Art Academy of Latvia

IDEAS AND MATERIALS: CULTURAL HYBRIDITY OF THE BALTIC AND OTHER REGIONS

ART ACADEMY OF LATVIA, 2021

ACTA ACADEMIAE ARTIUM

Conference Proceedings
of the Doctoral Study Programme
Art Academy of Latvia

Edited by Ojārs Spārītis, Agita Gritāne

IV

Riga, 2021

Art Academy of Latvia
Collective Monograph of the Conference Proceedings “Ideas and Materials: Cultural Hybridity of the Baltic and Other Regions”, 2021. Riga: Art Academy of Latvia, 2021

Peer Review Statement: All submissions are subject to a rigorous peer review process, based on initial editor screening and are anonymously peer-reviewed by a minimum of three specialist referees.

Editors-in-chief of the monograph: Ojārs Spārītis and Agita Gritāne
Proof-reader and technical editor: Laine Kristberga
Design and layout editor: Sabīne Vernere
Publisher: Art Academy of Latvia

The Collective Monograph has been approved in accordance with the decision of the Science Council of the Art Academy of Latvia on 13 November 2021

The Conference “Ideas and Materials: Cultural Hybridity of the Baltic and Other Regions” was supported by Signet Bank, Riga Latvia

The Conference and the Collective Monograph are deliverables of Project No.1.1.1.5 / 18 / I / 014 “Raising Research and Innovation Capacity of the Art Academy of Latvia and the Institute of Art History”

ISBN 978-9934-541-62-9
ISBN 978-9934-541-63-6 pdf

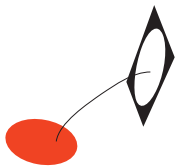
Ojārs Spārītis, Agita Gritāne

PREFACE

The conference of the Art Academy of Latvia is the result of our creative brainstorm and re-action on the theoretical discourse of Professor of the University of Cambridge Peter Burke, dealing with the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in the majority of his theoretical works. Since 2013, the translation of Peter Burke's book *Cultural Hybridity* has been available for scholars of humanities and social sciences in Latvia (translated by Dr. philol. Pauls Daija, publishing house "Mansards", 2013); however, its impact on new research methodology and conclusions is not yet noticeable in the theory of culture and art. The ambitions of the Art Academy of Latvia resulted in inviting the world-famous researcher of cultural phenomena to the annual conference organised by the Department of Doctoral Studies. The conference was organised as a platform for exchange of ideas at an international level. The goal of the conference was manifested not only in the need to provide insight in methodological approaches for research in art history carried out by lecturers and doctoral students alike, but also to help formulate a theoretical platform and offer innovative approaches for both research in traditional art disciplines and the ecosystem of interdisciplinary studies.

The organizers of the conference express their gratitude to Professor Peter Burke for the theoretical guidelines and for raising awareness of cultural hybridity in the context of contemporary culture studies. We would also like to thank each participant in this exchange of ideas for being interested in the analysis of art history, theory and interdisciplinary subjects. Following the assessment of an international Editorial Board, ten most outstanding papers in English have been included in the collective monograph, revealing each researcher's individual perspective on the research problem. The conference papers that were presented and written in Latvian are included in a separate compilation. Along with the compilation in English, the range of all studies is thus documented and offered to readers. It also encourages colleagues to test the hybridity theory as a method in art analysis. The compilers of the collection and the Editorial Board are of the opinion that the factual material included in the collective monograph, as well as the interpretation and application of the hybridity theory and the conclusions drawn will contribute to the Baltic and European space of knowledge production.

IDEAS AND MATERIALS: CULTURAL HYBRIDITY OF THE BALTIC AND OTHER REGIONS



THE RIGA CATHEDRAL ORGAN FAÇADE: DIGITAL ANALYSIS OF STYLISTIC HYBRIDITY

Sanita Bitko
Art Academy of Latvia, 13 Kalpaka Boulevard, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia
sanita.bitko@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The history of the Riga Cathedral organ façade began in 1601 with its oldest dated part, and over more than 400 years the façade has experienced several phases of reconstruction, crucially changing its visual and compositional exterior and supplementing it with new stylistic elements. Today the organ façade can be considered an exceptional art object paradigmatic of stylistic hybridity in Latvia. Recent restoration work materials and various solutions for computer programmes enable individual analysis of each of the construction phases and exploration of the diversity of the façade's ornamental, sculptural and architectural features. Using visualization, the most detailed changes that have affected the organ façade are revealed.
Keywords: *organ façade, ornaments, Mannerism, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo*

More than 400 years have passed since the completion of the Riga Cathedral organ and its façade in 1601 (Grosmane 2017, 66). During this period the façade has undergone numerous repairs and reconstructions. As a result, the façade's visual and compositional exterior has crucially changed. This history of modifications explains the stylistic diversity of ornamental, sculptural and architectural features (Lūsis et al. 2008).

Fig. 1. Example from the Internet project

During the last restoration campaign undertaken on the Riga Cathedral organ façade from 2000 to 2018, the elements of wood carvings were photographically documented, allowing detailed exploration (Riga Dome 800 2021). However, considering each of the ornaments individually, they are merely presented as isolated ornaments and do not form a proper holistic image. For this reason, the author of the article has created a website (Bitko 2021), which combines a joint plan for the organ façade with the possibility to verify the location of each element (Fig.1). The website (furtheron – the Internet project) contains a photograph of the organ façade with many red dots marking it. When a user hovers over one of these dots, the matching ornament appears in an enlarged format, enabling a broader audience interested in the topic to explore the richly decorated organ façade on their own.
A more careful viewer will notice that a band of Baroque ornaments or a wide range of Rococo ornaments are incorporated among the Renaissance style carvings. These modifications are related to different periods of the façade construction, and such changes can be identified on the basis of historical information and restoration materials, which will allow to decode the time of origin of each ornament and the corresponding art style of the given period.
Several colour-coded zones can be demarcated on the façade that correspond to phases or periods when the façade's compositional and stylistic form was changed (Fig. 2). The periods listed below are divided according to artistic styles, because in the given period the façade obtained stylistic additions (Lūsis et al. 2008):
The Renaissance period. The uncoloured central zone is the oldest part of the organ façade dated to 1601.
The Baroque period. Blue-coded areas denote the changes made during the period 1707–1709, when the organ was damaged after a stroke of lightning. At this time, serious repair work was carried out and the façade's composition was altered, represented by blue colour-colour-coded elements added to the oldest section of the façade. The green colour-coded section denotes the changes made after several complaints in 1738, when the organ balcony was repaired and new paintings were created on the gallery banisters. Minor changes to the carvings were also made.
The Rococo period. The red colour-coded areas can be dated to 1776, when the new organ structure was completed, crucially changing the composition of the façade; two large pipe towers were built on either side.
The Historicism period. The yellow colour-coding marks changes that occurred in the beginning of the 20th century, when the raising of the organ was carried out, entailing the creation of support columns.

Renaissance

The history of the Riga Cathedral organ and its façade began on 21 May 1547, when a fire broke out at the Cathedral, destroying both the tower and the organ. As a result of these circumstances, preparatory works were carried out in 1571 to restore the perished objects. The Riga City Council represented by Franz Nyenstaede (1540–1622) made a donation, which was also provided to purchase oak beams for the new organ. Bodeker's chronicle states that in 1594 the Riga Cathedral organ cost 5686 state thallers and 3 marks. The organ construction was commenced in 1595 and completed in 1601. The newly created organ reflected the latest European achievements of the time, which came via the Netherlands, Northern Germany, and Prussia, reaching the present territory of Latvia and bringing large-size instruments into churches (Grosmane 2017, 63–65). The organ style corresponded to the Hamburg-type organ façade consisting of basic elements including the large instrument (*Hauptwerk*) and the small instrument (*Ruckpositiv*), which were located on the banisters of the gallery. Both instruments consisted of three pipe towers framing smaller pipes between them. These instrument pipes were decorated with a variety of sculpted ornaments and statuettes, and the decorative front is known as the organ façade. Looking at the organ from the perspective of the church altar, both façades seem to converge, supplementing each other.
Closer inspection of the organ façade reveals the following inscription: *"Ich Meister Jakob Rab genant / Hab dvrch Gottes Gnad und Beistand / Uz seiner Ehrn dis[es] Werk fvndirt / Die Gmein hir dvrch auch schon gezirrt. / 601. die Jahrzahl wahr / Da solches all ist worden klar* ("Myself, Master Jakob Raab, at the mercy of God and according to His will

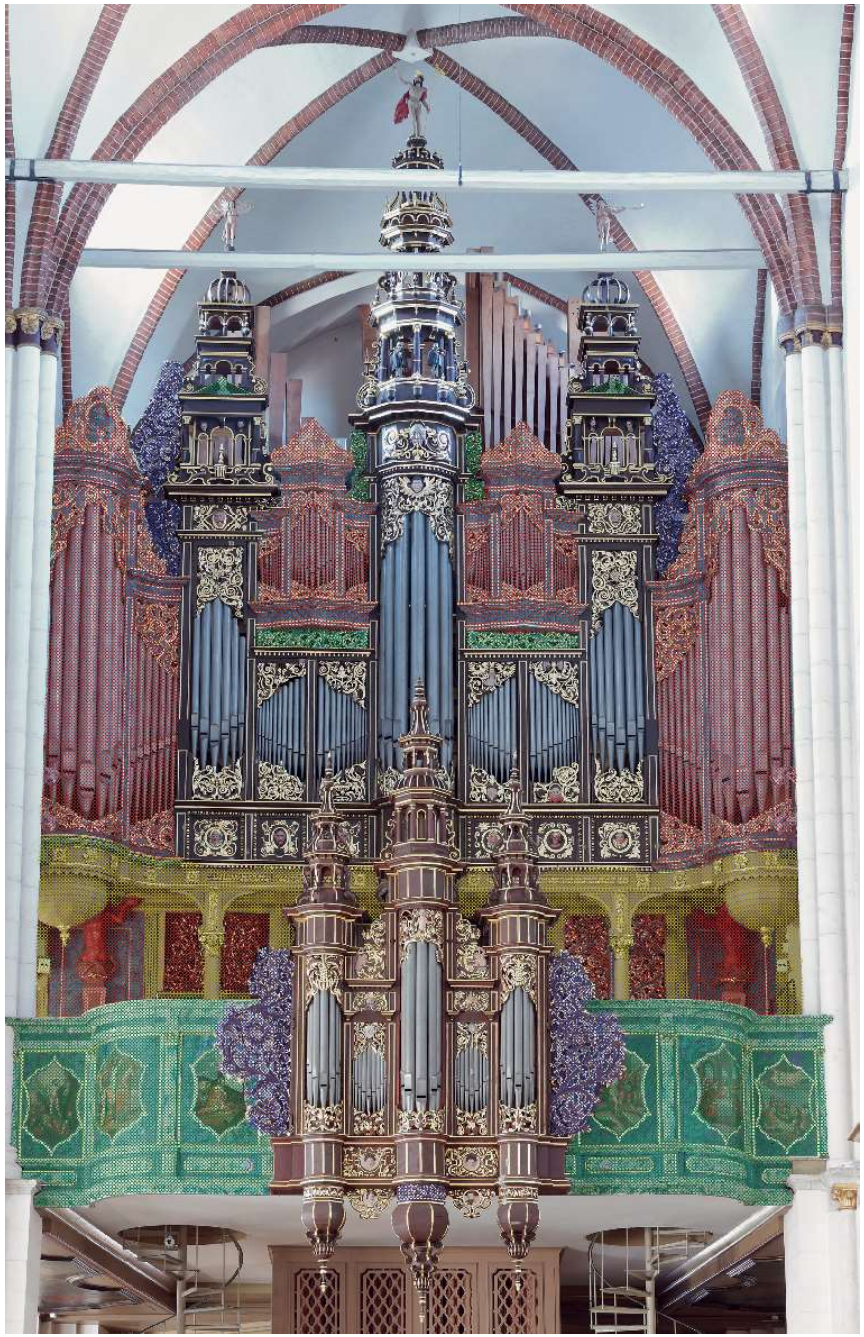


Fig. 2. The Riga Cathedral organ façade (photo: Muzikants U., stylistic analysis coloration: Bitko S).

in honour of Him created this piece, that also beautifully decorates the parish, in 1601, it all became clear") (Grosmane 2017, 67). Because of this inscription, it is known that the organ was built by Jakob Raab (Jacob Rabe, d. 1609), an organ builder from Northern Germany (Bush, Kassel 2006, 539). In this context, the organ as a musical instrument and its mechanical parts are inseperable from the decorative organ façade and its ornamental features. Until 1597 Jakob Raab was an apprentice of master Gotschalk Johansen (d. 1588), also called Burkhard or Borhert, which means that Raab was unable to conclude the contract for the organ construction by himself. Concurrent to work on the Riga Cathedral organ, Raab worked in Lubeck enlarging the organ in St. Mary's Church from 1596 to 1598, which means that he could not be in Riga at this time. In general, Raab had worked on the Cathedral organ contruction over different periods of time starting in 1594. First, he worked as an assignee of Borhert's workshop and after the master's death he took over his workshop. Organ construction was finished in 1601, when Raab was running the workshop (Lusis et al. 2008, 128). This is possibly the reason why the inscription carved in the façade emphasizes Raab as the builder of the organ. Therefore, it is important to point out that Jakob Raab was a master of organ's musical instrument components, but the name of the wood sculptor of the façade remains unknown.

The oldest part of the façade (Fig. 2 [uncoloured zone]) corresponds to the Renaissance style. It is rich in serpentine, stylized vegetal motifs, yet with a very pronounced Mannerism aspect in the diversity of grotesque masks and various mythical characters. For example, a musical character (Fig. 3 [3]) blowing the trumpet is depicted according to a mannerist spirit, with stylized trumpets seemingly emerging from the mouth of a grotesque mask, blowing schematized twisted plant tendrils instead of sound. Among similarly stylized ornaments, attention should also be paid to the carving (Fig. 3 [6]) of a man entwined together with a cornucopia horn from which various plants and flowers are pouring out. Closer examination reveals a singing bird on the plant. The entangled Renaissance ornaments also depict dolphin figures in the style of Mannerism (Fig. 3 [4]).

In addition to the façade's stylized botanical ornaments, a considerable part of the carvings is also covered in the rolverk pattern (Fig. 3 [9]), followed by associations with iron-chiselled sheets contrasting with other slightly twisted ornaments in the organ façade's oldest section. Among the grotesque masks in the style of Mannerism (Fig. 3 [1]) covering a substantial area of the entire organ façade, in the course of the reconstruction history many of the masks were damaged or completely lost following damage caused by lightning. Though stylistically they correspond to Mannerism, not all of them date back to 1601. Many of them were also made anew in later periods, but in complete imitatation of the earlier style. Since the grotesque masks have also been rearranged over time, it is difficult to determine the precise periods when each of these masks were made (Lūsis, Podzina 2010). Among the monstrous grotesque masks, the small façade includes a number of masks created in a very realistic manner, although it is not possible to speak of them as personal portraits (Fig. 3 [2]).

Architectural and sculptural features play a major role in the façade's overall composition. The central pipe tower includes at its end the sculpted figures of four town councillors (Fig. 3 [8]) attired in appropriate period clothing of a dark tone with black coats and white collars. The town councillors are placed at the end of the central tower in the round rotunda (Fig. 3 [5.1.]), surrounded by stylized columns with corinthian capitals. Another architectural element (Fig. 3 [5.2.]) is placed above the town councillors similar to the above mentioned rotunda, only instead of columns there are caryatides whose stylistic design shows a significant influence from the works of sculptor Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–1607).

Lastly but no less important are the sculptures placed at the ends of all three pipe towers in the large façade. The central section depicts the resurrected Christ flanked by dancing angels

Fig. 3. The Renaissance period

playing pipes (Fig. 3 [7]). Close examination of these figures discloses how masterfully they were made, with the fluttering angels' gowns seemingly moving along in rhythmic dance, and the cloak of the newly resurrected Christ blown by a breeze.

Assessing the overall qualities of the organ façade, it can be concluded that it comprises a wide range of masterfully executed carvings in both the lighter and dynamic elements of plants, flowers and strings typical of the Renaissance, and the more ponderous rolverk elements. The rich range of ornamentation skilfully included grotesque masks along with reproductions of more realistic portraits. Amidst a tangle of tendrils, fruits and flowers are cleverly hidden frightening goblins, while birds sing and compete with the organ sounds. As an integral element, the closing architectural elements and sculptural renditions of the pipe towers complement the façade's composition, rendering it airy and light.

Baroque

The Baroque style is associated with two phases of the façade reconstruction. The first compositional change (Fig. 2 [blue]) incurred to the organ façade after 31 July 1707, when lightning struck the organ causing severe damage totalling 600 Albert thallers. During repair works, the façade was embellished with new Baroque ornaments, authored by Riga sculptor Johan Gerwin (Grosmane 2017, 88–89). The small façade obtained ornate floral and acant ornaments on its sides, and the side-pipe towers of the large façade – new Baroque ornaments (Fig. 4 [1]). While many of the damaged Renaissance ornaments were restored in the same style, others were re-created according to the more current stylistic trends, resulting in a Renaissance façade with a baroque band of ornaments. A vivid example in the small façade is the lost section of the lower area of the medium tower. This restored portion was made not

Fig. 4. The Baroque period

according to the style of Renaissance or Mannerism, but rather following the Baroque, with decorative acanthus leaves that compared to adjacent ornaments marks a stylistic distinction (Fig. 4 [2]).

The next period that incurred noticeable changes to the façade relates to 1738, when repairs were carried out following complaints about the condition of the organ (Fig. 2 [green]). During this period, new paintings were added to the gallery banisters (Lūsis *et al*. 2008, 129). Unfortunately, the painter's name is unknown today, with only the caption "Ano 1738:/Factum est" (Grosmane 2017, 89). The original organ gallery was adorned with frontons with hidden small sculptural heads (Fig. 4 [3]). When creating the new paintings, the frontons with sculptural heads were out of place on the gallery banisters, so they were moved to the top of the side pipes of the large façade, where they conform well visually. Positioned in the small pediments, these sculptures appear as of part of a previous existing programme. Although the compositional position of these elements was changed in 1738, they can be added to the Renaissance period after the date of their creation.

Changes were also made to the Baroque ornaments in the large façade on both sides of the medium pipe tower. In the schematic image (Fig. 4 [3]) other ornaments were made instead of the red colour-coded elements.

Rococo

The most significant changes affecting the composition of the organ façade pertain to reconstruction completed in 1776. The first complaints in 1773 about the organ's poor condition were followed by storm damage (Lūsis *et al*. 2008, 129). The renovation marked major changes to the visual design of the organ, because two large bass towers (Fig. 5 [3.5 - dark blue coloration]) were built and decorated with elements in the Rococo style. The

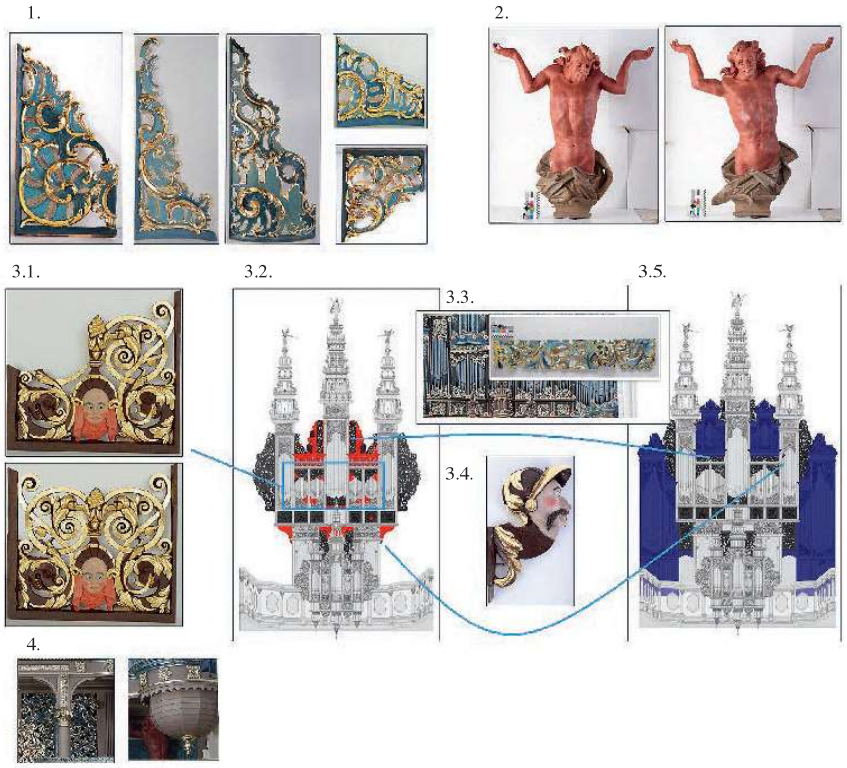


Fig. 5. The Rococo and Historicism period

reconstruction work was conducted by the organ builder Heinrich Andreass Contius (1708–1795) (Grosmane 2017, 89–90).

The reconstruction also resulted in the dismantling and relocation of some ornaments for preservation purposes. These included a sculpted head (Fig. 5 [3.4]) previously located on the side of the façade that was displaced by the new pipe towers and transferred from its original place to the pipe tower on the right side of the large façade. A similar method was also applied to carvings in the large façade located on either side of the medium pipe tower (Fig. 5 [3.2]) recreated in the restoration campaign of 1738, less than 40 years later the parts of these carvings were sawn and moved to the large façade between the pipe towers (Fig. 5 [3.3.]). These changes already impacted the façade's oldest section, as the Baroque bar is inserted between the Renaissance style ornaments until today.

Reconstruction of the organ resulted not only in ornate Rococo ornaments (Fig. 5 [1]), but also two spectacular sculptural figures of Atlas (Fig. 5 [2]) bearing the new pipe towers on their shoulders. The graceful and light Rococo elements visually reduce the gravity and massiveness of the newly constructed pipe towers. This visual effect is also enhanced by the Atlas figures, whose soft facial features suggest they carry on their shoulders the weight of something light and elusive, like musical sounds, rather than heavy and massive organ-pipe towers.

The storm damaged the ornaments of the oldest section between the three central pipe towers (Fig. 5 [3.1 and 3.2]). The technical drawing (Fig. 5 [3.2]) shows that the edges of the

ornaments were broken off (marked in red and the location on the façade delineated with a blue rectangle).

Upon closer inspection, these ornaments show what was a prior symmetric composition. Given that the whole façade respects the principle of symmetry, parts of the lost ornaments were similar to those that remain today. To better present the ornament's appearance, which also significantly changes the façade's overall composition, the author of the article offers a hypothetical reconstruction, assuming that this principle of symmetrical composition was observed (Fig. 5 [3.1 - upper original, lower possible reconstruction]).

Historicism

Stylistic analysis of the organ façade does not end with the Rococo period. By the 19th century, only seven pipes out of 51 were functional in the mighty organ, which led to ordering a new organ. In 1881, the new instrument was ordered from the German company *E. F. Walker & Comp.* in Ludvigsburg at Stuttgart (Grosmane 2017, 99). In 1884, the new instrument was installed behind the historical organ façade (Lusis et al. 2008, 130). Today we can thank the skilful masters who appreciated the historical, glamorous and richly ornamented façade and decided to preserve it.

During the period circa 1907–1908 organ builder Emil Martin (1848–1922) completed reconstruction of the organ, which entailed moving the façade forward by 1.4 m. This necessitated new supports in form of two newly constructed columns according to the Historicism style, also new hemispherical ends was attached to the lower section of the towers (Fig. 5 [4]) (Lūsis *et al*. 2008, 130).

These works marked the end of major stylistic and compositional changes to the organ façade. Over the centuries reconstruction of the façade has involved numerous master artisans and artists, each contributing to changes according to their degree of mastery and style, and ornaments in accordance with evolving aesthetic styles. Together, however, they have succeeded in creating a compositionally consistent organ façade wherein the variety of styles is not contradictory but rather complimentary, such that the styles mutually supplement each other, forming a phenomenal art object of stylistic hybridity in Latvia. In site for over 400 years, this object has long escaped detailed scrutiny, which is now possible thanks to the ambitious restoration work and digital technologies.

References

Bush, D., Kassel R. (2006) *Encyclopedia of keyboard instruments*. The Organ. New York:

Bitko, S. (2021) Rīgas Doma baznīcas ērģeļu prospekta digitalizācijas projekts, https://ceturtapriede.lv/. Available at: https://ceturtapriede.lv/doma-ergelu-prospekts/ (accessed 02.09.2021)

Grosmane, E. (2017) *Rīgas Doms gadsimtu gaitā*. Rīga: Jumava, pp. 63-99.

Lūsis, R., Melbārdis, A., Podziņa, A., Putriņš, K. (2008). Restoration of the organ facade of Riga Cathedral // 8th International Triennal meeting for conservators of the Baltic States. Tallin, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265560105_Restoration_of_the_Organ_facade_of_the_Riga_Cathedral (accessed 04.08.2021)

Lūsis, R., Podziņa, A. (2010) Rīgas Doma ērģeļu prospekta restaurācija Pārskata periods no 03.05.2007 līdz 01.10.2009 // *Atskaite*, Nr. RDAn-2010/02. Rīga: Nacionālā kultūras mantojumu pārvalde (VKPAI Pieminekļu dokumentācijas centrs).

Websites

https://doms.lv/lapas/200

http://doms800.lv/maza-ergelu-prospekta-kokgriezumi-2/

http://doms800.lv/liela-ergelu-prospekta-kokgriezumi/