

# FRAGMENTS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BELGRADE ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY IN VELIKI VRAČAR

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Summary: In the paper some details from the history of the construction of the Belgrade Astronomical Observatory in Veliki Vracar are presented, with a special reference to the reliefs on the observational pavilions and the inscription "OMNIA IN NUMERO ET MENSURA" on the main building.

**Introduction.** In Belgrade, in 1887, the Observatory of the Great School (later the University) was founded, which was Astronomical and Meteorological, and other Geo sciences have their beginnings in it. Its founder was Milan G. Nedeljković (1857-1950), who was appointed its director by the Minister of Education and Church Affairs Milan Kujundžić Aberdar, who served and managed it for almost 37 years. With his exceptional efforts, he managed to procure many instruments from Germany in the name of war reparations after the First World War. He then sent a letter to the Ministry of Education with a proposal to build a new Astronomical Observatory at another location. While intensive work was going on regarding the procurement of instruments, he was suddenly retired in 1924, and in the same year the Observatory was divided into Astronomical and Meteorological.

In 1926, University Professor Vojislav Mišković (1892-1976), who was also its builder, was appointed director of the Astronomical Observatory. Mišković developed a successful career as an astronomer in France, where he received his doctorate. The new Astronomical Observatory was built in the period 1930-1932 on the location Laudanov Šanac, on the hill Veliki Vračar (later named Zvezdara) according to the project of the Czech architect Jan Dubovi (1892-1969), who completed his architectural studies in 1921 in Prague, and came to Belgrade In 1922, as an employee of the Belgrade branch of a Prague construction company. As an architect, he soon transferred to the municipal Technical Directorate. He is one of the founders of the Group of Modern Architects (GAMP). He received recognition and a doctorate for the project of the Astronomical Observatory, which was built in the modernist style.

It was built quickly, and during the construction there were only a few minor problems and alterations, such as that the windows were not sealed, and also the colluding commission did not accept the motor-generator in the pavilion of the Great Refractor, because it was not new, but rewound. An order for Mišković (as a director during the construction) to correct the mistake at his own expense within a month. In a letter to the Ministry of Construction, Mišković wrote that he did not understand of the motor-generators, however, confirmation of the decision came from the same, with the comment that as a director he could have hired an expert. The explanation from the contractor of these works (RADIOMEHANIKA) was embarrassing, that the cable had to be rewound due to low electric voltage.

Some reliefs on the constructed objects were not realized, and there was a project in the form of a relief on the site of the current inscription OMNIA IN NUMERO ET MENSURA on the administrative building of the Astronomical Observatory, as well as a proposal for another text.

In the publication of the Astronomical Observatory ANNUAIRE for 1931, which was published in French, Mišković gave an overview of the plan and course of construction (illustrated with photographs), first about several potential locations (Avala, Košutnjak, suburbs of Voždovac, mountain peak on Laudan's trench) , then about the organization of the new Observatory, about the staff, about the scientific activity for the period 1929-1930, and finally about the work plan for 1931.

Mišković proposed to the Rector of the University to place two memorial plaques with the names of the meritorious, and he suggested that the Commission consider giving a place of merit to the founder of the Observatory Milan Nedeljković, who is credited with procuring many high-quality instruments. but he himself did not put his name in the proposed text, so Nedeljković's name was omitted on the memorial plaques (more about these slabs and the opening of the new Astronomical Observatory in August 1934 was written by the archivist of the Astronomical Observatory Milan Radovanac).

