



# PARTIAL RESTORATION OF EPITAPH

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## CONDITION BEFORE RESTORATION

Epitaph had cracked into two parts. Thick layer of dust and mould on both parts. Wooden elements missing. Writing almost unreadable/unintelligible due to discolouration/fading of letter paint. Tree borer tracks on the back. Epitaph may possibly be a part of a perished church altar. Marks on the sides of epitaph point to brutal use of a large-teeth saw when cutting the epitaph out. The front of the epitaph bears an inscription in German. Letters painted in imitation gold against black background.

## RESTORATION PROCESS

Restoration process: dust removal, biological mould testing of affected areas, mould removal with disinfectant, extermination of tree borers by cleaning tunnels with disinfectant, structural adjustment of letter paint, gluing of wooden elements, fixing of cross-bar, inlay application, deciphering of the text, application of fillings on gaps, text copying, touch up, protective sealing, frame manufacturing.

When the mould was cleaned off, inscription on the front of the epitaph was copied and analysed. It is an excerpt from the Bible in Old (Gothic) German. Quote was compared to a 17th – century German Bible. To touch up the faded text and letters on the epitaph, restorers created a template based on the existing style of text/letters. The first six lines contain a text from John 3:14-15, whereas lines 7-11 are from 2 Peter 24.



Epitaph before restoration. (photo by Aigars Pilenieks)



Epitaph after restoration. (photo by Aigars Pilenieks)



Transfer of restored letters to the epitaph surface. (photo by Irbe Grinberga)

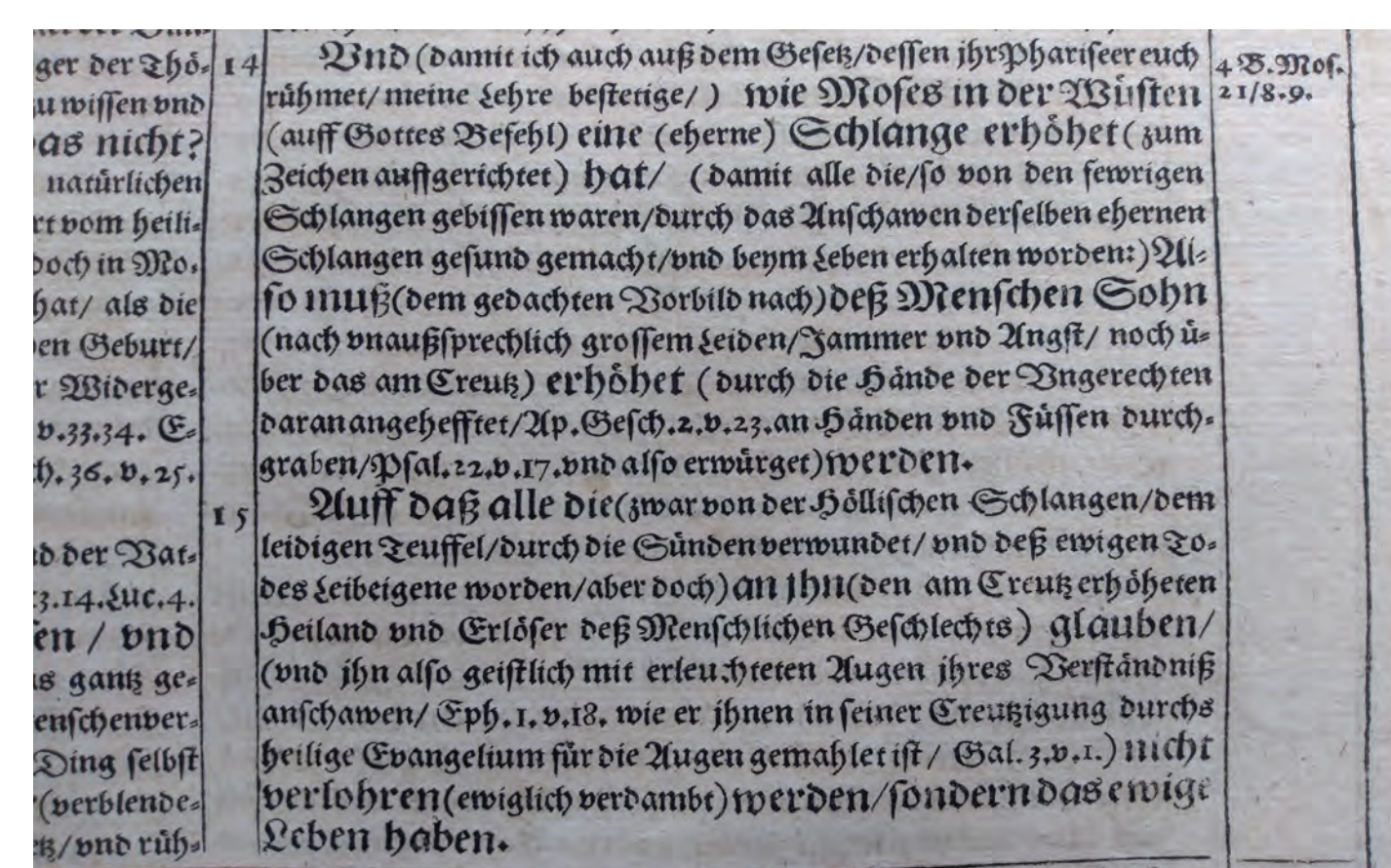
## QUESTIONS RAISED BEFORE AND DURING THE RESTORATION OF THE EPITAPH

- What was the original location of the fragment inside the church?
- Was it indeed a part of the altar integrated into it?
- Why is there mould on this item and not on the other objects found nearby?
- Should the missing decorative carving brace be restored given the obvious pattern?
- Should the restorers keep the original inscription or reconstruct the missing letters?
- Can a frame save the epitaph and make sure it can be used further?

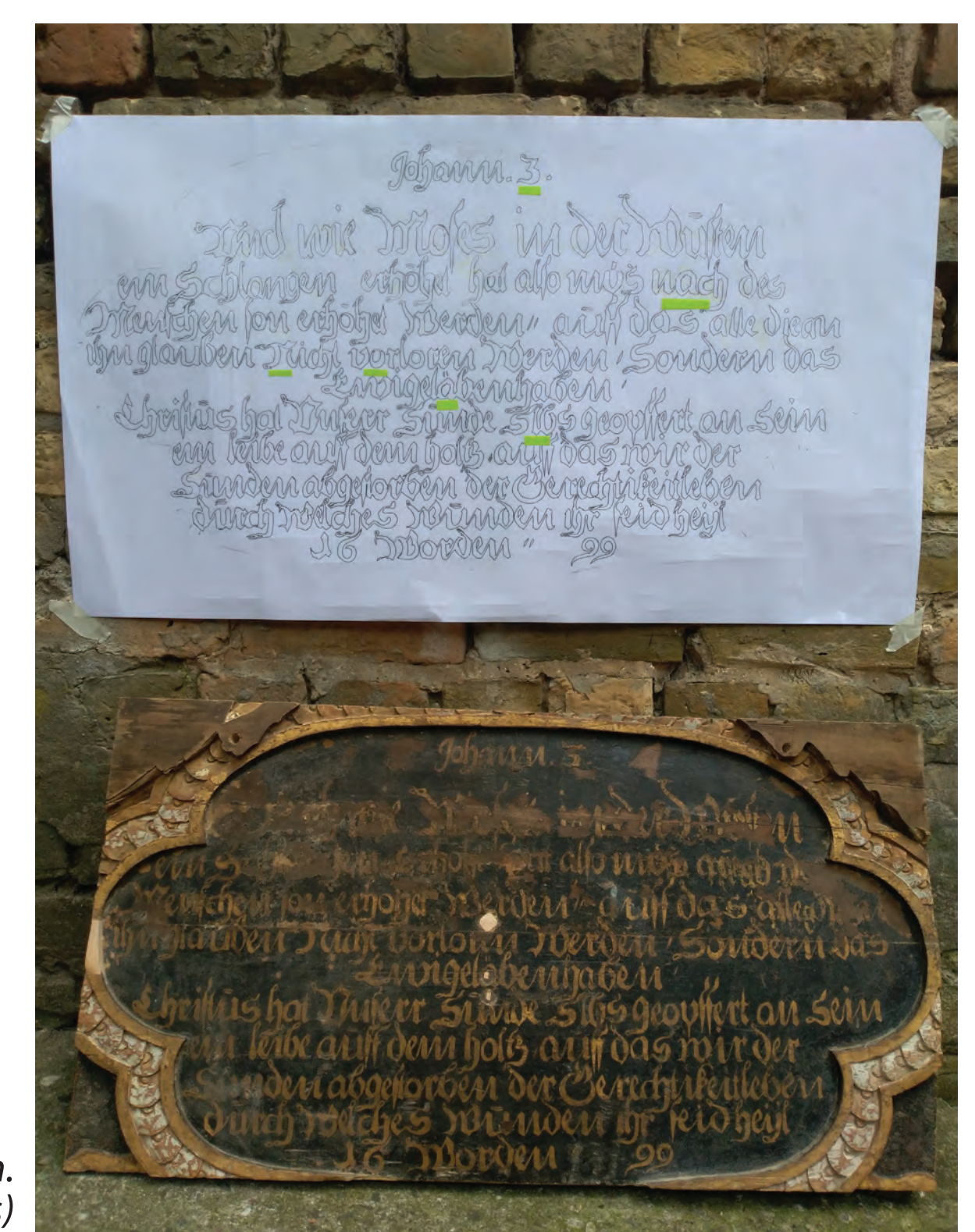
Type of item: epitaph  
Author, maker: unknown  
Age: end of the 17th century  
Material, technique: Linden, painted  
Dimensions: 86 x 46 x 4 cm  
Owner of the item: Sesava Evangelical Lutheran Church  
National Heritage Register number: 3425  
Time of restoration: 2017-2018



Restoration of lost wooden parts of epitaph. (photo by Aigars Pilenieks)



text from 17th century German Bible (photo by Aigars Pilenieks)



Epitaph after deciphering of text in Old German. (photo by Aigars Pilenieks)

