surfaces of the stratum were hard to dress. There was a "vein" with breaking potential in the middle of the stratum. The stone itself was easily felt.
2. The width of the pickaxes was 50-60 mm max. The narrowest however was 25 mm ($1''$).
3. The edges of the stones were accurately tooled, this cannot be said of the centres of the details – the stones were "bellied".
4. The scabbing of the ornamental face stones was not overly uniform. The surfaces of the stones were partially windblown, which could have left an impression of semi-dressing.

Why I did not give the attached shaft a "thin pencil" finish, which has probably entered architecture from the example of stalactites in caves. A slim stalactite on an everlasting rock can be breathtakingly beautiful – convincing. The permanence of the wall in the immediate vicinity of the portal of the building at Pikk 7 cannot be compared to a rock. Specifically, the portal's left side had dipped, and the wall inside had been laid unsystematically (or rather filled with random materials). Consequently, my instinct called for a console. The vague vertical profile of the wall also cautioned towards such a solution. There was a "belly" on the lower part of the wall and the undersides of the second-floor windows were protruding. Since I did not know how thick the new plaster would be, I had to be prepared for surprises that some part of the attached shaft would be lost in the plaster. During the works I became convinced that this threat was real.

To give symmetry to the left side of the portal and to guarantee the verticality of the shaft, I cut the stone on R-35 shorter by 55 mm.

⁴⁰ Reading this, it seems that the restorer was able to use a fragment of the original as well (R. P.).



FIG. 12. SCULPTURAL GROUPS OF ST NICHOLAS AND ST CATHERINE IN KARJA CHURCH. HELGE KJELLIN, *DIE KIRCHE ZU KARRIS AUF ÖSEL UND IHRE BEZIEHUNGEN ZU GOTLAND* (LUND: GLEERUP, 1928), PLATES LII AND LIII.



FIG. 13. TREFOIL MOTIFS ON THE BALDACHIN ABOVE ST CATHERINE. KJELLIN, *DIE KIRCHE ZU KARRIS AUF ÖSEL UND IHRE BEZIEHUNGEN ZU GOTLAND*, PLATE LVII.

This was also necessary for the restoration of the wall beside the shaft and at the back.

When we look at the portal of Pikk 7, everyone who is interested may see original stonemasonry, freshly chiselled and picked limestone dust details cast on cement mortar – the latter is completely alien to the city built on limestone – and yet accepted.

This report was meant as a potential addendum to the restoration report by Heino Uuetalu. If needed, this material may offer explanations to the opponents who have voiced their opinions without hearing me out.

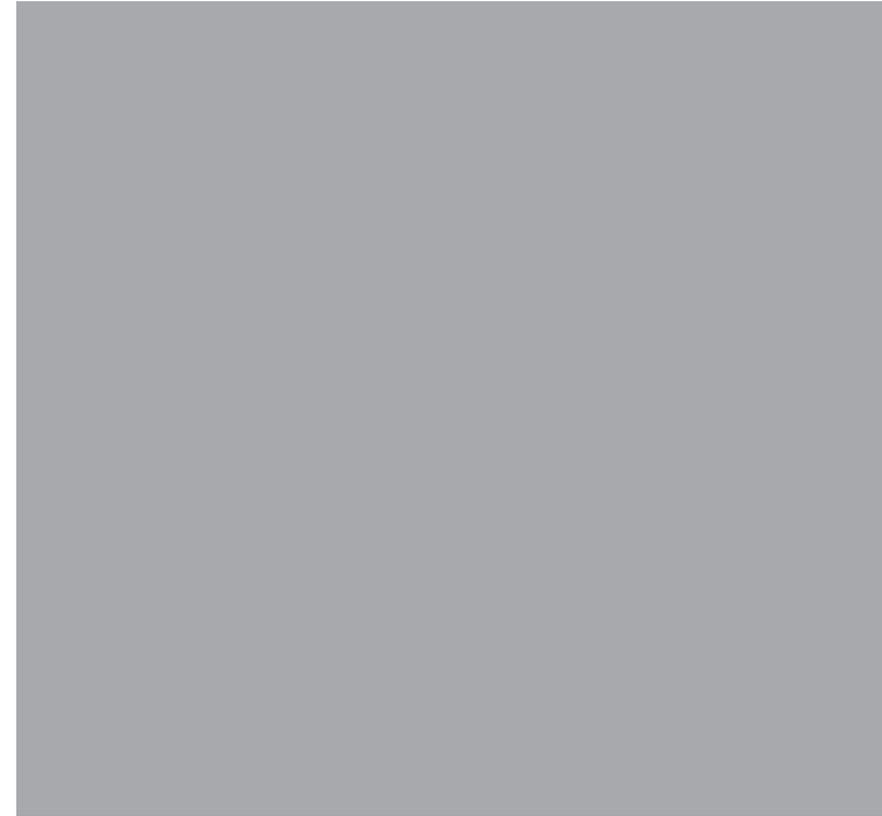


FIG. 14. PORTAL WITH WIMPERG AND SHAFTS ON VANA-TURG 2/4 IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM. ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM.

I would like to stress that I am not repeating the technical errors made by builders and stonemasons centuries ago. I am not denying that as a founding member of the Union of Estonian Limestone and a “stone worshipper” I have in many ways changed my “credo” and done that to the detriment of restoration and to the benefit of renovation. In conclusion, I am striving towards an enduring detail, and thereby a more economical solution from the perspective of the client.⁴¹

The long passage offered a good and detailed overview of a restoration process of a medieval portal in Tallinn, its problems and restoration decisions, and all of that straight from the ‘restorer’s worktop’. Nonetheless, this paper does not seek to evaluate the work

41 Joonsaar, *Tagasipeegeldus*, 63–65.



FIG. 15. PORTAL OF THE PASTORAGE (PERISHED) OF ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH. KJELLIN, *DIE KIRCHE ZU KARRIS AUF ÖSEL UND IHRE BEZIEHUNGEN ZU GOTLAND*, PLATE LVII.

done, this is not the aim, but it certainly must be said that technically the work was very well thought-through. Art historically, a question arises, why was the 13th/14th century Karja Church used as a model for a decorative motif on a Late Medieval portal in Tallinn Old Town, when they could have used the example of the portal of Vene 17 with its original wimperg (decorated with mascarons), for instance, or the pastorage of St Nicholas' Church, which has perished but can be seen in photos, or similar wimpergs on the portal of the gable house in Vana Turg 2/4? Looking at the stone decorations of Karja Church, we can find a similar trefoil in the sculptural group depicting the life of St Nicholas (Fig. 12), which has probably been used as a model by the restorer. H. Kjellin has made sketches of similar triangular decorations with orb motifs on the baldachin above St Catherine (Fig. 13).

In the drawing where the original parts of the portal found during the restoration have been marked (Fig. 8), the lower parts of the attached shafts are marked in blue, or as having survived. Their current location is not known to this author. The perron of Pikk 7 was probably supposed to begin there. In the wimperg of Vene 17 the shafts are currently hanging in the air, owing to the missing perron, and it is possible that



FIG. 16. PORTALS OF KINGA 6 AND PIKK 7. PHOTO: M. KÜTTIM, 2020.

they are smooth on the bottom precisely because the side stones of the perron used to stand underneath them. Based on the photograph, it can be said that the wimperg shafts of Vana Turg 2/4, the so-called Florell House (the house itself has perished, the portal without the wimperg has been attached to the new, neo-Gothic house; Fig. 14), were similarly supposed to lean on a perron. Only the wimperg shafts of the pastorage of St Nicholas' Church reach down to the socle, possibly because since the main entrance of the pastorage was not on the street but in the church yard, it did not have a perron and the stonemason has had to consider that (Fig. 15). Therefore, we can say in conclusion that the ornamental motifs of the portal of Pikk 7 are not all assumptive analogies or copies of the old, but some of them are new creations that use different medieval or even modern motifs (the naturalistic rose leaf that Joon Saar alludes to in his memoir). It can also be said that this kind of approach to wimpergs has been a representative of Tallinn's portal types, the likes of which have been found both on the more imposing residences as well as on the pastorage of St Nicholas'



FIG. 17. MASONED STONE WITH ROSE MOTIF FOUND AT PIKK 7. NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD'S ARCHIVE.

Church. Voldemar Vaga has called this kind of border-framed portal decoration the peculiarity of the Tallinn school of architecture.⁴²

Pikk 7 portal, and with it the stone windows are also interesting from the perspective of restoration because, as is evident from the above-mentioned memoirs of Arne Joonsaar and obvious to an attentive observer in situ, different principles have been utilised in the restoration of the masonry ensemble (portal, wimperg, window frames). During an earlier restoration process, new parts were made of artificial stone, which leaves an impression of limestone from a distance when hand-treated, but the old and the new are still clearly distinguishable.⁴³ During later restoration, as Joonsaar describes, he relied on a contrasting principle, explaining that because he now had access to limestone of the same stratum that the medieval masters had used to make the surviving original parts of the portal, he used precisely that in order to avoid the difference between the new and the old. Which approach

42 Voldemar Vaga, 'Tallinna keskaegne elamu', *Eesti NSV ajaloo küsimusi I. Tartu Riikliku Ülikooli toimetised* (Tartu: Tartu Riiklik Ülikool, 1960), 82.

43 Project by architect Karin Lüüs, carried out by the VRV stonemasons under H. Kuura. See: Kuuskemaa, 'Muististe maja Pikk tänav 7'.

was correct in a given situation, is not this paper's topic, but it can certainly be said that the old town has gained an interesting subject of discussion in the portal and façade of Pikk 7, and together with the perspective portal of Kinga Street 7 across the road, observing from the right angle, we can see a composition of two medieval Gothic portals that are not to be found in a formation as effective as this elsewhere in Tallinn Old Town (Fig. 16).

Considering everything that has been said, the residence at Pikk 7 is partially part of the medieval stonemasonry tradition of Tallinn, but to a lesser extent than the portal of Vene 17, for example, which has survived in its original shape in its original place and has not been demolished and then restored. The perspective portal of Pikk 7 is medieval to the same extent as it is from the 20th century and adds to the restoration history of Tallinn as much as to the studies of medieval architecture of Tallinn.

Kuuskemaa's article includes another thought that relates to the portal in question in this paper. Joonsaar, too, mentions a stone with a rose in his memoir (Fig. 17). In 1978, art historian Silvi Lindmaa carried out research in the building and according to Kuuskemaa, '/.../' on the second floor, next to the aperture of a window a masoned stone was detected that raised serious interest. Initially, only an edge of it was visible with a slim border column. As the dolomite plate was levered out of the wall, it became apparent that it was a rather interesting relief. In the depression of the front there is a depiction of a rose stem with fleshy leaves, including roots and a clump of soil at the bottom. In terms of style, the "rose stone" lies between Gothic and Renaissance. It is a shame that the top part of the plate has broken off. Since the "rose stone" has also been smoothed on the reverse, we may presume that it used to belong with the perron with a stone bench. The perron with the 'rose stone' must have been ordered over the years 1504–1517 by the then owner Hinrik Scrame⁴⁴ or his daughter Barbara, whose dowry the house was said to have been in 1547.⁴⁵ If it was a perron stone, it should have belonged with the main portal in question. This author does not know the current location of the stone. Looking at the photo, we could also suggest that it was

44 The spelling of the name in Kuuskemaa's article differs from the version in the real estate records given by Leo Tiik (R. P.).

45 Kuuskemaa, 'Muististe maja Pikk tänav 7'.

a window cheek, which symbolised a family tree and both the root clump and the leaves along the stem could have had names or coats of arms painted on them. Such family trees are found elsewhere on Tallinn's window cheeks, for example on Vene 10 (appr. 1615–1630), Rüütli 14 (appr. 1600). However, the aforementioned will remain speculative for now. And since the possibility that it could be a perron stone is also too conjectural, it would be too speculative to sketch reconstructions of it, because no surviving analogous example which undoubtedly used to function as a perron stone is available to us.

In conclusion, it may be said that in the restoration of Pikk 7 the Middle Ages have been the main target era and Gothic the main target style – the end results have been aimed at the dominance of those. Nonetheless, it was decided not to restore the gable with the blind niches, and as the beginning of this paper describes the photo of the bright interior of St Nicholas' Church, it can be said that this brightness is also present here, because neither on the portal ensemble in question, nor on other analogous works (e.g. Tallinn City Theatre in Lai 23, Hueck House in Lai 29) have there been efforts to restore the original polychromy of the portals. A possible reason for that is the lack of surviving traces of colour on the existing portals or their fragments, and the scarcity of information about them. Regarding polychromy, there is one exception – the Gothic stone portal of the gable house at Vana Turg 6 carries clear red-and-black pattern fragments and it is one of the most important examples that makes it possible to imagine the colourfulness of the rest of Tallinn's medieval domestic architecture. However, that in-situ portal did not survive in its location, but Polish restorers have replaced it during restoration works out of original pieces and by reconstructing the missing pieces. That portal is certainly also a subject that deserves attention similar to that given to the topic of this paper. The restored Gothics of Pikk 7 belong to the Middle Ages, depicting a 15th–16th century patrician house to the passers-by, as well as to the 20th century, offering a careful observer an inclination of the work, principles, and creations of the restorers, thus enriching local art history. Portals play a big role in the cityscape of Tallinn Old Town. Often, they are the most important decorative element in a rather lapidary façade. Voldemar Vaga has said in his inimitable style that it is the portals that used to give an especially ceremonious, but also intimate, pleasant, and welcoming aspect to the façades of Tallinn's houses. Quite a few of them have

survived in Tallinn /.../ perhaps it is Tallinn's portals (including those of churches and civic buildings) that are the most spectacular and original achievements of the Late Gothic architecture in Tallinn.⁴⁶

To conclude, a fitting thought from Juhan Maiste, 'Every single thing has a double meaning which tells us of the people to whom those things once used to belong, but also of those who have cleaned and restored them, brought them, whether in their natural form or as a verbal text, back into the light.'⁴⁷

RISTO PAJU: WHY IS THERE A TREFOIL MOTIF FROM KARJA CHURCH IN PIKK STREET IN TALLINN?

KEYWORDS: MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE; TALLINN OLD TOWN; GOTHIC PORTAL; STONEMASONRY

SUMMARY

Although Tallinn is known for its authentic medieval architecture, the closer to details we delve, to view the medieval buildings from the perspective of particulars, or the history of things, following the method of its apologist Ivan Gaskell, and take one concrete artefact as a starting point and basis, the more variegated the picture becomes.

The portal of the medieval building in Pikk Street 7 contains some of the more interesting restoration questions. This article here looks at the story of the restoration of a Gothic portal of a medieval residence in Tallinn. When we stand on Pikk Street today and take a cursory look at the portal of the house number 7, with the masonry windows on either side of it, it may seem that this medieval portal ensemble has survived as well as the one in Vene 17 in Tallinn. However, the portal of Pikk 7 has been chosen as the subject of this article because it contains one of the most interesting and well-documented restoration

46 Vaga, 'Tallinna keskaegne elamu', 78.

47 Juhan Maiste, 'Arvustus: Tagasi asjade juurde. Raimo Pullat. *Tallinlase asjademaailm valgustussajandil*', *Akadeemia*, 9 (2017), 1694.

stories of a medieval Gothic portal in Tallinn Old Town. How did it happen that these two leave a similar impression?

The article submits that the residence at Pikk 7 is indeed partially part of the medieval stonemasonry tradition of Tallinn, but certainly to a lesser extent than the portal of Vene 17, which has survived in its original shape and place and has not been demolished and restored. The perspective portal of Pikk 7 is medieval to the same extent as it is from the 20th century and adds to the restoration history of Tallinn as much as to the studies of the medieval architecture of Tallinn. The Middle Ages have been the main target era and Gothic the main target style of the restoration of the building at Pikk 7 – the end results have been aimed at the dominance of those. However, it was decided not to restore the high gable with the blind niches that characterise the medieval residences of Tallinn.

The article is based on official restoration documentation, restoration critique in the press, and personal work memoirs of restorer Arne Joonsaar.

CV

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