

Enes QUIEN

## **THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL EVENTS ON THE FATE OF THE MONUMENTS OF RUDOLF VALDEC**

The sculptor Rudolf Valdec is the author of numerous monuments, in addition to other works. We shall mention just a few of the most significant of those that were produced, which will convince us of his sculptural skills, his knowledge and quality, in order to account for those that were not completed, and the reason for them not having been produced, and those that were produced but later taken to pieces and removed (the equestrian monuments to King Petar I the Great Liberator).

1. *Monument to Antun Nemčić* in Križevci (fig. 1), of 1899, the first of many successful Valdec portrait monuments. The monument was devised and made for a park environment, and was put up in Zrinski trg.

2. The *Portrait of Ivan Kukuljević-Sakcinski* was made for a monument by Valdec in 1903 (fig. 2), while the monument *Ivan Mažuranić* was produced in 1910 (fig. 3). Both were erected in 1911 in Zrinski trg [square] in Zagreb.

2. *Monument to Dositej Obradović* of 1911 is Valdec's masterpiece and the first free-standing figure that he made (fig. 4). It was intended for an exterior, park, environment. It is located in the University Park in Studencki trg in Belgrade.

4. *Monument to Bulgarian Voyvoda General Radko Hadži Dimitriev* for the Bulgarian city of Sliven was produced in plaster model form in 1912, and won the Bulgarian competition. This plaster version, never produced in full, can be appreciated only from a photograph. No monument to General Radko Hadži Dimitriev was ever put up in Sliven because of the outbreak of World War I (fig. 5).

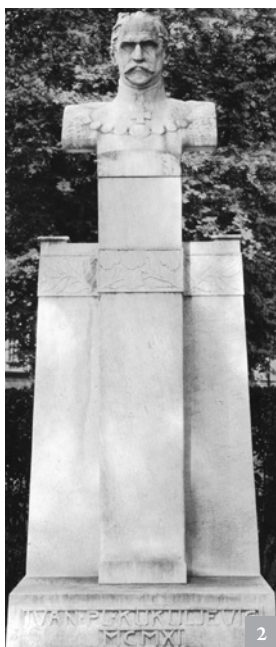
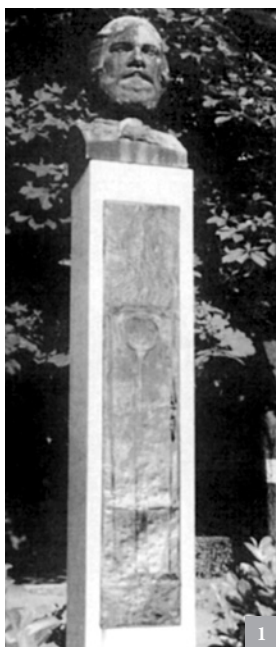
### **Proposals for monuments to Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer for Zagreb and Osijek**

For the competition for the Zagreb monument, Valdec sent a 62 cm high sketch in which Strossmayer, in standing position, is making a speech at the 1<sup>st</sup> Vatican Council, 1870 (fig. 6). In this invention, the bishop in his long, dress cassock, with a large cross upon his breast. The position of the hands is appropriate for the gesticulation accompanying his address, during which he opposed the doctrine of papal infallibility. However,

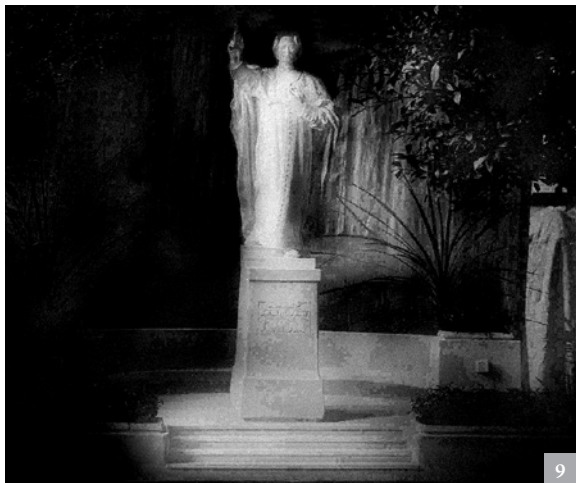
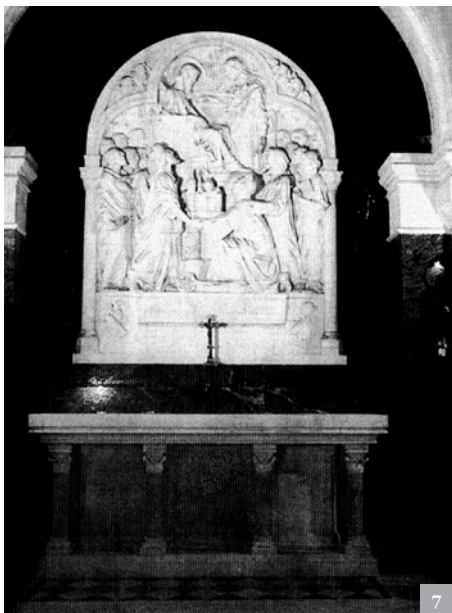
the project was confided to Ivan Meštrović, side-stepping the competition<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> One can only imagine what Valdec must have thought in the circumstances. He had campaigned for an exhibition in which all domestic sculptors would be involved «wherever they might be now». It is not necessary to explain how much he was personally interested in the making of the sculpture, his life's dream. It is very understandable that Valdec should have wanted to do the monument of Strossmayer. And yet he proposed and supported the idea of an open competition. He worked courteously with the Committee of Zagreb Ladies, took part in the discussion about and preparations for the competition, as is visible from his letters, and the ladies always involved him in the debates about the monument. This is borne out by a letter in which the Committee of Zagreb Ladies for a Monument to Strossmayer invited Valdec to a meeting at which there would be discussion of the monument, on March 10, 1912. «Dear Sir. We are aware that as a sculptural artist you would probably be happy to oblige the undersigned committee with your expert counsel, and so it makes so bold as to invite you to attend a meeting of the committee for the erection of a Strossmayer monument, to be held on March 12 this year at five thirty afternoon in the little hall of the Yugoslav Academy. The agenda includes the issue of the preparations for announcing a competition for the monument. For your convenience, enclosed is a study of Architect Pilar, which will be discussed in the session. With great respect, for the Committee of Zagreb Ladies for the Stross. Monument, President: S. Spevec, Secretary, Klotilda Cvetišić.»

The whole of the arts-minded public took place in the discussions; one of the most crucial questions was the competition and the jury. An anonymous letter sent to the Committee was aimed at slandering Valdec to stop him carrying out his teaching, and also to create a divide between Frangeš-Mihanović and Valdec. It is true that dissensions had broken out between them. They were competitors, and the clash of vanities also had a role. Frangeš thought that he should get the commission. Valdec was of the opinion that he best knew the bishop, for he had painted him most over the years and done plans for monuments, including a funerary monument and a death mask. A serious quarrel ensued. Frangeš insulted Valdec. In its issue of March 15, 1909, *Novosti* reported that Valdec sent seconds and challenged his rival to a duel (after the editorial office had received a letter with a «memorandum of honour», *Novosti* published the sensation news under the headline «Duel among artists and writers»). The «memorandum of honour» between the sculptors Messrs Frangeš and Valdec had been made on March 17. But on March 17, p. 2, *Novosti* in an article of the same name announced that the duel or «knightly contest» had not occurred. This episode would look, in today's context, like an adroit piece of advertising, and the papers, even in the arts, were always looking for some scandalous sensation to drop like a bomb, to boost circulation and sell papers. But however it might be, the sculptors really were at odds over the priority in the making of the Strossmayer monument. It was a matter of prestige and dignity. Although Frangeš had been decent and loyal to his colleague in 1905 when the news came that he (Frangeš) had been confided with the making of the funerary monument to the bishop of Đakovo and great patron of the arts, and had issued a public denial, now he wanted to do the bishop's



1. Memorial to Antun Nemčić. Portrait. 1898/1899. Bronze, stone base: 280 cm. Križevci (scan from the book *Ana Adamec: Rudolf Valdec*). 2. Memorial to Ivan Kukuljević — Saksinski. Portrait. Height: 80 cm, stone base: 185 cm. Zrinski Square, Zagreb, executed in 1903, set up in 1911. (photo: E. Quién). 3. Memorial to Ivan Mažuranić. Portrait. Height: 80 cm, stone base: 185 cm. Zrinski Square, Zagreb, executed in 1910, set up in 1911. (photo: E. Quién). 4. Memorial to Dositej Obradović. 1911. Bronze, exceeding life-size, height with base: 5 m. Students Square, Belgrade. 5. Model for memorial to Bulgarian duke General Radko Dimitriev for Sliven. Bulgaria, 1912. Plaster. Unknown, not executed (photograph from Visual Arts Archives of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, HAZU)



6. Model for memorial to J.J. Strossmayer for Zagreb. 1906. Bronze, height: 62 cm. Signed (HAZU Glyptothekue, Zagreb). 7. Epitaph on J.J. Strossmayer's tombstone in Đakovo Cathedral crypt. 1908. Marble. 8. Model for memorial to Bishop J.J. Strossmayer. 1915. Plaster. Unsigned, destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual Arts Archives). 9. Model for memorial to Bishop J.J. Strossmayer, with base. 1915. Plaster. Signed, destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual Arts Archives).

Of however high a quality was the Valdec approach to the monument, he was not the one who was awarded the making of it, but Meštrović, because Valdec was a Mason, in the *Count Janko Drašković* and *Love Thy Neighbour* lodges. The chapters of Đakovo and Zagreb both turned against Valdec for his Masonry. It is known how much the official policy of the Church, and the clerics PhD Franjo Rački and Bishop Strossmayer, senior dignitaries, were fervent opponents of Freemasonry. It was out of the question that a member of a lodge should obtain the commission to produce a monument to, no more nor less, than a bishop who so sharply opposed the movement. But Rudolf Valdec did make a monumental sepulchral monument for the great bishop, his patron, in the crypt of Đakovo Cathedral (fig. 7). Here too he modelled the composition according to the bishop's instructions. On the basis of the sketch provided, the Đakovo chapter commissioned the funerary monument to J.J. Strossmayer for the cathedral crypt.

In 1915/1916, Valdec made sketches for a Strossmayer monument in Osijek. In fact, he made two sketches. In one we can see the figure of the bishop standing on a dais, a slightly elevated platform accessed by two low steps from three sides (figs. 8 and 9). Unlike the first version, the second is conceived as a semi-circular low wall that frames the monument from the back. Along the wall are shapes of an impressionistically treated form, which cannot be deciphered because of the unclarity of the photograph (fig. 10). The selection committee found the first version acceptable, with the bishop's figure prominent on the raised dais with its low semi-circular wall at the back, but without any additional figures. The architectural base is formed according to the contractually required  $0.66\text{ m}$ , while the semi-circular wall is modelled according to the required  $1.32\text{ m}$ , which come together to  $1.98\text{ m}$  ( $0.66 + 1.32 = 1.98$ ). Thus the height of the base and the height of the semi-circular wall come together to the height of the plinth. This derives from the contractual provision that the architectural part of the monument was to follow the golden section, 3:5:8, the module 0.66. The most acceptable solution was that in which the bishop is raising his right hand in the air to bless the people with three fingers, while with his left hand «he is playing with the cross on his breast, as he was wont to do», as Valdec himself explained<sup>1</sup>. Thus by simple mathematics we arrive at the conclusion that the monument as a whole was to be  $5\text{ m } 28\text{ cm}$  tall

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sculpture in Zagreb. In spite of the chilly relationship, they did cooperate and in sensitive moments for Croatian art, acted together. Still, the erection of a monument to Strossmayer was a rare occasion and one that every sculptor would want to make use of. This topic enlivened everyday life for the citizenry, and included lots of things of interests. The monument had not yet been begun to be seriously addressed.

<sup>1</sup> As for Valdec's work on the monument, a description of the studio and the prototypes that he was using for the monument is given in the *Osječki Tjednik* of March 3, 1916. *Osječki tjednik*, «Spomenik Strossmayeru kipara prof. Valdeca iz Zagreba», 12.3.1916, p. 3.

(1.32 *m* of plinth and 3.30 *m* of the bronze figure of Strossmayer). In line with the vertical uplift of the monument to 5.28 *m*, the diameter of the semicircle from the step of the base to the low wall in the background also had to come to 5.28 *m* (also contractually determined), which would provide perfect proportionality and symmetry for the monumental unit consisting of statue and surroundings. The sketch in which Bishop Strossmayer is performing the blessing with his raised three fingers of the right hand, while he is playing with the cross on his chest, was cast in a 70 *cm* bronze and is to be found in the Fine Arts Gallery in Osijek (fig. 11). According to the practice of all artists, Valdec made one more version for the monument to Bishop Strossmayer, this time imagining him in the peroration of his fiery speech to Vatican I. The arms are away from the body, and a little raised in the gesture of a resounding ending to the speech (fig. 12). There is one more version for the Zagreb monument, in which the bishop, with calm gesture, and in a dignified stance, is standing and speaking mildly (fig. 13).

The quality of Valdec's approach to the Zagreb monument is shown by the fact that in 2005 Osijek sculptor Marijan Sušac made from the sketch from the Osijek Fine Arts Gallery a 4 *m* high monument to mark the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the See of Đakovo (fig. 14). During his lifetime Valdec was unable to obtain a commission to produce the monument either in Zagreb, because he was a Mason, or in Osijek, because there were rumours that he was Orthodox and they refused to let him produce the sculpture although it had been directly commissioned. Valdec had converted to Orthodoxy in 1906 in order to be able to marry the love of his life, Helena Csikos — Sesija, sister of the painter Bela, who had already been married in the Catholic Church and then divorced. The Church did not permit remarriage under its aegis. And so they married in the Orthodox Church. This was sufficient for the sculptor to have lost for good the chance of producing the monument. And so until this day Osijek has never erected a monument to the great bishop and patron of arts and sciences.

### **The equestrian monuments to King Petar I the Liberator in Veliki Bečkerek and in Bijeljina**

After World War I, Valdec produced equestrian monuments to King Petar I the Liberator<sup>1</sup> in Veliki Bečkerek (today Zrenjanin) and in Bijeljina.

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<sup>1</sup> King Petar I Karađorđević, commonly known as Peter the Liberator (1844–1921), Serbian king from 1903 to 1918. From 1918 to his death in 1921, he was King of the Kingdom of the SCS. He was a son of Prince Alexander and Princess Persida, and grandson of the leader of the first Serbian uprising, Karađorđe. He was schooled in Belgrade and Geneva. He graduated from military academy in Paris in 1864. He dabbled in photography and painting and completed his military and political education. This opened his eyes to the ideas of liberalism, parliamentarianism





10. One of the models for memorial to Bishop j. J. Strossmayer in Osijek. 1915. Dimensions unknown. Destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual Arts Archives). 11. Model for memorial to Bishop J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek. 1915/1916. Plaster. Unsigned, destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual Arts Archives)



12. Another version of model for memorial to Bishop J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek. 1915. Bronze, height: 70 cm. Unsigned (HAZU Administration, Zagreb, Art Gallery in Osijek). 13. One version of Bishop's figure for Zagreb monument. 1908. (scan from the book: A. Adamec: Rudolf Valdec). 14. Memorial to J. J. Strossmayer in Đakovo. 1999. Bronze, executed by academic sculptor Marijan Sušac after Valdec's model.

1. *The first equestrian monument to King Petar I the Great Liberator in Veliki Bečkerek.*

In 1924, at the contest for the equestrian monument to King Petar I the Great Liberator in Veliki Bečkerek, the commission to execute it was given to Valdec<sup>1</sup>. The contract for the making of the monument was signed by the committee and Valdec on June 10, 1924<sup>2</sup>. We can learn from the extensive reports and writing of the Serbian

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and democracy. He entered the Foreign Legion in 1870, and fought in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71. Because of the many battles in which he had fought, he was awarded the Legion of Honour. He married Princess Ljubica — Zorka, daughter of prince of Montenegro, Nicholas/Nikola. The first ten years, with the five children they had, they lived in Cetinje, and afterwards in Geneva, after Petar had sold his house in Paris. In May 1903 conspirators murdered King Alexander and Queen Draga of Serbia. The army carried out a military coup, and proclaimed Petar King of Serbia, which was confirmed by the National Assembly (parliament). He brought back the liberal and democratic Constitution of 1888, written on the model of the Belgian, in which Serbia became a constitutional monarchy. He had translated J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* into Serbian and this was motto his whole life long: *Only in liberty can the people be brought up to liberty*. He took the government from absolutism to constitutionalism and parliamentarianism, and respect for civil liberties and freedom of the press. But he retained the powerful influence of the army and the others, especially those around the Black Hand. Austro — Hungary, at first inclined to the Serbian king, soon, particularly after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, turned into an enemy of Serbia. In the First Balkan War, King Petar beat Turkey in 1912 and Bulgaria in 1913, and annexed Raška, Kosovo, Metohija and Macedonia to Serbia. In July 1914, the Austro — Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia, and thus World War I began. After Serbian victories at Cer and Kolubara, Germany and Bulgaria entered the war, and the outnumbered Serbian army had to withdraw. The withdrawal of the Serbian people, who accompanied the army, across Albania is considered the greatest tragedy in Serbian history. Yet they recovered on Corfú and broke the Thessalonica front. After the end of the war, when Austro — Hungary collapsed, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed, with King Petar Karađorđević I as its first monarch. (Source of information about King Petar: *Opća enciklopedija jugoslavenskog leksikografskog zavoda, Petar I. Karađorđević, Oslobođioc (Nik — Ras)*, Zagreb, 1980, p. 400.). These facts need to be brought out, for in Valdec's later oeuvre there are two important equestrian statues of him, while Valdec also painted his portrait, as he did of many other important people.

<sup>1</sup> The Committee for the Erection of the Monument received 36 works from twenty four sculptors. The jury gave no one the first prize. The two second prizes of 15 000 dinars each, went to models by Fran Kršinić and Nedjeljković. The third prize was taken by Petar Palavičini for his model. The jury purchased four other models at 5 000 dinars each — those of Rokсандić, Stojanović, Milovanović and Valdec. (Ana Adamec, *Rudolf Valdec*, p. 108.).

<sup>2</sup> In the Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (box 5, file *Spomenici Kralju Petru I*) is a contract written in Cyrillic, drawn up «on June 10, 1924 between





15. Equestrian Monument to King Peter I. 1924–1926. Bronze, height: 405 cm, stone base with relief: 450 cm. Unsigned, destroyed in 1945, Zrenjanin (former Veliki Bečkerek). 16. Equestrian Monument to King Peter I the Great Liberator. 1924–1926. Bronze, height: 405 cm, stone base with relief: 450 cm. Unsigned, destroyed in 1945, Veliki Bečkerek (newspaper photograph from HAZU Visual Arts Archives). 17. Equestrian Monument to King Peter I the Great Liberator in Veliki Bečkerek (photograph from HAZU Visual arts Archives)

and Croatian press something about the monument, no longer in existence, only a few photographs and one newspaper reproduction still being in existence<sup>1</sup>. Valdec produced

the Committee for raising a monument to King Petar the Liberator in Veliki Bečkerek and the sculptor prof. Rudolf Valdec of Zagreb. The committee was represented and the contract signed by the following gentlemen: president, Mr Svetislav Rajić, secretary, Mr Ljubomir Brkić, treasurer, Mr Dušan Radojević, and committee members Messers Dušan Kovačević and Milorad Mojić.

<sup>1</sup> Najveći spomenik kralju Petru u našoj kraljevini u Vel. Bečkereku (Cyrillic), *Pančevac*, Pančevo, br. 26, 28.6.1925, str. 2; Kraljevski dan je blizu, *Banatski glasnik*, no. 36, 8.8.1926, p. 1; Miloje Vasić, Spomenik Kralja Petra Prvoga, Oslobođioca u Velikom Bečkereku. Rad prof. R. Valdeca (Cyrillic), *Banatski glasnik*, no. 39, 26.9.1926, p. 1. i 2; C.B, Spomenik kralju Petru, *Dnevnik*, Belgrade, 29.6.1925, p. 1. i 2; Spomenik kralju u Bečkereku, *Reč*, Belgrade, 26.10.1926, p. 5; Čudno otkrivanje spomenika kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku, *Vreme*, Belgrade, 4.11.1926, p. 2; The monument was also discussed in Croatia: Spomenik kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku,



18. Good Friday, relief from base of Equestrian monument to King Peter I the Great Liberator in Veliki Bečkerek. 1924. Bronze. Destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual arts Archives). 19. Model for memorial to King Peter I the Great Liberator for Veliki Bečkerek. 1924. Plaster, dimensions unknown (photograph from HAZU Visual arts Archives). 20. Model for memorial to Vatroslav Jagić in Varaždin. 1923. Plaster (photograph from HAZU Visual arts Archives)



a traditional three — part monument: a) a stepped base, b) the central part as plinth with two reliefs and c) the bronze figure of the king (figs. 15, 16, and 17). King Petar is represented on horseback with a royal cloak, placing his sword in its scabbard. Around the royal neck hangs a chain with the order of King Lazar. He is dressed in coronation robes, with crown, sceptre, cloak and orb. On the wider sides of the plinth two scenes are done in relief. The first shows the king's four oxen<sup>1</sup> and the king on the gun carriage on his way through Albania (the Golgotha of the Serbian people, as it was called) (fig. 18). The second relief shows King in Parliament on July 14, 1914, the day on which the ultimatum was given to Serbia and on which he called for war. When we look at the existing photographs of the reliefs, we can see the king on the gun carriage, sitting, rueful, with folded arms. He is accompanied on the journey by women, children and old men, and the men are pulling the carriage out of the mud. Over the stragglers and the flagging flies a conspiracy of ravens, heralds of death. On the narrower sides of the plinth alongside the royal emblems were the inscriptions: «I have done. I have

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*Pokret*, Zagreb, 11.7.1924, p. 3; Najljepši spomenik kralju Petru. Odličan rad vajara g. Rudolfa Valdeca, the Osijek paper *Jug* (Organ Samostalnih Demokrata za Osječku Oblast), no. 30, 2.7.1925, p. 1; Spomenik kralju Petru Oslobođiocu, Najljepše djelo g. Rudolfa Valdeca, *Novosti*, Zagreb, 3.7.1924, p. 2; S. P. Povijest spomenika kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku, *Obzor*, Zagreb, 14.7.1924, p. 2; Najljepši spomenik Petru Prvom Velikom Oslobođiocu, *Riječ*, Zagreb, 27.6.1925, p. 3; Spomenik kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku, *Narodno djelo*, 17.10.1926, p. 2.

Of course, things could not go on in the local Zagreb milieu without newspaper libels. Valdec only once in his life reacted and responded. The critic Milan Ćurčin in the paper *Nova Europa* no. 7, which came out in Zagreb, wrote an article entitled *How is art treated in this country?* He attacked Valdec for being dishonest in the competition. Valdec replied on July 12, 1924, in the paper *Pokret*, no. 121, with an article of the same name. The jury had been composed of B. Popović, I. Meštrović, A. Stefanović, Dj. Jovanović and L. Ivanović, with later members Dobrović, Kljaković and Frano Kršinić. In his text, commissioned by the paper, Valdec claimed that «for partisan reasons» the *Književna republika* had foisted some of its members on the jury (thinking of Dobrović, Kljaković and Frano Kršinić). He defended himself against Ćurčin's libels and all the claims, after the outcome of the competition was that, after all, Valdec had won, with the explanation that they were *tendentious and perfidious libels* (Jasna Galjer, *Likovna kritika u Hrvatskoj 1868–1951*, Zagreb, pp. 177–178). The monument was knocked down by the Germans while they were occupying what was then Petrovgrad in April 1941. The monument stood there from 1926 to 1941, and in 1945 was melted down. In 2005 it was reconstructed by Zoran Jezdimirović and placed where the original had stood.

<sup>1</sup> French poet Edmond Rostand, author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, inspired by the courage of Petar I during the withdrawal through Albania, published the poem *Four Oxen of King Peter*. By the time of the Thessalonica front this song inspired the Serbian soldiers to do battle.

liberated my people, and place my sword in its scabbard». On the opposite narrower side is written «Thrice happy he whose name rings down the years, For he had reason in this world to come» [a citation from the *Mountain Wreath* of Njegoš] and in Cyrillic the dedication: «To King Peter the First. A grateful people to its liberator». The plinth was four and a half metres, and was made of costly granite<sup>1</sup>. The statue and horse were cast in bronze, 4.05 m from hoof to tip of the head<sup>2</sup>. According to the competition and the idea, which was megalomaniac, the monument had to be both moving and monumental. How Valdec conceived the monument can be seen in one more sketch (photograph in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) (fig. 19). In this version King Petar I is sitting at ease on the horse, with his legs out straight. Above his head the king has raised his sword high over his head. The whole gives the appearance of stiffness, and the gesture and pose are over — emotional. But it is interesting how in this version too Valdec employed the base on which the plinth was placed. The semicircular shape of the base is typical of Valdec's idea of how to produce a monument. He employed it in the solutions for the monuments to Vatroslav Jagić, to Bulgarian general Radko Hadži Dimitriev, and in one version for a possible approach to the Strossmayer monument in Osijek. The way he imagined this Strossmayer monument was never executed. The monument for the Bulgarian was accepted for Sliven, and was supposed to have been executed<sup>3</sup>. The monument to Vatroslav Jagić was once

<sup>1</sup> The invoice for the steps as base from red Swedish granite was sent by *L. Pierotti i nasljednici, vlasnici Prve hrvatske industrije mramora i granita sa strojevnim uređajem kiparstva i klesarstva, utemeljeno god. 1874*, as is written on their headed notepaper. Also in the Pierotti invoice is «paving the upper part of the same material, red Swedish granite, with inscriptions and grooves according to the drawing, while the erection and all materials of wall and sub-wall do not come within this bill, only the special workman who will supervise the placing of the steps and the paving of the pedestal». (Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku*).

<sup>2</sup> The statue with horse and rider was cast in the *Atelier za ljevanje umjetnina, strojnih dijelova i svih obrtnih potrepština iz metala* of Zvonimir Oblak, Savska cesta no. 80, branch at: Ilica no. 129, Zagreb Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku*). Oblak had started as Kerdić's apprentice in the foundry of the Art Academy, but in 1922 he set up his own foundry, in which he cast three large monuments: the *Strossmayer* of Meštrović, the *King Petar I* of Valdec for Veliki Bečerek and Frangeš — Mihanović's *King Tomislav*. Antonija Tkalčić-Koščević, *Sjećanja na prve generacije Umjetničke akademije u Zagrebu*, Fine Arts Archives of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2007, p. 104.).

<sup>3</sup> This would be a confirmation that the Bulgarians not only respected Valdec, but were ready to put up the monument with the semicircular base; but the problem was that when World War I broke out, the project was halted.

again not executed according to the Valdec proposal (fig. 20)<sup>1</sup>.

2. *The second equestrian monument to King Petar I the Great Liberator, in Bijeljina.*

In 1926, after the erection of the equestrian monument in Veliki Bečkerek, Valdec started on work for another equestrian monument to the same king<sup>2</sup>. *Riječ* reported as follows: «Our well-known artist, professor Mr Rudolf Valdec has finished, after his brilliant monumental work, the monument to King Peter the Great in Bečkerek, a new work, which will again bring him unstinted recognition. This is a monument to King Petar in Bijeljina. These days a commission composed of members for the committee for the erection of this monument, visited Valdec's studio and examined the model of the statue, before it is cast in plaster. The commission was completely satisfied.»<sup>3</sup>

According to his own notes, Valdec was helped in the making of the monument in Bijeljina were his student, Davorin Hotko, a teacher at the Trades School, and Franjo Bramor, also a master carver and teacher of carving at the Trades School<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For the first proposal for an equestrian monument to King Petar I in Veliki Bečkerek accepted, Valdec was given the nice sum of 1 000 000 dinars, of which 450 000 would go to the casting, 400 000 for the granite base, and the models and preparation 200 000 dinars. When he had paid all the costs, the sculptor would have 50 000 dinars left, not much for a job of two years. (Najljepši spomenik kralju Petru, *Jug*, Osijek, 2.7.1925, p. 1.). The unsigned writer in *Jug* concluded that this was too little for «the merits for the best so far and genuinely worthy monument to the Liberator King». Sarajevo, Mitrovica and Belgrade were also getting ready to erect the king a monument. The anonymous writer praised the sculptor: «when in our setting we have such an excellent sculptor who in this wonderful way has been able to solve the problem of the monument, it is a shame that it happens here that the products of suspect artists are so often disseminated, supported and bought. Anyone who can should in such matters address real Yugoslav artists, and Mr Valdec is one of those, who has made his name in particular in the monumental line».

<sup>2</sup> The Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku*, have Valdec's journal entries about the procedure for planning the monument and communicating with those in charge. Then the committee arrived in Zagreb, looked over the sketches for the monument in Valdec's studio, and they drew up and signed a memo, and afterwards the contract, written in Bijeljina.

<sup>3</sup> *Novo djelo, spomenik kralju Petru u Bijeljini. Jubilej umjetnika*, Riječ, Zagreb, 21.7.1927, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Franjo Bramor (1888–1962), was a teacher of sculpting at the Trades School from 1920. (Zrinka Tatomir, *Povijest naše škole: od Obrtne škole do Škole primijenjene umjetnosti i dizajna: 1882. — 1993, Škola primijenjene umjetnosti i dizajna*, Zagreb, 1993, p. 10.) In her book, Zrinka Tatomir says that Stjepan Radić had given the School a machine for cutting stone, which was run by the teacher Franjo Bramor, master of sculpting.

Franjo Bramor created the Crucifix that is in the very centre of Sesvete, on the main square, Trg



The Bijeljina monument was conceived very differently from the monument in Veliki Bečerek. In 1936 the plinth was put up, and in 1937 the monument to King Petar I Karađorđević was unveiled in the square in front of the city council chamber<sup>1</sup>. On the granite plinth is the bronze figure of King Petar I on horseback (for want of a photograph of the original appearance of the monument as it was when it was standing in Bijeljina, we include photographs (fig. 21) of Valdec's final clay model, ready for casting. There is no relief on the plinth, as there is on the Veliki Bečerek monument. There was only a plaque with the inscription in Cyrillic: *Grateful Semberija. To King Petar I the Great Liberator*. While in the earlier monument the horse is gently cantering, that in the Bijeljina monument is rearing on its hind legs, its head and neck bent. King Petar is clad in a cloak and in panoply of war. In his left hand he holds the reins, and in the right has raised his sword<sup>2</sup>, ready to inflict the death blow on the giant Three-Headed Arab, a mythological creature (from the folk epics about Prince Marko who puts him to death) who has fallen on his side underneath the hoofs of the king's horse. Valdec gave up on his first idea of having a mace and put a sword in the king's hand instead. The sculptor thus makes the king a personification of the folk hero, identifying him with the greatest Serbian hero from the folk poems, Prince Marko. In fact, of course, this is a metaphor for the battle of good and evil, universal theme in the history of all arts and culture, and in the Valdec conception it is also about a real struggle. Allegorically, the figure represents the Ottomans, with whom there had been immemorial enmity and against whom Marko fought, as well as the current Turks, Bulgarians, Austrians and Germans against whom Petar fought at the head of the Serbian army in the Balkan and First World wars<sup>3</sup>. The three-headed Arab has huddled down in his terror

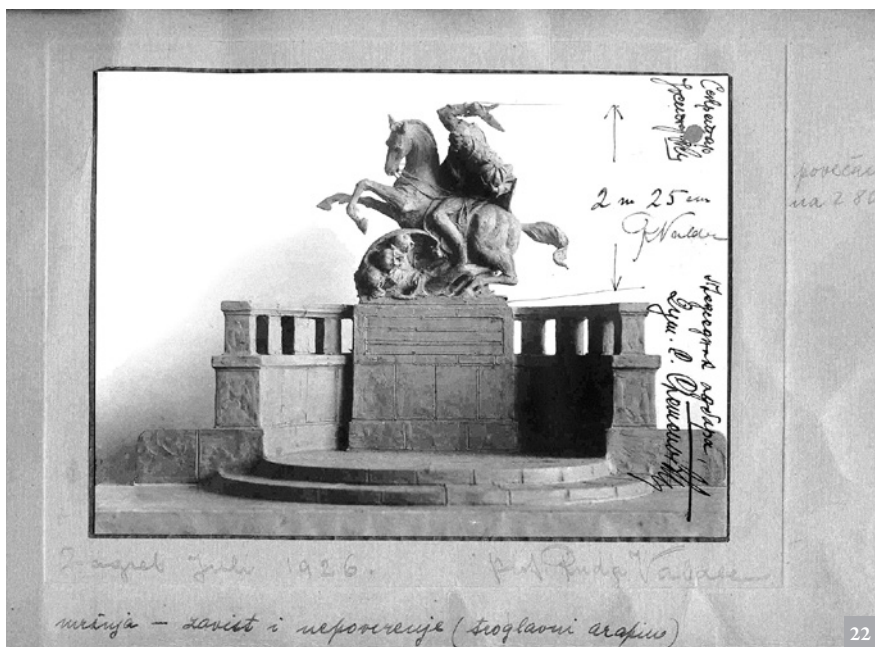
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Dragutin Domjanić, in front of Prigorje Region Museum, opposite the Late Baroque Parish Church of All Saints. It was erected in August 1941 and was made of artificial stone. The cross is erected on a high stone plinth raised by one step. The space around the crucifix is fenced with a wrought iron railing. The crucified Christ has closed eyes and his thorn-crowned head is dropping onto the right shoulder. The body is wrapped in the perizoma and the feet are nailed with a single nail. Above the head of Christ is the legend INRJ (Jesus Nazarensis Rex Judaeorum).

<sup>1</sup> The monument was of great artistic value cast in bronze, the work of the sculptor Rudolf Valdec. This monument is among the finest of its kind in the state, and in 1941 after coming into Bijeljina the occupier toppled and destroyed it. All that was left was the granite plinth. (Mustafa H. Grabčanović, *Monografija grada Bijeljine*, 1961, typescript, unpublished. I thank the author's granddaughter Azra Grabčanović for the loan of this text from the family estate).

<sup>2</sup> He had originally planned to have Petar I killing Three — Headed Arab with a mace, as we know from his own notes.

<sup>3</sup> In the Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, there is a special file entitled *Spomenik kralju Petru u Velikom Bečkereku; photographs, sketches*,



21. Model for memorial to King Peter I. 1926–1928. Plaster. Bijeljina, destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual arts Archives). 22. Model for memorial to King Peter I. 1926–1928. Plaster. Bijeljina, destroyed (photograph from HAZU Visual arts Archives, with original notes by Valdec, Zagreb, July 1926)

and covered himself with some kind of fabric (or perhaps a refuge in the rock). In fact, invaluable information is given by the photograph in the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts archives (fig. 22), for on it there are Valdec's own comments. Under the photograph he wrote the time of the completion of the model (Zagreb, July 1926) at the left, and signed himself «Prof. Ruda Valdec» on the right. Underneath he wrote what his theme was, what he had thought, and what the monument actually signified: «hatred — envy and distrust (the three-headed Arab)». The triple — headed Arab symbolised hatred, envy and distrust. Anyway, Valdec renders King Petar as hero who with his courage, strength, resoluteness and Christian faith has vanquished the enemy bugbear. He also wrote down the measurements: from the line of the upper railing of the plinth, the height of the actual bronze casting, the figure of horse and rider was meant to be 2.25 m. The monument was majestic and was unreservedly accepted by the public. The monuments, not surprisingly, won plaudits from the public and positive reviews. But if the first monument in Veliki Bečerek is an echo of Fernkorn's Ban Jelačić, the second in Bijeljina was like Fernkorn's *St George Slaying the Dragon*<sup>1</sup>. Valdec not only had the chance to see Fernkorn's equestrian monuments to Ban Jelačić and St George slaying the dragon, but they were at that time the only equestrian statues in Zagreb. They were used for the study of the anatomy of the horse, its movements and muscles, the position of the rider in the saddle as against the position of the horse. It is logical that Valdec

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*letters; photographs 6, letters 62.* Among the letters is one that Valdec wrote himself, in which we clearly see what he thought, what kind of idea and concept he had for the equestrian monument to King Petar I in Bijeljina: «Apotheosis of glorification of King Petar as liberator it is imagined that King Petar is the Prince Marko of our time. Prince M. with the figure of KP riding on his roan, killing the triple-headed Arab with a mace, in his left hand holding the broken blade of the Arab's sword that he broke with his bare hand and took from him, knocking him down below the roan's legs. On the left hand side by the Arab the slain Musa Kesedžija can be seen, from whose breast crawls the awakened adder. Behind Marko on the right hand side the people's priest (monk) can be seen, holding high the national banner. He has kept this symbol through centuries of slavery in the monasteries, as the national awareness. He was the guardian of our ethics and aesthetics, of our national customs and all the cultural features and characteristics, and now he calls and leads the people, which has shaken off itself the chains of fetters and the yoke, he calls it to rise, and to put down and kill the heraldic monsters of the feudal economy (animals and symbols from the coats of arms of the feudal nobility). On the right hand side at the end of on the ruins of the old temple sits a gusle player, that quiet avenger, who for centuries has sung of our woes, revealed our wounds, cried and sung, moaned and wished for liberation. The gusle player teaches the feeble child how to wield the horse pistol and the avenging sword. Over him and behind him can be seen women and children, holding out their hands in greeting to their king and liberator.»

<sup>1</sup> Austrian sculptor of emperors, princes and archdukes (1813, Erfurt — 1878, Vienna).

should have referred to the best example, which had affected him as an ideal depiction of warrior on horseback, and which he saw every day in the city in which he worked. Ban Jelačić on horseback here was not his exemplar, for the point was that the combative movement should be forceful and vehement. Yet the monument to the same king, Petar I the Great Liberator, in Veliki Bečkerek, considering his calmness in his riding in front of the fugitive people, owes in its composition something precisely to the posing of horse and rider produced by Fernkorn in the monument to Ban Jelačić. Valdec knew Fernkorn's sculptures, had studied and admired them since his student days and frequent visits to Vienna. When he was himself in the position of making an equestrian monument, at the end of his career at that, indeed, a year or two before his death, and considering that the whole of his career he had executed no such commission, he naturally resorted to the Fernkorn model. The figure of the Three — Headed Arab arose in his imagination, like the reliefs in the scenes of the episodes in which the king withdrew the Serbs across Albania. He could have placed both the horses in different positions, calmly cantering, or rearing, or in any other position he might have chosen<sup>1</sup>.

The monument began actually to be produced only ten years after the committee had accepted the sketch (1936, when the plinth was put in position, and eleven years, after the contract was drawn up and signed (the monument was unveiled in 1937). The reason for this was that there was a dispute between the foundry and Valdec's widow, Helena<sup>2</sup>. In the negotiations concerning the terms of casting in bronze, had agreed on and accepted a more reasonable price. This time he did not cast the monument at Zvonimir Oblak's in Zagreb, and also avoided the Pierotti firm for marble and granite working. The monument to King Petar I for Bijeljina was cast in Belgrade, unlike that for Veliki Bečkerek, which was cast in Pierroti's and Oblak's in Zagreb. The casting was confided to the *Veštačka livnica umetnina, zvona i svih drugih potreba od metala* Vlastimir

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<sup>1</sup> Judging from the faded picture postcard that is the only reproduction extant from the time when the equestrian monument was still sanding, and from the reproduction of the monument in Bečkerek and the photograph of the new, reconstructed version by the sculptor Jezdimirović put up in 2005, all on the Internet, it seems that the monuments were monumental indeed. By a quirk of fate, Valdec created equestrian monuments just before the end of his life, the last major commissions that he carried out.

<sup>2</sup> The monument was meant to have been cast by the *Veštačko — Umetnička Livnica Metala Vlastimira K. Đorđevića, Belgrade, ulica Franše Depere 116*, as is written in the heading of the letter sent to the Police HQ in Zagreb on March 25, 1935. (Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Bijeljini*). The Valdec Papers also hold a summons from the police in Zagreb for the examination of Helena Valdec for April 3 at 4 p.m. in room 42, Đorđevićeva ulica no. 4, sent on March 30, 1935, official number 47253.

K. Đorđević and Slavko Brnčić, founded 1906 at the address Vojvode Mišića 170 in Belgrade<sup>1</sup>. The correspondence stepped up, because for a long time it was not clear to the foundry whether it had got the job or not<sup>2</sup>. Soon came the answer<sup>3</sup>. On the same day, August 1927, when Franjo Bramor wrote to the Belgrade bronze founder Vlastimir K. Đorđević, he also wrote to Antun Wannek, industrialist of Bijeljina, member of the monument to Petar I committee. We can see then that the failure of the monument to be made came about because of default on the payment. On Valdec's behalf, Bramor sought the money from the member of the committee in Bijeljina, and the founder Đorđević was waiting to be paid the instalment agreed on before he started casting. Soon Đorđević sent a letter to Valdec on his firm's headed notepaper<sup>4</sup>. However, not even then was a start made on any resolute production of the monument. Several more years passed, and the financial disputes were not settled. In the meantime, apart from the Đorđević foundry, the widow Helena Valdec, who had taken over the affairs of her deceased husband, and was handling court cases with the Bijeljina committee and the foundry, Đorđević, was sent an offer by one more foundry in Belgrade — the *Umetnička livnica metala Voždovac, Kralja Vladimira broj 73*<sup>5</sup>. Not even then was the monument produced. Vlastimir K. Đorđević drove out the competition, and once again sent a letter to Helena Valdec, on November 24, 1934. When she did not reply, Đorđević wrote to her adopted son Eugen (Geno) Valdec, on August 10, 1935. He wrote to Geno Valdec, then, a few

<sup>1</sup> *Lije spomenike u grupi, biste, reljefe, medaljone i razne dekoracije od bronce, mjedi, srebra i svih drugih kovina sa garancijom sa prvoklasnom izradom. Preduzima i sve druge metalne radove kao: lustere, portale, razne adaptacije sa limom, komina i vrata za radiator peći, porudžbinu izvršuje tačno i na vreme, po modelu i crtežu [Casting monuments in groups, busts, reliefs, medallions and various decorations of bronze, brass, silver and all other metals with a guarantee of first-class workmanship. Accepting all other metal works such as pendant lights, portals, various conversions with sheet metal, fireplaces and doors for radiator, stoves, executing orders precisely and on time, according to model and drawing], as is written in the left hand corner of the headed notepaper.*

<sup>2</sup> On July 28 1927, Vlastimir K. Đorđević. wrote a letter to an unknown «doctor», probably an agent or lawyer of Helena Valdec in which he expresses his uncertainty as to whether he will get the casting job.

<sup>3</sup> The Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Bijeljini* hold documentation about the dispute concerning debts for the casting of the Petar I monument in Bijeljina, which became the liabilities of Valdec's widow, Helena, when he died on August 12, 1927, to the owner of the foundry in Belgrade; a letter was written to V.K. Đorđević and his partner Slavko Brnčić at the address Vojvode Mišića 170 by Franjo Bramor, Valdec's assistant, confidential agent in efforts to get the monument produced.

<sup>4</sup> Letter written on August 21, 1927.

<sup>5</sup> Dated October 8, 1932, Belgrade; a quotation from the Voždovac foundry, written in Cyrillic.





23–24. Equestrian Monument to King Peter I the Great Liberator in Bijeljina, set up in 2009

months after the complaint had been made to the directorate of Zagreb police in March 1935. In this complaint Helena Valdec wrote a written statement dated April 5, 1935<sup>1</sup>. The problem was solved only with a decision of the court handed down on November 6, 1935<sup>2</sup>. After the judgement, in which the committee was ordered to pay all the costs, thus meeting its liabilities according to the contract signed in 1927 with Rudolf Valdec, to his widow Helena, all the subsidiary financial problems were solved too, and the monument was cast and placed on its plinth in 1936; in 1937 came the unveiling ceremony. Like that in Veliki Bečerek, it stood there a few years only, until the Germans and the local quislings destroyed it during the occupation of Yugoslavia, in 1941. In Veliki Bečerek (Zrenjanin) the monument stood from 1927 to 1941, and in Bijeljina only for four years, from 1937 to 1941.

After the break — up of Yugoslavia, the end of Titoism and communism, the Republic of Serbia became independent, and once again put up the monument to its great king. In 2005 Serbian sculptor Zoran Jezmirović erected an equestrian monument almost exactly the same as Valdec's in Zrenjanin. Since in the war against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina the Serbs occupied Bijeljina, which became a fully Serb city

<sup>1</sup> The Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Bijeljini* keep this document too. Helena Valdec writes to the Police HQ in Zagreb, number 47253–1935.

<sup>2</sup> A transcript of the judgement of the district court in Tuzla of November 6, 1935, is also kept in the Valdec Papers in the Fine Arts Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Box 5, file 1: *Spomenik kralju Petru u Bijeljini*. The judgement was given by chamber president Miloš Ilić.

in the entity Republika Srpska, the same sculptor, Zoran Jezdimirović, in 2009 renovated and erected the Valdec monument to Petar I (*figs. 23 and 24*).

In other words, as historical circumstances changed, so the monuments were shifted and put up again.

### Conclusion

Among the many monuments made by the sculptor Rudolf Valdec, the monuments to Bishop J.J. Strossmayer and King Petar I the Great Liberator are particularly interesting. In 1922 he created a proposal for a monument to the Slavic studies expert Vatroslav Jagić for Varaždin. His monuments to Bishop Strossmayer in Zagreb and Osijek were never executed. In Zagreb, the job went to Ivan Meštrović, who did not take part in the competition, for Valdec was *persona non grata* to Catholic circles as a Mason; in Osijek he was unacceptable because he had converted to Orthodoxy in order to be able to marry, and the quality of his proposals in such circumstances meant nothing. But the quality of his formal approach to the monuments is indicated by the fact that the model in the Osijek Fine Arts Gallery meant for the Zagreb monument was used by sculptor Marijan Sušac to erect a monument to Bishop Strossmayer in Đakovo to mark the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the See. The problem of the two equestrian monuments to King Petar I for Veliki Bečkerek (today Zrenjanin) in 1924 and for Bijeljina of 1926 (commission) and 1927 (the completion of the clay model) came because of financial complications about the casting of the work ten years later is an indication of the historical vicissitudes to which they were exposed. They stood in their places for just a few years, until the German occupation of Yugoslavia, when they were removed. After the collapse of Yugoslavia, the formation of new states from the former republics of the SFRY and the Homeland War of the 1990s, Serbia once again put up the same Valdec monument in Zrenjanin, in 2005, and in Bijeljina, now in the territory of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2009 essentially the same Valdec monument was erected once again. His formal approaches to these monuments can be seen thus to be impeccable, historical events alone determining when they were to be put up and pulled down. The proposal for a monument to Vatroslav Jagić in Varaždin was never executed, for want of funds, and not for political, ideological or historical reasons. This is a shame, for the proposals for Strossmayer and Jagić, as well as the never executed monument to General Radko Hadži Dimitriev in the Bulgarian city of Sliven of 1912, because of the outbreak of World War I, used the approach of a low circular rail around the figural complex for the first time.

In the full monumental sculptures that he made (to Antun Nemčić, Ivan Kukuljević — Sakcinski and Ivan Mažuranić) as well as in the sculpture to Bulgarian general Radko Hadži Dimitriev that was never produced because of the outbreak of World War I, and in later versions of the monument to Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer

and the equestrian monuments to King Petar I the Great Liberator the sculptor showed his skills in modelling, and the fact that in terms of technique and metier he was well qualified. He also showed the thoroughness of his education at the Viennese *K. K. Kunstgewerbeschule des Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* (in the class of August Kühne) and at the *Königliche Bayerische Akademie der bildenden Künste* in Munich (class of Syrius Eberle). he brought Secession into the sculpture in the Zagreb milieu, having taken it on board in Vienna and Munich, where he studied, the centres of Secession in the period from 1897 to the beginning of World War I, in 1914, when the sculptor modelled in Art Nouveau style, returning only later to realism and naturalism. Valdec discovered formal resources that corresponded with European stylistic features and effectively was able to mediate between his creative world view and the public, for his lexis was simple, concise, clear to all and accordingly functional. The focus of interest in the article is on the analysis of the monuments mentioned to Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer for Zagreb and Osijek and on two equestrian monuments to King Petar I the Great Liberator for Veliki Bečerek (today Zrenjanin) and for Bijeljina. Mention is particularly made of the arguments concerning the historical, political and economic reasons for the monuments to Strossmayer in Zagreb and Osijek not being executed, and to the equestrian monuments to King Petar I in Veliki Bečerek and Bijeljina being put up and yet rapidly removed after the arrival of the German forces of occupation in 1941.

**Енес Квін. Вплив політичних подій на долі пам'ятників Рудольфа Вальдеця.**

**Анотація.** У статті розглядаються пам'ятники роботи Рудольфа Вальдеця (8 березня 1872 р., Крапина — 1 лютого 1929 р., Загреб), який, крім Роберта Франгеш-Михановича, був першим хорватським скульптором-модерністом. Розглянуто причини незавершеності пам'ятників єпископу Й. Ю. Штросмаєру в Загребі (комісія надала перевагу Івану Мештровичу поза конкурсом) і в Осієку. Головні причини такого рішення були пов'язані з релігійними, політичними і світоглядними аспектами, а не мистецькими чи естетичними уподобаннями. Це підтверджується прикладом статуї з Джаково роботи скульптора Мар'яна Сушака з Осієка за ескізом Вальдеця, на честь 750-річчя заснування Джаківської єпархії. Вальдець також створив дві кінних статуї короля Сербії Петра I Карагеоргійовича. Одну з них було встановлено у Великому Бечкерєку (пізніше перейменованій на Зренянін) у 1924 р., а іншу — у Бієліні у 1935 р. (хоча ліпну роботу було завершено ще 1927 р.). Обидві скульптури було демонтовано у 1941 р. під час німецької окупації Югославії. 2005 р. сербський скульптор Зоран Єздимирович поставив в Зреняніні кінну статую короля Петра I, практично ідентичну тій, що виконав Вальдець. 2009 р. у Бієліні було відновлено пам'ятник королю Петру I роботи Вальдеця. Таким чином можна зробити наступний висновок, що під впливом історичних подій пам'ятники зводилися, втрачалися і відновлювалися.

**Ключові слова:** скульптура, Рудольф Вальдець, пам'ятники, єпископ Й. Ю. Штросмаєр, кінні статуї, король Петро I Великий Визволитель.

**Энес Квин. Влияние политических событий на судьбы памятников Рудольфа Вальдеца.**

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются памятники работы Рудольфа Вальдеца (8 марта 1872 г., Крапина — 1 февраля 1929 г., Загреб), который, помимо Роберта Франгеш-Михановича, был первым хорватским скульптором-модернистом. Рассмотрены причины незавершенности памятников епископу И. Ю. Штросмайеру в Загребе (комиссия вне конкурса отдала предпочтение работе Ивана Мештровича) и в Осиеке. Главные причины такого решения были связаны с религиозными, политиче-

скими и мировоззренческими аспектами, а не художественными или эстетическими предпочтениями. Это подтверждается примером со статуй из Джаково работы скульптора Марьяна Сушака из Оснека по эскизу Вальдеца, к 750-летию основания Джаковской епархии. Вальдец также создал две конные статуи короля Сербии Петра I Карагеоргиевича. Одна из них была установлена в Великом Бечкереке (позднее переименованный в Зренянин) в 1924 г., а другая — в Биелине в 1935 г. (хотя лепная работа была завершена еще в 1927 г.). Обе скульптуры были демонтированы в 1941 г. во время немецкой оккупации Югославии. В 2005 г. сербский скульптор Зоран Ездимирович установил в Зренянине конную статую короля Петра I, практически идентичную той, которую изваял Вальдец. Биелинский памятник королю Петру I работы Вальдеца был восстановлен в 2009 г. Таким образом можно сделать вывод, что вследствие исторических событий памятники возводились, утрачивались и восстанавливались.

*Ключевые слова:* скульптура, Рудольф Вальдец, памятники, епископ И. Ю. Штротсмайер, конные статуи, король Петр I Великий Освободитель.

**Enes Quien. The impact of political events on the fate of the monuments of Rudolf Valdec.**

**Summary.** The article discusses the monuments of Rudolf Valdec, who, apart from Robert Frangeš — Mihanović, was the first Croatian modern sculptor (March 8, 1872, Krapina — February 1, 1929, Zagreb). It considers the reasons for the non-completion of his monuments to Bishop J.J. Strossmayer in Zagreb (the commission went to Ivan Meštrović, bypassing the competition) and in Osijek. The crucial reasons were related to religion, politics and worldview, not art and aesthetics. This proposition is confirmed by the statue standing in Đakovo today made by Osijek sculptor Marijan Sušac, after a sketch by Valdec, put up to mark the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the See of Đakovo. Valdec also created two equestrian monuments to King Petar I of Serbia. The first was erected in Veliki Bečkerek (later renamed Zrenjanin) in 1924, and the second in Bijeljina in 1935 (although the sculpting work was completed in 1927). They were taken down when the Germans occupied Yugoslavia in 1941. In 2005, Serbian sculptor Zoran Jezdimirović put up an equestrian statue of the king in Zrenjanin that is practically identical to that of Valdec. In Bijeljina, too, in 2009, the Valdec monument to Petar I was reconstructed and once again erected. In other words, as circumstances changed over the course of time, so the monuments were shifted and once again put up.

*Keywords:* sculpture, Rudolf Valdec, monuments, Bishop J.J. Strossmayer, equestrian monuments, King Petar I the Great Liberator.