

ARION FOUNTAIN



Arion Fountain is the last link in the chain of a monumental baroque construction project in the city of Olomouc which took place after the Thirty-Years War. This seventh public fountain situated on the Upper Square was finally completed in the year 2002. Earlier attempts to build another fountain had, however, repeatedly occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries. These proposals by J. A. Richter in 1751 and F. Brunner in 1846 were never, however, brought to fruition.

In 1995, when the reconstruction preparations of the Upper Square were taking place, the reconstruction plan included the requirement that a seventh public fountain be built. The project was delayed by a flood in 1997. In 2000, at the request of the Olomouc City Council, Ivan Theimer, an Olomouc native, prepared a study of Arion fountain and displayed it at an exhibition in The Museum of Art. On the 28th of June 2002, after months of demanding preparation, and both construction and sculptural work, the fountain basin was filled with water and the up until that time completed sculptures were mounted, including a solitary turtle, a gift from Ivan Theimer to the children of Olomouc.

Since being placed into operation, the new public fountain has become the regular destination for parents with children for whom Arion has become a favourite attraction. The goal to have the fountain open to the public before the summer holidays was met, also making possible a trial and testing period of the fountain water system during the months of July through September 2002. The fountain will be dedicated and officially opened to the public on the 27th of September 2002, when it will have been fully completed with sculptures of Arion and the legendary dolphin.

At present, the basin and the sculpture are only in trial operation. Consequently, occasional interruptions of the water delivery as well as fountain shutdowns are necessary to adjust the water system and to prepare the fountain for regular operation.





The fountain, with its dominant feature of a sculptural group of Arion with the dolphin, was planned as far back as the first half of the 18th century. These plans were not successfully carried out, however, and only now, at the beginning of the 21st century, does the public have the opportunity to witness the ancient classical legend of Arion who was adopted by the town of Olomouc as a symbol of its unhappy fate during its tumultuous history. The ancient classical legend of Arion relates of the unhappy fate of Arion, a wealthy Greek poet, who was assaulted by sailors on his homeward voyage from abroad. They wanted to rob and kill him. Arion, however, jumped into the sea where a dolphin saved him from certain death. This story was seen as an allegory for the desire for a 17th century post-war "revival" of degraded Olomouc. The city councilors of that day decided to restore the original glory of Olomouc through a monumental public construction project.

The turtle which has already achieved popularity in Olomouc is a characteristic feature of Ivan Theimer's art creations. Ivan Theimer, an Olomouc-born artist, now lives and works in Paris. Amongst his most well-known sculptures are for example, three turtles for Grenoble, an obelisk for the Elysée Palace façade and a commemoration of the Declaration of Human Rights in Paris.

The preparation of Arion fountain, including the placement of the smaller sculptures, will be presented at an exhibition in Patro Gallery (Opletalova Street no. 1) up until the 3rd of August. It will continue in the Town Hall, in the antechamber of the Mayor's office.

Investor: The Statutory City of Olomouc

Author of the Artwork: **Ivan Theimer**
Architectonic Study: **Angela Chiantelli**
Contractor: **Horstav Olomouc, s.r.o.**
Construction period: **October / 2001 – September / 2002**

Project Executors: **Pavel Pospíšil**
Tomáš Lampar
Ivo Galík
Petr Hadrava