

Altering the Titles of Artworks for New Functions. Two Plaster Groups by Josip Urbanija (1877–1943)

Karin Šmid

Abstract

Slovenian sculptor Josip Urbanija (1877–1943) received his initial training in workshops in Ljubljana, Selce pri Škofji Loki and Klagenfurt, then he studied with Hans Bitterlich at the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste) in Vienna shortly before the First World War. He spent the war years in Bosnia, where he completed two monuments. After the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, he settled permanently

in Vienna. This is partly the reason why his life and work have hardly been researched and are almost unknown. The aim of the present study is to provide insight into the origin of two monumental sculptural groups initially named *Quelle (Water Spring)* and *Tunnelbrecher (Tunnel Breaker)*. In addition, it also discusses later names of the two plaster artworks and examines what they reveal about the intended functions of the sculptures.

[1] After the Revolution of 1848, the Slovenes in the Habsburg Empire started to express their national identity through public monuments and buildings.¹ Public monuments to prominent Slovenes had to be carried out by Slovenian sculptors.² The most important educational centre at the time was the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademie der bildenden Künste) in the capital of the Empire.³ In Slovenia at that time commissions for sculpture were rare and architectural decoration was almost exclusively an import of industrially produced works from larger workshops, mainly from Vienna and Graz.⁴

[2] The Slovene sculptors of the generation born in the last third of the 19th century acquired their initial training in local workshops and then attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Among these were Alojzij Repič (1866–1941), Ivan Zajec (1869–1952), Jožef Ajlec (1874–1944), Franc Berneker (1874–1932) and Josip Urbanija (1877–1943).⁵ None of these sculptors has been adequately researched, only Ivan Zajec is still publicly recognized, as his 1905 monument to the most important Slovenian poet France Prešeren (1800–1849) stands in a square in Ljubljana that bears the poet's name, next to the Triple Bridge designed by Jože Plečnik (1872–1957).

[3] Both in public and in research, the oeuvre of Josip Urbanija, who moved permanently to Vienna after the First World War, has been almost completely forgotten.⁶ His work was mentioned in Slovenian newspapers and magazines at the beginning of his career,⁷ and between 1910 and 1915 he attracted some attention in Austrian newspapers with his student work: In 1910 he received his first student prize (Gundel-Preis) at the Academy of Fine Arts,⁸ in 1911 his sculpture *Water Source*

¹ Cf. France Stele, "Likovni spomeniki v Sloveniji do leta 1941", in: *Sinteza* 7 (1967), 8-15; Špelca Čopič, "Slovensko kiparstvo v prvi polovici 20. stoletja", in: *Sodobnost* 24 (1976), no. 3, 218-235; Sonja Žitko, *Historizem v kiparstvu 19. stoletja na Slovenskem*, Ljubljana 1989; Špelca Čopič, *Javni spomeniki v slovenskem kiparstvu prve polovice 20. stoletja*, Ljubljana 2000, 27 f.

² Cf. Čopič, "Slovensko kiparstvo"; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 29, 32.

³ Cf. Čopič, "Slovensko kiparstvo"; Žitko, *Historizem v kiparstvu*, 26 f.; Sonja Žitko, "Prispevek k problematiki slovenskega kiparstva ob prelomu stoletja II", in: *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino* n. v. 25 (1989), 91-96; Čopič, *Javni spomeniki*, 32-34.

⁴ Žitko, *Historizem v kiparstvu*, 25-27.

⁵ Žitko, *Historizem v kiparstvu*, 26.

⁶ France Stele, "Urbanija Josip", in: *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, vol. 34, Leipzig 1939/1940, 590; France Stele, "Urbanija Josip", in: *Enciklopedija likovnih umjetnosti*, vol. 4, Zagreb 1966, 476; Ksenija Rozman, "Urbanija (Vrbanija) Josip", in: *Slovenski biografski leksikon*, vol. 4, Ljubljana 1982, 301; Sonja Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija Josip", in: *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, 14, Ljubljana 2000, 84; Barbara Murovec, "Urbanija (Vrbanija), Josip (1877–1943), Bildhauer", in: *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, vol. 15, Vienna 2016, 132.

⁷ Cf. Fran Zbašnik, "Upodablajoča umetnost", in: *Ljubljanski zvon* 23 (1903), 703; J. D., "Znanost in umetnost", in: *Slovenec* 36 (1908), no. 119, 13; Vladimir Levstik, "Prva umetniška razstava v paviljonu R. Jakopiča: Slovenski umetniki", in: *Ljubljanski zvon* 9 (1909), 524-528: 528; Josip Regali, "Prva razstava v Jakopičevem umetniškem paviljonu (slovenski umetniki)", in: *Dom in svet* 22 (1909), 326-375: 330.

⁸ Venceslav Belé et al., "Naši cerkveni kiparji", in: *Ljubitelj krščanske umetnosti* 1 (1914), 31.

(German orig. *Quelle*) was mentioned in *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*,⁹ in 1912 he received the Preleuthner-Preis for his sculpture *Self-confident* (German orig. *Selbstbewußt*) at the Academy of Fine Arts,¹⁰ in 1913 a photo of his sculpture *The Tunnel Breaker* (German orig. *Tunnelbrecher*) was printed in *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*,¹¹ and in 1914 a photo of his sculpture *The Sower* (German orig. *Der Sämann*) was published in the same newspaper.¹²

[4] The Slovenian National Gallery in Ljubljana keeps two plaster models by Josip Urbanija named *Water Source* (Slovenian *Vrelec*; Fig. 1) and *The Strain* (Slovenian *Napor*; Fig. 2). While the title of the plaster model *Water Source* was only translated and thus can be identified as the same model, we can identify *The Strain* as the same plaster model as *The Tunnel Breaker* based on the reproduction. The whereabouts of *The Sower* and *Self-confident* remain unknown. The aim of this paper is to present new findings on the provenance of these two plaster models along with detailed analyses of their renaming. In the scholarly literature two statements about the two larger-than-life plaster groups are regularly repeated. The first is that they were commissioned by the *Krainer Landtag* (Provincial Council of Carniola), and the second asserts that they were intended for the *Krainer Landhaus* (the building of the Carniolan Council) in Ljubljana,¹³ but there are no archival or other documents that corroborate these statements. The claim that Urbanija's studies at the Viennese Academy were supported by the *Krainer Landtag*, has not, so far, been substantiated.¹⁴

[5] The plaster model *Water Source* (h. 222, w. 140, d. 100 cm) depicts two nude figures, one male, one female, in a rocky terrain. The muscular man is raising a rock, while the slender woman drinks from a spring gushing out of another rock below. The straining muscular male rising above the fragile female creates contrast, tension and a certain dynamic quality.

⁹ "Schulsausstellung der Akademie der bildenden Künste", in: *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, vol. 21, no. 1 of 1 October 1911, 15.

¹⁰ Belé et al., "Naši cerkveni kiparji", 31; Rozman, "Urbanija", 301. The *Preleuthner-Preis* was a prize for sculptors. It was funded with money bequeathed by sculptor Johann Preleuthner (d. 4 August 1893). Since 1899, the prize, endowed with 600 *Kronen*, was awarded to a student from the master class (*Die K. K. Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Wien in den Jahren 1892–1917: Zum Gedächtnis des zweihundertfünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestandes der Akademie*, Vienna 1917, 90).

¹¹ Franz Planer, "Reflexionen. Anlässlich der jüngsten Ausstellung der Wiener Meisterschüler der Bildhauerei", in: *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, vol. 23, no. 1 of 5 October 1913, 28.

¹² "Akademische Arbeiten", in: *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, vol. 23, no. 50 of 20 September 1914, 1367.

¹³ Fran Šijanec, *Sodobna slovenska likovna umetnost*, Maribor 1961, 284; Rozman, "Urbanija", 302; Žitko, "Prispevek k problematiki", 95.

¹⁴ Belé et al., "Naši cerkveni kiparji", 31; Rozman, "Urbanija", 301.



1 Josip Urbanija, *Water Source*, 1911, plaster, 222 x 140 x 100 cm. National Gallery, Ljubljana, inv. n. P302 (photograph © Photography Library of the National Gallery)

[6] The plaster group *The Tunnel Breaker* (h. 265, w. 145, d. 110 cm) shows two muscular nude male figures, both in a state of extreme physical tension. The two figures, one standing and the other kneeling, are supporting the rocks that rise behind them. The tension is not only visible in their taut body muscles but is also emphasized by the tense facial musculature.



2 Josip Urbanija, *The Tunnel Breaker*, 1913, plaster, 222 x 140 x 100 cm. National Gallery, Ljubljana, inv. n. P301 (photograph © Photography Library of the National Gallery)

[7] Although the plaster models have not yet been analysed in detail, the influence of the work of Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) and of Adolf von Hildebrand (1847–1921) has been noted, which may have been mediated through Urbanija's professor Hans Bitterlich (1860–1949).¹⁵ The nature of academic sculpture was not as modern as the works that could have been seen in exhibitions in Vienna, such as those in the Secession. Although we can observe a certain tendency towards a clear and calm sculptural form, as called for by Hildebrand, a strong reduction of form is not evident. As noted by Ksenija Rozman the monumental Hercules sculptures on Michaelerplatz in Vienna, executed in 1893 by various sculptors, may have been an important influence.¹⁶

[8] It is possible to determine an approximate date of completion for these plaster models, as they were shown at exhibitions of student works at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, the plaster *Water Source* in 1911, and *The Tunnel Breaker* in 1913.¹⁷ Transported to Ljubljana, these monumental artworks, at first named *For the Thirsty* (Slovenian orig. *Žejnim*) and *The Tunnel Breaker* (Slovenian orig. *Predorolom*), were kept in the Krainisches Landes-Museum Rudolfinum (Carniolan State Museum, now the National Museum of Slovenia). It was the artist himself who donated these works to the museum, the plaster group *For the Thirsty* on 25 April 1912,¹⁸ and *The Tunnel Breaker* on 18 May 1914.¹⁹ When exactly the sculptures were transferred from the National Museum to the National Gallery is still not known. They are not listed in the inventories of the two main transfers from the Museum to the Gallery, the first of which took place in 1934, the second in 1947.²⁰ The plaster figures were on display in the National Museum at least until 1939/1940, when Stane Mikuž wrote a paper about Josip Urbanija.²¹ At present, the sculptures, now kept in the depot of the National Gallery, are not accessible to visitors. Since their creation, they have been given several different titles: the sculpture *Water Source* (German *Quelle*; Slovenian *Vrelec*)²² was also titled *For the Thirsty* (Slovenian *Žejnim*),²³ *Water* (Slovenian *Voda*),²⁴ *Water Installation* (Slovenian *Vodovodna naprava*)²⁵ or *Water Energy* (Slovenian *Vodna energija*),²⁶ while the sculpture *The Tunnel Breaker*

¹⁵ Sonja Žitko, "Prispevek k problematiki", 95.

¹⁶ Rozman, "Urbanija", 302.

¹⁷ "Schulausstellung der Akademie", 15; Planer, "Reflexionen", 28.

¹⁸ For this information I am indebted to Dr. Mateja Kos Zabel, curator in the National Museum of Slovenia.

¹⁹ Archive of the National Museum of Slovenia (hereinafter referred to as NMS), Darovi 1905–1932.

²⁰ Archive of the NMS, Prezemni zapisnik 29 March 1934; Archive of the NMS, Seznam kipov, ki jih Narodni muzej odstopa v hrambo Narodni Galeriji po sporazumu z šefom odseka za umetnost in muzeje, 5 December 1947 (št. 514/46).

²¹ Stane Mikuž, "Slovenski kipar Josip Urbanija na Dunaju", in: *Umetnost* 4 (Ljubljana 1939–1940), 10-15.

²² Rozman, "Urbanija", 302; Žitko, "Prispevek k problematiki", 95; Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija", 84.

²³ Ksenija Rozman also listed this title as one of the used titles (Rozman, "Urbanija", 302).

²⁴ Mikuž, "Slovenski kipar", 11; N. C., "Slovenski sodobni", 260.

²⁵ Šijanec, *Sodobna slovenska*, 284.

²⁶ Rozman, "Urbanija", 302.

(German *Tunnelbrecher*; Slovenian *Predorolom*) was usually called *The Strain* (Slovenian *Napor*),²⁷ but the names *Electric Installation* (Slovenian *Električna naprava*)²⁸ or *Electric Energy* (Slovenian *Električna energija*) are also found.²⁹

[9] Josip Urbanija (also written Vrbanija and Urbanya, after WWI Josef Urbania) was born in Ljubljana on 16 February 1877. He was an illegitimate child and at the time he was born his mother worked as a maid in the house of sculptor Franc Ksaver Zajec.³⁰ When Urbanija was thirteen, his mother married the craftsman Josip Grošelj.³¹ In 1890 they moved to Grošelj's house in Selce near Škofja Loka, where Urbanija started working as an apprentice in his stepfather's workshop.³² Around 1899 Urbanija worked for the sculptor Alojzij Progar (1857–1918) in Klagenfurt in Carinthia.³³ In 1906, at the relatively mature age of 29, he enrolled at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts.³⁴ He completed his studies in the master class (*Spezialschule*) under the supervision of Professor Bitterlich in 1914.³⁵ During the First World War he was drafted into the k. k. 27th *Landsturm* regiment and worked as a *Rechnungsunteroffizier*.³⁶ He was stationed in Bosnia, where he created two war memorials to soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian Army.³⁷ After the First World War he moved permanently to Vienna, where he lived and worked until his death on 10 July 1943.³⁸ From the last two decades of his life we know of only a few Church commissions and small-scale sculptures, such as family portraits and decorative statues.

²⁷ N. C., "Slovenski sodobni", 260; Rozman, "Urbanija", 302; Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija", 84.

²⁸ Šijanec, *Sodobna slovenska*, 284.

²⁹ Rozman, "Urbanija", 302.

³⁰ Franc Ksaver Zajec (1821–1888) was a sculptor, who received his education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and in Munich. Many young sculptors were trained in his workshop, e.g. his two sons Ivan and Franc Ignac, Alojzij Progar, Josip Grošelj and Josip Urbanija. He is best known for a series of small figures of prominent Slovenian men, such as politician and journalist Janez Bleiweiss, poet France Prešeren and bishop Anton Martin Slomšek. See Sonja Žitko Durjava, "Franc Ksaver Zajec", in: *Slovenski biografski leksikon*, 2013 <https://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi852992/> (accessed 27 August 2019); Belé et al., "Naši cerkveni kiparji", 30; Rozman, "Urbanija", 301.

³¹ Josip Grošelj (1854–1941) was a craftsman. He received his training in the workshops of Štefan Šubic and Franc Ksaver Zajec. For three years he worked for the craftsman Matija Ozbič in Klagenfurt. After he left the workshop of Zajec in 1887, he opened his own workshop in Selce near Škofja Loka, and lived there until his death. See Viktor Steska, "Podobar Josip Grošelj", in *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino* 19 (1943), 60-62.

³² Belé et al., "Naši cerkveni kiparji", 30; Stele, "Urbanija Josip" (1939/1940), 590; Stele, "Urbanija Josip" (1966), 476; Rozman, "Urbanija", 301; Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija", 84.

³³ Stele, "Urbanija Josip" (1966), 476.

³⁴ Rozman, "Urbanija", 301; Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija", 84.

³⁵ Rozman, "Urbanija", 301; Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija", 84.

³⁶ *Das interessante Blatt*, vol. 34, no. 38 of 23 September 1915, 10.

³⁷ *Das interessante Blatt*, vol. 34, no. 38 of 23 September 1915, 10; Mikuž, "Slovenski kipar", 11.

³⁸ Mikuž, "Slovenski kipar", 11; Stele, "Urbanija Josip" (1966), 476; Rozman, "Urbanija", 302; Žitko, "Prispevek k problematiki", 95; Žitko Durjava, "Urbanija", 84.

[10] The full amount of the financial support that Urbanija received during his years of study is not yet known. The records concerning the grants awarded to artists by the *Krainer Landtag*, kept in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, do not contain any files on Urbanija. A greater insight into the financial aid granted to some university students is offered by the minutes of the meetings of the *Krainer Landesausschuss* (Carniolan Provincial Committee), which are kept in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia. The *Krainer Landesausschuss* approved Urbanija's requests for financial support in the year 1911 and again in 1912. While his requests have not been preserved, the minutes of the committee's meetings record that Urbanija's request was examined on 19 July 1911 and was forwarded to the provincial art council (*deželni umetniški svet*) for consideration. The *Krainer Landesausschuss* made its final decision on 29 July 1911 and approved a grant of 700 Austro-Hungarian crowns, if the artist agreed to donate a statue on the theme "For the Good of Mankind" (Slovenian "V prid človeštvu").³⁹ When Urbanija asked for support again the following year, he was granted 500 crowns for the academic year 1911/1912, without further conditions.⁴⁰ Nothing is known of the appearance and fate of the statue *For the Good of Mankind*.

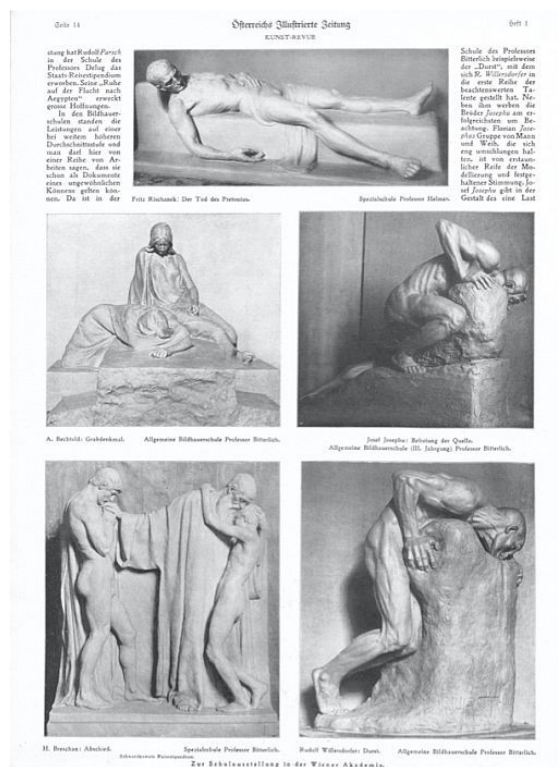
[11] It seems likely that the sculpture *Water Source* (German orig. *Quelle*) was a school assignment rather than a commission from the *Krainer Landtag*, as has been claimed in the literature to date.⁴¹ In the *Kunst-Revue* of October 1910, a supplement to *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, it was reported that students in Bitterlich's master class were creating sculptures on the theme of *Thirst* (German orig. *Durst*), and two photographs of two sculptures were added (Fig. 3).⁴²

³⁹ Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: ARS), SI AS 38, Deželni zbor in odbor za Kranjsko, seje deželnega odbora, Box 14, Zapisnik seje deželnega odbora kranjskega v Ljubljani, dne 19. 7. 1911 and dne 29. 7. 1911.

⁴⁰ ARS, SI AS 38, Deželni zbor in odbor za Kranjsko, seje deželnega odbora, Box 14, Zapisnik seje deželnega odbora kranjskega v Ljubljani, dne 24. 2. 1912.

⁴¹ Fran Šijanec, *Sodobna slovenska*, 284; Rozman, "Urbanija", 302.

⁴² F. Wolfbauer, "Zur Schulausstellung in der Wiener Akademie", in: *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, vol. 20, no. 1 of 2 October 1910, supplement *Kunst-Revue*, 14; the newspaper reproduced the works *Befreiung der Quelle* by Josef Josephu and *Durst* by Rudolf Willersdorfer.



3 Page from the newspaper *Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung*, 2 October 1910, 14. The photos in the middle and the bottom right show works of the master class of Hans Bitterlich on the theme of "Thirst" (newspaper scan © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek/ANNO)

[12] Although Urbanija's work was not mentioned or illustrated in photographs, given the subject and the fact that Urbanija was a student of Bitterlich, we can assume that the monumental plaster model by Urbanija was also part of that assignment. The sculpture was mentioned again, one year later, in October 1911, in the same newspaper supplement. This allows us to conclude that the Slovenian title *For the Thirsty* was derived from the subject of the sculpture assignment, while the Slovenian title *Water Source* is a Slovenian translation of the original name that the sculpture was given at the time of its completion. For the statue *The Tunnel Breaker*, made two years later, a similar context has not yet been found. At this stage we can neither confirm nor disprove any of the possible reasons for creating the more recent statue. It could have been either a school assignment at the Vienna Academy or a commission for the *Krainer Landhaus*. It is also conceivable that *The Tunnel Breaker* was commissioned by the *Krainer Landesausschuss* to complement the statue *Water Source*.

[13] The first known donation by Josip Urbanija to the then Provincial Museum is the plaster group *For the Thirsty*. What happened to the sculpture *For the Good of Mankind*, which was requested by the *Krainer Landesausschuss*, is not yet known. Could it be that the requested sculpture was donated under a different name, only a few years after it was made? It is also unclear whether the *Krainer Landesausschuss* requested a monumental plaster group simply to enlarge the art collection or as a model for a stone sculpture that it planned to commission. If we accept the claims of earlier researchers that the artworks in question were intended for decoration of the *Krainer Landhaus*, then the *Krainisches Landes-Museum* would have been a suitable repository until Urbanija could use them as models for statues sculpted in a more durable material.

[14] The *Krainer Landhaus* in Ljubljana was rebuilt between 1899 and 1902, as the previous building, which stood on the same site, had been severely damaged during the Easter earthquake of 1895 and no longer met the needs of the provincial representative body.⁴³ Although the construction of the *Krainer Landhaus* building has been the subject of considerable research,⁴⁴ only the master's thesis by Jakob Gindiciosi has so far addressed the question of its sculptural decoration.⁴⁵ Gindiciosi stresses that the *Krainer Landtag* had envisioned a rich sculptural decoration for the *Landhaus*. Ivan Zajec and Alojzij Progar submitted an estimate of 15,730 crowns for such sculptural work on 26 May 1899.⁴⁶ Today we only know that this estimate included two monumental allegorical figures of *The Future* and *The Past*, which were intended for the eastern portal (on Gosposka Street) and were to be made of limestone from Aflenz in Styria.⁴⁷ However, the order was not placed, because the Landtag considered the sculptural decoration too expensive and ultimately dispensable. Despite the requirement to reduce the building costs, the *Landtag* then at last commissioned some architectural decoration from the Vienna-based company Fischer, Haselsteiner & Bock.⁴⁸

[15] The plans drawn up by the architect of the *Krainer Landhaus*, Josef Hudetz (1842–1909), in July 1899, in August 1899 and in 1902 together with the scale model⁴⁹ show that the architect considered different positions for the sculptural decoration of the façades. The number and kinds of figures also changed in the course of this planning history. Hudetz's plans from July 1899 included six sculptures on the most representative north façade, facing Congress Square (*Kongressplatz*, today *Kongresni trg*), whereas the coloured plan from August of the same year showed only four figures in total.⁵⁰ The western façade onto Vegova Street, drawn in July 1899, shows two figures in the central avant-corps.⁵¹ The plan from August 1902 again displays six sculptures on the north façade, but at different positions than in the July 1899 plan.⁵² The August 1902 plan features two sculptures on the west

⁴³ Damjan Prelovšek, "Olbrichov projekt deželnega dvorca v Ljubljani", in: *Sinteza: revija za likovno kulturo* 18-19 (1970), 23-25.

⁴⁴ Cf. Damjan Prelovšek, "Ljubljanska arhitektura Hribarjevega časa", in: *Grafenauerjev zbornik*, ed. Vincenc Rajšp, Ljubljana 1996, 597-606; Prelovšek, "Olbrichov projekt", 23-30; Ana Benedetič, *Deželni dvorec v Ljubljani: 1902–2002*, Ljubljana 2002.

⁴⁵ Jakob Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega deželnega dvorca v Ljubljani*, master's thesis, University of Ljubljana 2019, (see <https://repozitorij.uni-lj.si/IzpisGradiva.php?id=108804&lang=slv> (accessed 22 May 2021).

⁴⁶ Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 90.

⁴⁷ Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 92.

⁴⁸ Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 89, 92.

⁴⁹ The plans are kept in the Archive of the University of Ljubljana in fond IV. They are published in part in Ana Benedetič, *Deželni dvorec v Ljubljani: 1902–2002*, Ljubljana 2002, and all of them are published in Jakob Gindiciosi's master's thesis, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*. The scale model is known only from postcards kept in the National and University Library in Ljubljana, inv. no. ad 1989/1291-5 and ad 1989/1291-6, [URN:NBN:SI:IMG-ZSHW9BJG](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:si:img-zshw9bjg) (accessed 5 April 2020).

⁵⁰ Reproduction of the plan in Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 172.

⁵¹ Reproduction of the plan in Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 173.

⁵² Reproduction of the plan in Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 174.

façade and two more on the east façade facing Gosposka Street.⁵³ The undated photographic reproductions of the scale model, which was most probably based on the final plan, show only two sculptures, which are on the avant-corps of the west façade, while there are no sculptures on the north and east façades. It cannot be said for certain whether the architect omitted the sculptural decoration only in the making of the scale model, or whether he also omitted it in his final plan.

[16] The final decision on commissioning furniture, decorations and other equipment was in the hands of the *Krainer Landtag's* financial department. In 1901, the *Landtag* decided not to order either the marble statues or the crown of the Duchy of Carniola (orig. *vojvodska krona*) as decoration for the façade, because this was regarded as an unnecessary expense at a time when the *Landtag* was confronted with sizable expenditure for office equipment.⁵⁴



4 *Krainer Landhaus*, Ljubljana, postcard, 1910. National and University Library, Ljubljana (photograph © Digital Library of Slovenia, [URN:NBN:SI:IMG-ZSHW9BJG](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:si:img-zshw9bjg) [accessed 10 April 2020])

[17] The iconographic interpretation of Urbanija's statues must be approached in a multifaceted manner due to the different names, which were, at least partly, in line with the change of the intended functions. The sculpture *Water Source* was probably created as a school assignment on the theme of *Thirst* (orig. *Durst*). It is most likely Hans Bitterlich drew inspiration from events in Vienna at the time. In 1910, the Vienna City Administration completed the second Viennese mountain spring pipeline (*Hochquellwasserleitung*). On similar occasions, the authorities often ordered commemorative medals, for example in 1904, when the medallist Arnold Hartig commemorated the breakthrough of the Karawanks railway tunnel as well as the exhibition on hygiene in Vienna.⁵⁵

[18] The development of Carniola and its capital Ljubljana in the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire witnessed the same modernizing tendencies as in the capital and many other

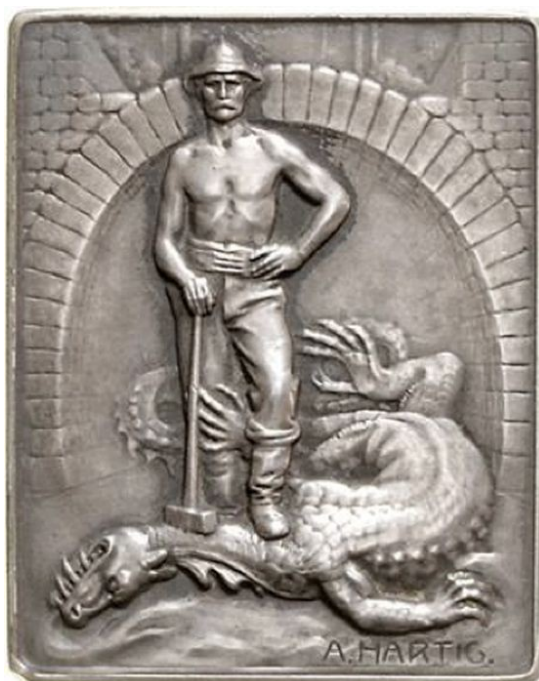
⁵³ Reproduction of the plan in Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 175 f.

⁵⁴ *Obravnave deželnega zbora kranjskega v Ljubljani*, 12th session of 13 July 1901, 257; Gindiciosi, *Poslopje nekdanjega kranjskega*, 78.

⁵⁵ Rudolf Schmidt, *Das Wiener Künstlerhaus. Eine Chronik 1861–1951*, Vienna 1951, 161.

towns of the monarchy. The construction of water supply systems for Ljubljana, its suburbs and other places in Carniola was a highly topical issue, as can be read in the minutes of the meetings of the *Krainer Landesausschuss* in the period between 1910 and 1912.⁵⁶ So far, research has dealt only with the modernisation of Ljubljana, where the water supply system was built in 1890 and remained intact during the earthquake of 1895.⁵⁷

[19] Due to the mountainous terrain, the construction of railway tunnels and viaducts posed the greatest challenge in developing the railway system. Historically, the most important line was the Austrian Southern Railway between Vienna and Trieste (*Südbahn*; completed in 1857), which connected the capital with the port via the Styrian and Carniolan capitals, Graz and Ljubljana.⁵⁸ The construction of tunnels in Carniola continued at the beginning of the twentieth century, as the railway connection between Carinthia and Trieste was being established. To achieve this, a tunnel had to be driven through the Karawanks. This tunnel was completed in 1906,⁵⁹ and the breakthrough was celebrated with a commemorative medal (Figs. 5a and 5b).



5a Arnold Hartig, *Breakthrough of the Karawanks tunnel*, 1905, 41 x 33 mm, recto (photograph © Dorotheum Vienna, auction catalogue 19 Nov. 2014)

⁵⁶ ARS, SI AS 38, Deželni zbor in odbor za Kranjsko, seje deželnega odbora, Box 14-15.

⁵⁷ Breda Mihelič, "Urbanizem in arhitektura avstro-ogrske dobe", in: *Slovenski impresionisti in njihov čas 1890–1920*, ed. Barbara Jaki, Ljubljana 2008, 222-249: 228.

⁵⁸ Karol Rustja, "Južna železnica", in: *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, vol. 4, Ljubljana 1990, 363 f.

⁵⁹ Karol Rustja and Vlasto Zemljič, "Predor", in: *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, vol. 9, Ljubljana 1995, 267.



5b Arnold Hartig, *Breakthrough of the Karawanks tunnel*, 1905, 41 x 33 mm, verso (photograph © Dorotheum Vienna, auction catalogue 19 Nov. 2014)

In the same year a tunnel was also built near Bohinj, at the station of the railway line Jesenice–Trieste.⁶⁰ In addition, between 1912 and 1914 a railway line was built from Novo mesto to Metlika, which also included the construction of a tunnel.⁶¹ The hypothesis that the sculpture *The Tunnel Breaker* was ordered by the *Krainer Landesauschuss* would be in line with the interpretation that the plaster model represents an allegory of tunnel construction in Carniola and thus of the *Landtag's* efforts to improve the infrastructure of the crown land by expanding and modernising the railway system.

[20] The titles used by Šijanec in 1961, *Water Installation* (Slovenian *Vodovodna naprava*) and *Electric Installation* (Slovenian *Električna naprava*), or *Water Energy* (Slovenian *Vodna energija*) and *Electric Energy* (Slovenian *Električna energija*), used by Rozman in 1962,⁶² suggest a different interpretation and contextualization of Urbanija's two statues. In addition to the water projects already mentioned, the modernization of Ljubljana also included the installation of power lines from the municipal power station to the town in 1898.⁶³ However, neither of the statues has attributes

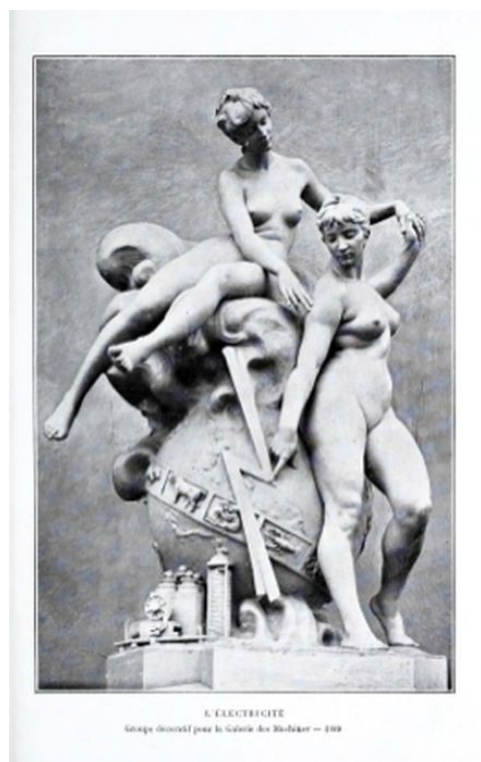
⁶⁰ Rustja and Zemljič, "Predor", 267; "Bohinj – Bohinjska železnica", in: *Register nepremične kulturne dediščine*, <http://giskd2s.situla.org/rkd/Opis.asp?Esd=8117> (accessed 24 March 2020).

⁶¹ Rustja and Zemljič, "Predor", 267; "Novo mesto – Železniški most in predor", in: *Register nepremične kulturne dediščine*, <http://giskd2s.situla.org/rkd/Opis.asp?Esd=14406> (accessed 24 March 2020).

⁶² At present it is not known whether the names employed by Fran Šijanec were used earlier. Ksenija Rozman uses several titles for these sculptures; the ones in question here may be based on the writings of Šijanec or may be taken from an earlier source.

⁶³ Mihelič, "Urbanizem in arhitektura", 228.

that could confirm such an iconographic interpretation. In general, the images used for electricity were defined by light and the metaphor of lightning, and could be accompanied by attributes such as an electric generator, distribution system and/or products of the electrical industry.⁶⁴ Among the most famous representations of electrical energy are *Electricity*, a nine-metre-high statue by French sculptor Louis-Ernest Barrias (1841–1905) made for the *Palais des Machines* at the *Exposition Universelle* in 1889 (Fig. 6; destroyed after the exhibition),⁶⁵ and advertising posters such as the 1888 poster for the German electrical equipment manufacturer Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft AEG, Berlin,⁶⁶ and a billboard for the Vienna International Exhibition of Electricity in 1883.⁶⁷ More recent works of art include the statue of *Electricity* (Fig. 7; made in 1928 along with its counterpart *Steam*), which adorns the façade of Bolzano railway station and is the work of the Austrian sculptor Franz Ehrenhöfer (1880–1939).



6 Louis-Ernest Barrias, *Electricity*, 1889, h. 9 m, destroyed (Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/luvredeernestbar00unse/page/30/mode/2up> [accessed 10 April 2020])

⁶⁴ Dirk Schall, "Bild und Ikonographie der Elektrizität", in: *Energie in der modernen Gesellschaft: Zeithistorische Perspektiven*, eds. Hendrik Ehrhardt and Thomas Kroll, Göttingen 2012, 33-56: 53 f.

⁶⁵ Georges Lafenestre, *L'œuvre de Ernest Barrias: avec une notice*, Paris 1908, 31, see <https://archive.org/details/luvredeernestbar00unse/page/30/mode/2up> (accessed 10 April 2020).

⁶⁶ Louis Schmidt, advertising poster for AEG, 1888, digitized in: *Deutsche Geschichte in Dokumenten und Bildern (DGBD)*, http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=1259&language=german (accessed 10 April 2020).

⁶⁷ Advertising poster *Internationale Electriche Ausstellung in Wien, 1883*, Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plakat_Elektrische_Ausstellung_1883.png (accessed 10 April 2020).



7 Franz Ehrenhöfer, *Electricity*, 1928, Bolzano railway station, façade (photograph © Wolfgang Moroder/Wikimedia CC BY-SA 3.0)

The attributes of these artworks are a lamp, an electric cable and an electric motor. The sculptural groups made by Urbanija bear no resemblance to such artworks. Their academic manner is very different to the technological iconography of the industrial era. Moreover, they are based on works by Michelangelo and are closer to the classical sculptural tradition of 'neo' styles.

[21] The placing of the statues *Water Source* and *The Tunnel Breaker* on one of the *Landhaus's* façades would have enriched not only the architecture of the building of the *Krainer Landtag*, but also the town as a whole, as large-scale façade sculptures are rare in Ljubljana. The reason why statues based on Urbanija's two plaster groups were never executed for a public place could have been the outbreak of the First World War. Josip Urbanija was sent to Bosnia as a soldier and after the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy the *Krainer Landhaus* acquired a new function – it was given to the newly founded University of Ljubljana.⁶⁸ After the end of the Great War, Urbanija moved to Vienna and no longer took part in Slovenian art exhibitions or competitions. He gradually fell into oblivion and knowledge of and interest in his work decreased.

⁶⁸ Cf. Barbara Murovec, "Ewige Präsenz der Wissenschaftler im öffentlichen Raum: Gelehrtentendenzmähler in Laibach", in: *Der Arkadenhof der Universität Wien und die Tradition der Gelehrtenmemoria in Europa*, eds. Ingeborg Schemper-Sparholz et al., Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2017, 351-366.

Acknowledgements

This paper was written under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Murovec and is a continuation of my research into Josip Urbanija's life and work, which I started for a master's thesis with the Slovenian title *Josip Urbanija – kipar in črnovojnik* (Josip Urbanija – Sculptor and Landsturm Soldier; it includes an English summary). I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Barbara Murovec for her time, guidance and constructive critique.

About the Author

Karin Šmid graduated with a master's degree in art history and history from the University in Maribor (2019). In her master's thesis, supervised by Dr. Barbara Murovec, she analysed the Slovenian sculptor Josip Urbanija (1877–1943) in the period of the First World War. From January until June 2020 she worked on the HERA project "Transfer of Cultural Objects in the Alpe Adria Region in the 20th Century" funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no 649307.

Special Issue

Ingeborg Schemper-Sparholz and Caroline Mang, eds., *Vienna as a Sculptural Centre in the Long 19th Century. Current Research on Sculpture in Central Europe*, in: *RIHA Journal* 0260-0269 (10 July 2021), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/riha.2021.1>.

License

The text of this article is provided under the terms of the Creative Commons License CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0

