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OLOMOUČ

Czech Republic



32.1m

THE LARGEST BAROQUE SCULPTURAL GROUP IN CENTRAL EUROPE

# Holy Trinity Column

A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE  
SITE SINCE 2000



The Holy Trinity Column on the Upper Square is a unique work of the High Baroque period, which, for Olomouc, was an era of unprecedented architectural and artistic development. The key person behind the column was the local construction entrepreneur and stonemason **Václav Render**. His workshop was one of the largest in Moravia. Render held an imperial privilege which allowed him to build constructions of his own design anywhere in the Habsburg monarchy.

In Olomouc, he created many monuments, including several fountains, the altar to St Pauline in the Church of St Maurice and the portal of the Church of Our Lady of the Snows.



## Holy Trinity Column

The Holy Trinity Column, inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000 for its uniqueness, is the jewel in Olomouc's crown. For centuries, it has been enchanting passers-by with its beauty and the diversity of its sculptural decoration, the precision of the design and its size, as well as its spiritual message.



In 1715, while the city was still in the final throes of a plague epidemic, Václav Runder started dreaming of an unusual monument. At the time he was involved in the construction of a plague column on the Lower Square, but his greatest desire was to build a bigger one on the neighbouring Upper Square. In early 1716, he sent a letter to the city council which detailed his plans. The city councillors approved. Runder soon delivered a model of the column, a budget and all the necessary documentation. One proof of his enthusiasm for building the column, which cost some 11 thousand guilders, is that he financed the early works from his own pocket.

### Did you know?

- Because it was standing in the way of the proposed column, the Hercules Fountain had to be relocated a little further away.
- The column was built over 37 years, from 1717 to 1754.

Runder never saw his dream fulfilled. He died in 1733, aged sixty-four, single and childless. The man who influenced his home town so much is buried in the Church of St Maurice. He completed his magnum opus to the height of the first floor, meaning the chapel and part of the sculptural decorations. His estate was used to fund the rest of the construction work. After Runder's death, the huge unfinished stone monument in the centre of the city attracted a lot of ire. That is why the councillors of Olomouc decided to finish the project in 1744.

**On 9 September 1754, the column was consecrated by the Bishop of Olomouc and Cardinal Troyer in the presence of the imperial couple, Maria Theresa and Francis of Lorraine.** There is a commemorative plaque from the event above the entrance to the chapel. Because the construction and the sculptural work were carried out exclusively by local craftsmen and artists, the column is also an expression of local patriotism. For Václav Runder, this was both a dream made real and a celebration of the Christian faith.



### Did you know?

- As the works were nearing completion in 1753, Ludvík Ignác Müller, a painter from Olomouc, preserved all the stone parts of the column and the statues with hot oil and painted them white to imitate marble. This means that the original colour of the column was different than today.



## Plague columns

started appearing in Europe in the early 17th century. They are modelled after the column built on the Santa Maria Maggiore Square in Rome in 1614. The Olomouc column, made from sandstone, represents one of the last examples of this fad. The construction found itself in trouble a mere four years after the consecration. When Olomouc was besieged by the Prussian army, several cannonballs hit the column. The people of Olomouc sent out a procession to the Prussian general, pleading him not to shoot at the monument. General James Keith granted their wish. This episode is commemorated with a **gilded cannonball** placed above the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, made of gilded sheet copper.



All its characteristics make the Holy Trinity Column a true jewel of Baroque architecture in the second largest monument conservation area in the Czech Republic. It is located near the **Gothic-Renaissance city hall, with its 76-metre tower and astronomical clock**. The first mention of the city hall dates to 1378. The original astronomical clock from the 15th century was modernised in the style of socialist realism by the Olomouc native Karel Svoboda in the 1950s.

The centre of the city also boasts **several Baroque fountains**, some of which are near the Trinity Column. The Mercury, Caesar, Neptune, Hercules and Jupiter fountains are located on the Upper and Lower Square. The city also boasts the Triton Fountain on Square of the Republic. In 2002, a new addition was built: the Arion Fountain, designed by Ivan Theimer from Olomouc.





### Most Important Monuments

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Holy Trinity Column           | 11 Hercules' Fountain   |
| 2 Town Hall and Horologe        | 12 Mercury's Fountain   |
| 3 Romanesque Bishop's Palace    | 13 Neptune's Fountain   |
| 4 St Wenceslas Cathedral        | 14 Jupiter's Fountain   |
| 5 Church of St Moritz           | 15 Tritons' Fountain    |
| 6 Archbishop's Palace           | 16 Arion's Fountain     |
| 7 Church of St Mary of the Snow | 17 Old Jesuit Monastery |
| 8 Church of St Michael          | 18 Theresian Gate       |
| 9 Chapel of St John Sarkander   | 19 Theresian Armoury    |
| 10 Caesar's Fountain            | 20 Capuchin Church      |
|                                 | 21 Marian Plague Column |

- |                         |
|-------------------------|
| 22 Hauenschild's Palace |
| 23 Crown Fortress       |
| 24 Dominican Church     |
| 25 Villa Primavesi      |

### Cultural Life

- |                            |
|----------------------------|
| 1 Moravian Theatre Olomouc |
| 2 Moravian Philharmonic    |
| 3 Šantovka Theatre         |
| 4 Archdiocesan Museum      |
| 5 Museum of Modern Art     |

### Sports and Leisure

- |                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| 1 Flora Olomouc Exhibition Grounds |
| 2 Indoor Swimming Pool             |
| 3 Ander Stadium                    |
| 4 Ice Stadium                      |
| 5 Semafor Centre                   |

|            |                  |             |                  |        |                |
|------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------|----------------|
| Parking    | Parking Building | Parking BUS | Municipal Police | Police | Public Toilets |
| Tram Lines | Walls            | Railways    | Municipal Park   |        |                |



In the summer season, **the chapel in the Holy Trinity Column** can be visited as part of the “Olomouc Churches with a Guide” project.

For more information on tours, visit the information centre in the city hall arcade.



### **Olomouc Information Centre**

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Olomouc Tourism



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**[www.tourism.olomouc.eu](http://www.tourism.olomouc.eu)**

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