



## 6 » Caesar Fountain

Wenzel Rener also made a wise decision in choosing a sculptor for the Caesar Fountain, intended as the thematic crowning achievement of the overall collection. This time he invited the young talented Johann Georg Schaubberger to co-operate with him, the demanding statue work of which opened up his way to membership in the Olomouc sculpture's guild. Schaubberger choose the difficult form of an equestrian statue for his portrayal of Caesar, the characteristic silhouette of which convincingly occupies the space in front of the south-east corner of the Olomouc Town Hall. The figure of Caesar gazes with a self-confident look from the back of a horse toward Michael's Hill, where at the time of its creation, the "Pagan" or Julius Tower (Turris Iulia) still towered over the town – the remains of an ancient courtyard where it was believed Caesar had once stayed. The composition of the fountain is complemented by accompanying figures of the river gods Moravus and Danubius along with the land symbols of Moravia and Lower Austria and the figure of a sitting dog as a symbol of Olomouc's loyalty to the Emperors. This monumental work of art was completed by the artists on the name day of the patron of "Julius' Hill" St. Michael on the 29th of September 1725.



## 7 » Mercury Fountain

A loose connection exists between the heavenly protector St. Michael with the symbolism of the last of the collection of baroque fountains, Mercury Fountain from the year 1727. The gods' messenger Mercury (Hermes in Greek) played a similar role in classical tradition as the victorious Old Testament Archangel Michael. In similar fashion he served as a guide for the souls of the dead and as the voice of the will of God. In the depiction of the sculptor Phillip Sattler he is also traditionally equipped with a symbol in the form of a gilded messenger's rod (a Roman caduceus). This completely sandstone statue is from an artistic perspective the most successful work in the entire Olomouc fountain collection. The stone part of the fountain was carried out this time by Wenzel Rener in co-operation with the builder and master bricklayer Johann Jacob Kniebandel. Phillip Sattler as a frequent co-worker with Rener also worked on the little known Dolphin Fountain (around 1724–1725), which was built at the town gate at nearby Slovenská Street. Only a fragment of the wall pool has been preserved from the original fountain up until the present.



## 8 » Arion Fountain

The crowning work of the public decorations was supposed to be an Arion Fountain at the end of the 18th century with a prestigious position already chosen in front of the south-west corner of the Town Hall. The citizens of Olomouc wanted once again to draw inspiration from classical legend, this time from the story of the renowned Greek singer who grew rich in Italy thanks to his singing and cithara playing. On his return voyage home to his native country of Corinth, the ship crew conspired against him out of greed for his wealth, laid hands upon him and forced him overboard onto the open sea. The drowning singer was unexpectedly saved by a dolphin which had been attracted by the ceremonial song which Arion sang before jumping into the waves. The dolphin rescuer was placed into the stars by the gods as a reward. The figure of Arion was viewed as an example of rectified justice and rescue from destruction in various literary and artistic

traditions. This was also the manner he was understood by Olomouc burghers, who took particularly hard the humiliation of the town during the Thirty Years War – the loss of the statute of the main town of Moravia and its later transformation into a border fortress. The original proposals for the Arion Fountain were drawn up in the year 1751 by Johann Anton Richter, but were never brought to fruition due to lack of finances. The Olomouc town council finally returned to the plans of their predecessors of long ago after the year 1989. The call for the creation of a new fountain on the theme of the Arion story became a part of the construction programme of the reconstruction of the Upper Square (1995–2002). The contract was given to the sculptor Ivan Theimer and the architect Angela Chiantelli. The starting point for their work remained the original legend. In the same fashion as with the older baroque masters, they too

interpreted the old story in a manner so as to speak to a contemporary audience and at the same time express an actual relationship to the legacy of the historical town and its connections with the Mediterranean world of classical tradition. The oval pool of the fountain houses three bronze sculptural groups: an axial obelisk on the shell of a monumental turtle, an eccentrically situated standing sculpture of Arion with a dolphin and two children playing instruments. The statues are covered by detailed relief décor – this "tattooing" is a typical feature of Theimer's work, the purpose of which is to celebrate Moravia, the city of Olomouc along with its inhabitants.



## 9 » Spring of Living Water

The below ground area of the Chapel of St. Jan Sarkandr, a former town jail of the early 15th century, where this Saint was tortured to death in 1620, is a place where clean spring water rises from the ground. The spring water is carried to the courtyard between the chapel and the Neo-Baroque Sarkandrin Palace, and spouts from the fountain called "St. Jan Sarkandr Spring of Living Water". Its creator, Otmar Oliva, depicted in this work of art the irreconcilable contrast between good and evil. Christ's wounds, as symbols of the triumph of good, are washed by Sarkandr's "living water", which symbolically purges a man both physically and spiritually.



Text: © Marek Perůtka, 2004  
 Photographs: Michal Dvořák, Petra Stejskalová,  
 archives of the City of Olomouc  
 Graphic design, DTP: STUDIO TRINITY, s. r. o. © 2009  
 Publisher: Statutární město Olomouc, 2009





From its very beginnings the city of Olomouc has been connected with the element of water, with a relationship to rivers and springs, evoked not only by the needs of practical life, but also by respect for the mystery of nature and the myths of the ancient past. The first Slavic settlement here came about in the 6th century thanks to a propitious ford across the Morava River. In all probability even deeper in the Pre-Christian period, another water element played a similar significant role, a spring on the former stony hillside of Michael's Hill. The spring bubbling out of a fissure in the rock was the supposed centre for a pagan cult. The humanist myth of the Roman founding of Olomouc by Caius Julius Caesar inspired by ancient tradition later thought of Michael's Hill as the setting for this founding act. They named it "Julius' Hill" and from the Latin name "Iulii Mons – Iulimons – Iuliomontium" was even derived the actual name of the town "Olomuntium".

At the dawn of a new age, the legend met with its first well-known artistic expression. From the 1540s a no longer existing Caesar Fountain stood on the Upper Square between the Town Hall and the mouth of Ostružnická Street. Later the Imperial founding act was portrayed in an illustrated university thesis of Johann Lysovský, created in the year 1640 by Johann Wilhelm Baur. This portrayal of the Roman Emperor in front of the Olomouc gates was just before the creation of the baroque collection of stone fountains with figurative decorations, drawing inspiration from classical mythology. At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries the foot of Michael's Hill was gradually loosely surrounded by a group of six fountains with the figures of Neptune, Hercules, the Tritons, Caesar, Mercury and Jupiter. The impressively situated fountains at the meeting points of streets and squares are reminiscent of the theatrical stage solution of their great baroque models, the Roman fountains of Gianlorenzo Bernini. The collection of Olomouc fountains is similarly unique not only due to its allegorical programme, but also due to the fact that they came into being over the short time period of only two sculptural generations. Along with the two monumental columns – the Trinity and Plague – they rank among the most significant monuments of Moravian baroque sculptural work. Thus from the middle of the 18th century, the vistas of all the main streets in the centre of Olomouc were crowned according to the perspective scenography of the baroque theatre with an impressive sculptural dominant – a fountain or church monument.



## 1 » Neptune Fountain

This the first of the fountains was built on the Lower Square in the year 1683 portraying the water god Neptune surrounded by four sea horses. It was the joint work of the master stonemason Wenzel Schüller and the sculptor Michael Mandík. The participation on the part of the older master of the Olomouc baroque indicates a possible thematic connection with earlier initiatives by the Olomouc bishop Karl of Lichtenstein-Castelcorn in Kroměříž. This nobleman had employed Mandík there earlier for carrying out sculptural decorations for the Flower Garden. This conception is also the first occurrence of often monumental responses to Baur's vision of Moravia as a fertile land symbolically criss-crossed with life-giving water streams.

## 2 » Hercules Fountain

In the year 1687 the second work, Hercules Fountain, came into being on the Upper Square. This legendary hero with a chequered Olomouc eagle in his left hand was symbolically presented as a protector of the town warding off the enemy attacks of a Hydra at his feet with a huge club. The sculpture and basin of the fountain were once again created by Michael Mandík and Wenzel Schüller. It was later moved to its present position in front of the northern side of the Town Hall by Wenzel Rendor who in the year 1716 needed the space for the construction of his planned Holy Trinity Column.



## 3 » Jupiter Fountain

The productive master stonemason, sculptor and "Imperial Privileged Architect" Wenzel Rendor worked on the next four fountains himself. The next fountain Florian on the Lower Square particularly demonstrated his representational skills supplying the work with a simple stone basin, a relief decorated pedestal as well as the actual statue of the protector against fires and floods. This fountain was completed in the year 1707, but only remained in its original form around twenty years. This the only Christian saint in the collection, although a Roman like Caesar, was replaced in the year 1735 by a statue of Jupiter, the ruler of the ancient gods, the work of the Olomouc sculptor Phillip Sattler. The original Rendor statue was then moved to the courtyard of the town estate in Skrben where it has been particularly well preserved up until the present day.

## 4 » Saturn Fountain

It is difficult to definitively decide the circumstances leading to the unusual and rapid replacement of the top statue of the original Florian Fountain for Jupiter. It could have been due to purely prestige reasons as at that time the Premonstratensians at Hradisko Monastery were preparing a no less ambitious construction project of a Saturn Fountain for the courtyard of its freshly completed prelature. Perhaps due to the apprehension that the town pantheon would be symbolically ruled over by a deity from Hradisko, the second highest in the hierarchy of gods, the town burghers decided promptly on a depiction of the actual hegemonic ruler of Olympus, Jupiter. A modification to an already completed fountain was in addition a quicker solution than the construction of a completely new one. The Premonstratensians apparently completed their work around the year 1740. The central statue Saturn in the role of the god of time with a scythe in his left hand was complimented by two Old Testament heroes Samson and Gideon as original allegorical representations of Day and Night (this according to the time of day they performed their heroic deeds). The author of the fountain was once again one of the major figures of the Moravian baroque Joseph Anton Winterhalter. His work, unfortunately, did not survive the dissolution of the monasteries under Emperor Joseph and came to an end soon after the fatal year of 1784.



## 5 » The Triton Fountain

Another town fountain by Rendor encountered a similar fate as he had dealt his predecessors in the case of the Hercules Fountain. His Triton Fountain from the year 1709 originally situated in the area where the streets Denisova, Ztracená, Ostružnická and Pekařská meet was moved to Republic Square in the year 1890 in order to make room for the construction of a tram line. The author of the figural parts of the fountain was an anonymous artist who created the up until that time most widely developed composition with a pair of watermen and dolphins holding up together two giant shells. Out of them emerges the delicate figure of a boy with a pair of water dogs leashed on chains. The theme as well as the original location of the fountain clearly reveals the inspiration of Bernini's well known Triton Fountain on the Piazza Barberini in Rome. This was not the first or the last time Olomouc built upon the exemplary model of this prominent representative of the radical Roman baroque.



Horní náměstí (Upper Square) – The Town Hall  
Opening hours: daily 9 am – 7 pm  
infocentrum@olomouc.eu  
Tel.: +420 585 513 385, +420 585 513 392, Fax: +420 585 220 843  
http://tourism.olomouc.eu

### IC Olomouc provides the following services:

1. Tourist information and accommodation
  - tourist information about Olomouc and the environs
  - travel information
  - guide services
  - daily tours of the Town Hall tower at 11 am and 3 pm
  - tours of the Town Hall including entrance into the tower
2. Information about cultural, social and sports events
  - advanced ticket sales for cultural events taking place in Olomouc
3. Sales of souvenirs and maps
4. Information about the activities of the city government and other institutions within the territory of the city
5. EUROPE DIRECT – European information centre



A tourism card that saves you money!

A tourism card valid for 48 hours or 5 days, in Olomouc, in Central Moravia and Jeseníky:

**ADMISSION FREE:** Castles, chateaux, museums, zoos, Olomouc city public transport, mini-golf, adrenalin attractions and others  
**DISCOUNTS:** Aqua-parks, spa treatments, caves, restaurants, accommodation and others

The card can be purchased at information centres and from other authorised sellers.

More information at: [www.olomouregioncard.cz](http://www.olomouregioncard.cz)