

ИЗОБРАЗИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИСКУССТВО

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**The Monument to Millennium of Russia:
Bringing the Idea to Life. From History of Reigns
to History of Culture****O. V. Kalugina*

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This article sets out to examine the development of the initial idea and compositional concept of a renowned mid-19th century monument "The Millennium of Russia." As apparent from careful examination of materials from various sources, the sketch of the monument does not appear to have greatly influenced its final design as alleged by its author Mikhail Mikeshin. Given the tight deadlines and strict control of the August Head of the Imperial House, the very idea of the monument underwent significant change with a profound impact on its artistic and plastic design. The adjustments to the monument's plan implied the personal participation of the emperor Alexander II, the Head of the Imperial Academy of Arts, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Railways as well as other experienced architects, engineers, and specialists. The monument was initially meant to commemorate the ruler Rurik, however, its meaning eventually transformed into the idea of Russian statehood history. Particular emphasis was placed on presenting the country's history in terms of its cultural development. The shift in focus from the history of reigns to the history of cultural development ensured the enrichment of the monument to the Millennium of Russia with new characters and story lines. Democratic conditions for participation in the contest resulted in a prevailing number of unknown artists or people having no relevant training. One of these artists happened to be M. Mikeshin whose forte was the genre battle painting. Therefore, it seems that the actual authors of the project were young sculptors and experienced professionals who were inevitably involved at different stages of designing and building the monument.

Keywords: monument, historicism, sculpture, government order, art competition, Russian statehood.

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Fig. 1. Mikhail Mikeshin. <http://vfl.ru/fotos/9e3a703719708364.html?antid=1>

The construction of one of the principal Russian monuments dating back to the time of historicism, has been debated by many scholars [1, c.78–84]. The subject, however, was represented by scattered data, which could not present an objective and unified picture of the issue in question. Still, considering all the nuances of interpretation, the Selection Committee, as most authors claim, considered Mikhail Mikeshin's project to be the one that complied with the officially announced program (fig. 1). At the same time, the documents studied by the author clearly state that in effect the competition's program did not insist on a particular artistic approach or artistic design, i. e. on the monument's design in accordance with the stages of Russian history outlined in the program. The data from the Russian State Historical Archive published by Andrei Zakharenko [2]¹ show that the terms of the contest clearly indicated that "In fact, project applicants

should not be restrained by these instructions; the main idea is that the monument should express its principal idea by commemorating the gradual growth of the Russian state over a thousand years" [I, p. 8]. So, the problem was not that Mikeshin's design was fully consistent with the program's terms, but rather something else.

At present, the career of the young battle painter is sufficiently discussed in the publications of Oksana Kanashkina from the State Russian Museum [3]. Kanashkina provides a detailed account of the painter's increasingly close contacts with the Imperial family, "for the picture acquired by Nicholas I showing equestrian grenadiers, the artist was given a Silver medal of the second order. In 1854, Grand Princess Maria Nikolaevna, President of the Academy of Fine Arts, commissioned from Mikeshin a series of drawings for her album,² and also put him in charge of her daughters' drawing classes. Mikeshin was twice nominated for the medal: in early 1857, he finished his painting "The Fall of Lithuanian Fortress Pilonnas during the Reign of Gediminas" and embarked upon "The Count Tilly at Magdeburg in the Year of 1631," but he failed to finish it because he accompanied the Grand Prince Nikolai Nikolaevich on his trips to Poland, Ukraine and Caucasus where he was busy making sketches" [3, p. 305]³. The artist's life took a sharp turn when he, as he said, in the autumn of 1858 "came across a newspaper with an announcement of a competition for the erection of a monument to 'A Thousand Years of the Russian State'" [4].

¹ Since 1992. Until 1961, the Central Historical Archives of the USSR were housed partly in the Central State Historical Archive of Leningrad. The references are given after the new name of RGIA (the Russian State Historical Archive). All quotes of archival sources are cited as in Zakharenko's publications and with the new name of the archive — RGIA.

² Such albums were a high society fad then.

³ The drawings are in the collection of the State Russian Museum.

The fact that this young battle painter took part in the competition appears serendipitous, which poses a number of questions regarding his success.

Detailed information is not available as to who exactly applied and which projects were submitted other than Mikeschin's. A number of papers help to better understand what designs and ideas were behind the authors' intentions and the reaction of the committee to these proposals. Alexander Antoshchenko [5] provides a description of several of the 52 projects including Platon Antipov's sketch, which resulted in him being awarded [6]⁴. The project by Viktor Hartmann mentioned by Andrei Zakharenko [2] and Viktor Smirnov [7, p. 12] who seriously studied the history of the monument, was ignored. Antipov's model, as the committee stated, was executed as a "semi-circle with the colossal figure of Russia in the center. But this project in its form was a direct copy of one of the monuments in Munich" [2, p. 59]. Quite obviously, it is the monument to "Bavaria," which was many years later mentioned by Vasily Stasov. Actually, the famous critic drew the comparison with the already unveiled monument to the millennium, correctly underlining the principal tendency in the projects' content, "A miserable imitation of the Munich contrivance, the statue of "Bavaria." This one also cost a fortune and did not leave anyone content in the whole world" [8, p. 483]. The plan to involve an architectural group also was reminiscent of the architectural group in Munich.

One should note that the King of Bavaria Ludwig I commissioned the design of the monument to the sculptor Ludwig Schwantaler in 1843–1853 and the cast was made by foundry men Johan Baptist Stieglmeier and Ferdinand von Miller. The statue represented a compositional center of the architectural group in Theresienwiese. This peculiar hall had been erected by the architect Leo von Klenze as a place to pay homage to important Bavarian statesmen who contributed to the development of their country, science, and art. The impressive statue of Bavaria eighteen and a half meters high was considered a technical masterpiece, but it was hardly viewed as a work of art. It still fulfills its main function of a viewing platform inside the interior of the statue's head [9].

No doubt, Antipov's project (Viktor Smirnov in his monograph wrongly refers to him as Arkhipov) was rejected as irrelevant conceptually and out of place in the moderately sized Novgorod Kremlin. However, it is worth drawing certain parallels between the final design of Mikeschin's artwork and the Bavarian one, and, hence, Antipov's proposal. In the end, the high relief of the lower part of the monument [10], corrected by Emperor Alexander II, became a monument to outstanding public officials and cultural figures of Russia. The architectural project of Ippolit Monighetti looks similar both conceptually and structurally as it represents a portrait gallery of Russian tsars inside a building resembling St. Isaac's Cathedral.

An award-winning project submitted by Gornostaev was also analogous to Antipov's idea. The former proposed to erect a single allegorical statue as the center of the monument. The documents do not provide any information about which member of the famous family of the Gornostaevs participated in the contest. Most likely, this was Alexei Maksimovich Gornostaev (1808–1862) [11], an academician of architecture, a prominent representative of eclecticism and one of the founders of the pseudo-Russian style. While quite a few contestants submitted architectural designs, for instance as already mentioned and a certain ministerial secretary Vasily Okhrimenko [7, p. 12], Gornostaev proposed a

⁴ Antipov Platon Ermolaevich (died in 1861) — architect. He studied at the Academy of Arts (from 1840); Academician (1855).



Fig. 2. Project of Nikolai Shtrom [5]

figure in the center. However, the committee came to the conclusion, “that such a monument even if most carefully and perfectly executed, will be beyond the general public’s comprehension and will not make a proper impression” [2, p. 59].

Beside these projects, many other variants of allegorical figures (fig. 2) and symbolical groups were proposed. There is another fact, which raises some serious questions — among other mentioned projects in the archives there are none from the leading sculptors of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, though there is some indirect data about their participation in the competition. In general, most contestants turned out to be not very skilled in sculpture, or they were not sculptors at all nor were some of them painters. From this standpoint, the democratic attitude of the contest organizers, who determined

that “all painters, both Russian and foreign residing in Russia are eligible to apply” [I, p. 9], unexpectedly influenced the quality of proposals received. Most projects were supplemented by extensive commentary, which, in line with the logic of non-professionals, were aimed at the description of the ideological program that was allegedly to be “read” by the viewer of the monument rather than at the substantiation of the composition and image. We should note that this approach in general was not viewed as a disadvantage: a negative reaction was not caused by it, but rather by another interpretation of the history of the Russian state.

In this respect, the imperial resolution on the project of the architect Alexander Ladan who suggested one more monument in St. Petersburg is very indicative. As a principal theme of his monument, he chose “Russia’s gratitude to European nations promoting its movement towards civilization”: “the monument is a rectangular pedestal with four trumpeting angels on its corners. On the pedestal, there is a statue of Peter the Great clothed as a carpenter from Zaandam. With his right arm, he demonstrates his gratitude to the representative of Holland, while his left arm is raised as if inviting the heavens to be witness to his sincerity. On the four sides of the pedestal, there are separate low-reliefs depicting Empress Catherine II, Emperors Alexander I, Nicholas I and Alexander II with representatives of those European nations that had assisted in the enlightenment of Russia” [12, p. 36]. In the wake of still very vivid sentiments after defeat in the Crimean war, the absurdity of this project was apparent and resulted in a stern reaction from the imperial commissioner, “His Imperial Highness personally wrote on the project “Tell him that this is an utter nonsense”. The monarch did not agree to see Russia as a disciple in European history” [5].

To sum up, among the proposed projects there were not many serious contenders. One should particularly note that the unrivaled supremacy of Mikeshin’s project, so easily ascribed to him by all scholars, was questionable. From the position of modern requirements, he cannot be called a winner at all because twenty-one members of the committee voted for the projects by Antipov and Gornostaev (10 and 11 respectively), which means that twenty-one members of the committee voted against Mikeshin. His project received seventeen votes or less than 45 percent. In earnest, there should have been one more stage of the competition. Mikeshin, however, was announced a victor and the case was closed [5; I, p. 7]. So, what was the initial design of his monument? Posing this question in such a way is fully justified, as later on many elements of his composition underwent serious alterations.

First of all, with all of Stasov’s biased attitude toward academic sculpture, one cannot but acknowledge his erudition, including his expertise in the field of European art history. In his major work, “The Art of the 19th Century” published in 1901, the famous critic once more expresses his negative evaluation of the monument to the millennium of Russia, pointing out that in his representation of a “host of Russian celebrities,” Mikeshin “did it so superficially and indifferently making a striking copy of the monument to Friedrich II executed by Christian Daniel Rauch [13]⁵ and in imitation of the newest Italian and French monuments of a similar kind, that its erection does not play any role in the history of our national sculpture” [14, p. 527]. The last passage of the critique seems extremely controversial to us and thus deserves a separate analysis.

⁵ Vasily Stasov wrote about the equestrian monument to the King of Prussia Friedrich by Christian Daniel Rauch unveiled in 1851 on Unter den Linden in Berlin.

Indeed, Mikeshin's project, as it was mentioned before, was not novel or original. Obviously, it was a blending of works by European monument sculptors over the last hundred years. The idea of surrounding the figure on a pedestal with numerous characters had been suggested as early as the late 18th century by Denis Diderot when Étienne Maurice Falconet was busy with his design of the monument to Peter the Great. This idea was embodied in the Berlin monument years earlier. In the composition of one of the "colossal figures" with Peter the Great blessed by the winged angel indicating the direction, one cannot help but sense a reference to *La Marseillaise* by François Rude ("The Departure of the Volunteers in 1792", 1833–1836). There are quite a few other works that echo Western creations, so Mikeshin's contemporaries could easily trace the actual origins and "borrowings in the work of the not-so-experienced project manager." For instance, academician Fyodor Buslaev [15], a well-known Russian art historian was quick in his response with an important article to the publication of the monument's photograph in the supplement to the "1862 Menologium" church calendar published by the Academy of Sciences. His critical essay deserves a separate discussion, while here it is vital to note the author's parallel with one more apparent painting serving as a source for the high-reliefs in the monument's composition, viz. the famous fresco "Hémicycle" by Paul Delaroche (1837–1841) from *École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. This parallel easily explains the unusual composition of the monument, i. e. a circle of large diameter laid as a foundation.

It is important to note that it was not Mikeshin's victory. He could not mold, nor did he know the methods and technology of sculpture as well as the ways to designing a work of sculpture. All this proves the validity of Buslaev's comparison of Mikeshin's work with the fresco. Mikeshin's complete ignorance in the field of sculpture, however, does not prevent him from humiliating his friend and chief executor of the initial model by saying, "Schroeder was then just a novice artist, who just changed his life-guardsman uniform for the working blouse of a sculptor" [16]. To put it mildly, Mikeshin stretches the truth here.

Ivan Nikolaevich Schroeder (1835–1908) (fig. 3), son of Ryazan's governor who traced his lineage to German nobles from Eastern Prussia had been in the army, but when he was in the Corps of Pages for initial military training, he became interested in molding and received advice from Pyotr Klodt. Their careers had much in common [17]. Upon leaving the army, he volunteered to attend classes at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in 1857 under Professor Nikolai Pimenov. As a result, prior to his work on the monument he had already had two years of learning under one of the most talented sculpture teachers in Russia. According to Olga Krivdina, it was he who executed the model of the monument in one fifth of its size, over three meters tall [18]. This explains why Mikeshin mentions the problem of carrying the model out of the studio — it could hardly fit through the door [16].



Fig. 3. Ivan Schroeder. https://karel.mk.ru/upload/userfiles2/30-07-2018/Иван%20Шредер__7472e9f.jpg

Mikhail Mikeshin was quite in his element trying to downplay the role of the actual executor of the model. His description of events, however, reveals his complete unpreparedness to solve this issue as well as his skill to pin the principal work on the shoulders of his colleagues, “Hartmann soon resumed his talk about the number of sketches. We must have six front-view watercolors, then the layout, and the sectional layer while time is running short. Isn’t it better to mold one sculptural model — this idea struck all of us. It turned out to be more convenient, but we had some special sculpturing problems, because none of us had been doing any molding (emphasis added). I at least did some molding of trinkets for fun, while Schroeder aspired to become a sculptor — but this was all about the future. At present, he had not molded anything academic and was doing something insignificant in the manner of Men and Pradier. We together with Schroeder got on with this work in a feverish state” [16].

Indeed, neither Hartmann nor Mikeshin had ever sculpted anything. As a result, it was Schroeder who completed the model, no matter how disparagingly narcissistic Mikeshin sounded in his description. Mikeshin’s talk about his own “trinkets” is just a figure of speech: it is known that later on, he took lessons from Schroeder, but he did not have any knack for molding. It is particularly telling that he mentioned dismissively one of the leading neoclassical sculptors Jean-Jacques Pradier and the wonderful animalist Pierre-Jules Men.

In his memoirs, Mikeshin reveals his inexperience by describing his labor-intensive work on the project, “On the night before the competition I had to make several wax accessories: swords, scepters, orbs, and some other small objects that could not be made from pliant clay. I did not know how to prepare wax for molding and sculpted from candle wax, kneading it with my fingers. It is so difficult and painful that after three hours of work my fingers needed rest. They were swollen, I could not move them, and as a result I could no longer rely on my hands” [16]. Mikhail Mikeshin did not actually know the basics of molding, while novice and self-taught sculptors can easily deal with wax work, as Leonid Posen did it, for instance. The painter’s frail hands could not stand to the task, which any student of sculpture gets used to after several months of work.

We can partly conjure up the picture of the initial concept of Mikeshin from a few sources. There is a drawing in the State Russian Museum described by Zakharenko in detail. It shows the monument without its pedestal. The monument looks like the Monomakh’s Cap: “a hemisphere shaped as a dome with the figures of a woman symbolizing Russia and an angel with a cross. The colossal figures are placed below and under the hemisphere on the plinth around the upper part of the monument. Below the colossal figures, there is a low-relief depicting some historical events, and below there were some kind of niches probably intended for the figures of writers, artists and composers” [16].

Different publications quite ambiguously interpret the process of creating the principal design of the monument. In his 2004 Internet project researching this earlier drawing, Antoshchenko [5] describes the final design of the monument as a bell, while his conclusion is erroneous — the presence of the orb radically changes the silhouette and the tectonics of the monument. Besides, this drawing demonstrates a different positioning of the figures — they are placed below the hemisphere, while the historical scenes, later modeled by Klodt, are in the niches. The whole monument represented in this sketch, was rigidly structured, but the reiteration in the historical reliefs of the same events whose heroes were depicted as the “colossal figures” displeased the Emperor. At the same time, it is

notable that the images of “artists and composers” appear in this early design, though the very idea of framed low reliefs on the pedestal undoubtedly reminds us of the equestrian monument to Nicholas I.

Mikeshin appropriates the idea of Alexander II to set up a “gallery of prominent men” in the reliefs on the pedestal [2, p. 68]. At the same time, the Aide-de-Camp General Konstantin Tatischev, also a well-known and experienced military engineer and Chief of the Department of Lines of Communication and Public Buildings which supervised the construction of the monument, considered himself to be the author of the pedestal’s design. In Russian Museum’s collection, there is one of the earlier models of the monument without the angel’s figure near the cross on top of the orb, while the lower portion is fully in line with the final concept of the monument. It is very difficult to determine which variant of the monument was adopted by the committee. One thing is clear, the initial composition and the whole concept were rather undefined and were constantly modified in accordance with the advice of the consultants of every description, but still under the strict and direct supervision of the Emperor. There is no doubt that the final decision to announce Mikeshin as the winner of the competition was also made with the Imperial family’s consent.

To continue with his work, Mikeshin was to present the models of all figures executed in one fifth of their size. It was stressed that the statues were to be made “with a level of precision in order to make a due guideline for the artists who will be assigned to complete the colossal figures” [II, p. 6]. It is quite obvious that all this work fell to Schroeder, while Mikeshin was likely busy finishing the details of costumes and weapons which he diligently copied in the Armory Museum in Moscow. However, in accordance with the earlier design mentioned before, six historical low reliefs of the lower level were commissioned from Pyotr Klodt. Alexander II visited his studio and deemed it appropriate that “the low reliefs repeating the images on the monument itself be replaced by some low reliefs representing prominent men whose exploits contributed to the glorification of the Russian state,” and Klodt should stop his work on the models of low reliefs until “further notification” [III, p. 24–5].

In his memoirs, Mikeshin writes about Klodt’s outright failure, and this idea is actively advanced in the popular book by Viktor Smirnov who remarks that the seasoned sculptor was an animalist and failed to cope with the task [7, p. 19–20]. To begin with, Klodt as early as 1845–1848 executed the sculptural frieze “The Horse in the Service of Man” for the Service building of the Marble Palace, and in the mid-1840’s he was involved in making models of low reliefs for the exterior of St. Isaac’s cathedral on the subject of “The Entombment” and “Bearing the Cross.” For the interior decoration of the cathedral, he executed the high relief “Christ in Glory” which demonstrates an absolutely original technique — covering the painting with a silver revetment. In the 1853–55s, Klodt constructed some models, which, unfortunately were not preserved, of the high reliefs for the front of the cathedral of Christ the Savior [19, p. 132–3]⁶. This all attests to the fact that Mikeshin’s commentary should not be deemed as a reliable source, while Klodt’s expertise in monumental high reliefs is beyond doubt.

Secondly, on undertaking the project which exceeded his ability, Mikeshin submitted the model with no reliefs at all. The themes of the compositions executed by Klodt, had been approved by the Emperor via Mikeshin’s facilitation; it was Mikeshin who actually

⁶ “Saint Peter and Alexy of Moscow,” “Stephan of Perm and venerable Sergy,” “Saint Iona and Philip of Moscow,” “Saint martyr George” (from Donskoy monastery).

made this mistake which led to the duplication of the characters represented in the colossal figures and in the low reliefs. This blunder resulted from the fact that Mikeshin had no clear and detailed view of the final design of the monument. At the same time, the professional community of sculptors at the Academy of Fine Arts was undoubtedly dismayed by his ignorance and aggressiveness and by the fact that he had taken advantage of both young and experienced sculptors and later took credit for the design.

To recall the events of the monument's concept and design, it is important to note that it was the last draft with the continuous relief and the orb surrounded by the "colossal figures" that was approved by Alexander II. Thus, the top of the monument was to carry a sculptural group consisting of an angel and a genuflect woman in national Russian costume before a crucifix. The government program stipulated that there should be six sculptural groups around the sphere consisting of seventeen "colossal figures." The work on them was organized in the following way: Schroeder was assigned to make two figures and the cross in the upper part of the monument as well as three figures in the group of Peter the Great and five figures in the group of Ivan III. In total, the young sculptor executed ten out of seventeen "colossal figures" during the course of one winter. Academician Robert Zaleman was commissioned the group of Mikhail Fyodorovich and three figures, the group of Vladimir Svyatoslavovich also of three figures and Dmitry Donskoy's group of two figures, which amounts to only eight figures. Academician Pavel Mikhailov was to execute a one-figure composition of Riurik [IV, p. 5] (fig. 4).

Things took a more complicated turn with the high relief because the main problem was connected with the list of characters to be depicted. The picture was more or less clear with the selection of characters for "colossal figures" including those crowning the monument, while the lower high relief required some lengthy work. It is quite obvious that in the course of defining the ideological program of the monument, its conceptual content was becoming more and more controversial. The precondition of the competition which stated that the monument was to be "truly national and coming from grassroots," ultimately resulted in its main theme being associated with the ideological formula of Count Sergey Uvarov — "orthodoxy, autocracy and national spirit." This was emphasized in the program documents that pointed out the need to represent qualities such as "orthodox faith as the principal foundation of the moral uplifting of Russian people" in the monument [5]. The second mandatory emphasis was "the celebration of a gradual, thousand-year long development of the State of Russia" [5].

Quite in the line with the principle of dynastic interpretation of history formulated as early as antiquity, this historical period was presented as a change of monarchies which increasingly strengthened and celebrated the Russian state. This glory, however, is already assessed not only through the prism of victories on the battlefield, but in connection with the important events in the history of culture. This explains the placement of Rurik, who allegedly institutionalized the Slavic territories, together with Vladimir, who baptized Russia, and this fact was undoubtedly seen as an advancement in the cultural level of the nation's development. Ivan III was considered to be not only the sovereign of "All-Russia" (from 1478) who completed the gathering of all lands into a unified realm, but as a ruler who determined the cultural identity of Muskovy as a Third Rome. There is no doubt that the figure of Peter the Great epitomized a new level and new direction of cultural development.

This principle was even more vividly exemplified by the process of compiling the list of people to be depicted on the high reliefs of the monument's pedestal. Quite a few



Fig. 4. The Monument to Millennium of Russia. 1862. Modern view. Photo of the author

scholars, for example, Antoshchenko, stress that the design of these reliefs presented a new interpretation of the foundation of the state, which now relied on, so to say, the wider public masses, “Contrary to the denial of the intelligentsia’s national role, characteristic of the preceding reign of Nicholas, Emperor Alexander II was ready to accept it agreeing with the idea of cultural development as an important criterion for the maturity of society” [5]. The same idea is found in Olga Mayorova’s social and cultural study regarding the history of the monument, “The fact itself that ‘writers and artists’ were widely featured on the monument symbolizing the state of Russia, moreover, that they were equaled to all other groups depicted, such as ‘The Educators,’ ‘The Statesmen,’ ‘The Military and The Heroes’ attests to the striking departure from the official ideology of Nicholas’s period when the government dismissed the cult of literature and did not recognize the national significance of intelligentsia” [20].

Thus, we observe a gradual transformation of the monument into a specific illustration of the history of Russian culture, which was now understood as the development of the founding principles of the Russian state. Indeed, the characters of the relief “The Educators” were viewed in the context of cultural development, i. e., the theme of one half of the relief (along with “The Writers and The Artists”) reflected this very aspect of institutional development. Most likely, the idea itself was not in the least formulated a priori, and in this case, its representation in the gradually evolving design of the monument appears truly pivotal.

Research into the list of characters depicted on the monument, provides ground for the conclusion that the evolution of the concept of the high relief, which largely determined the entire ideological theme of the monument, followed some underlying logic. As we know, it was Mikeshin who prepared the original list, and then Chevkin and others made amendments to it. Neither of them, of course, was able to complete the task; it was a reasonable and bold decision to resort to some experts in history. Antoshchenko relies on memoirs for this matter; however, their credibility raises reasonable doubts. One of those experts involved, for instance, was Fyodor Buslaev. As we already mentioned, he read about the project of the monument after it had been published in “The Menologium” church calendar, while the majority of Buslaev’s paper, including a detailed analysis of the project and especially its conceptual aspect, was devoted to a very severe criticism of the proposed list of personages.

Judging by the opening lines of his paper, it is doubtful that Buslaev was among those who offered consultancy on the project in question, “The artist faced a challenge to depict a thousand-year-long history of establishing order in this great and plentiful land.” To solve this task, it was not enough to have imagination and artistic tact; one had to use the results of Russian historical science in order to embody the theme in the monument to meet the purpose” [15, p. 187]. From further analysis of the monument, it is easy to understand that Buslaev did not consider the design of the monument to be consistent with modern scientific ideas.

The role of Sergey Solovyov seems also questionable. Could he have been a project advisor, as from the very beginning his opinion was that the date of the anniversary suggested was erroneously stated? Moreover, Solovyov was a consistent supporter of the idea that the science of history branched from medieval lessons of the “history of monarchs.” In the historical development of the country, he assigned the main role to the emergence of political systems, which served as a basis for the state. Naturally, this position had noth-

ing to do with the design of the monument. Nevertheless, Antoshchenko deems it to be a remarkable fact that the project executors used scientific works, since “in doing so, they employed an epistemological strategy of an aesthetic representation of history based on scientific knowledge” [5].

As we can see and as it has been stated in a number of publications by the author, not only some fabulous situation developed regarding the date of the jubilee and the site of the monument, but also some mythological perception was produced regarding the historiography of its creation in the coming decades. This was, of course, connected with the fact that despite presenting the history of the Russian state through the history of the country's culture, the authors remained politically engaged when selecting significant dates, names and events. Initially, amendments were more technical: Chevkin crossed out the characters that duplicated “colossal figures” depicted in the group. It soon became clear, however, that it was merely impossible to do without them within the framework of a narrative intended in the relief: “gaps” appeared in the historical stream, as a result, the figure of Vladimir for example, had to be reintroduced immediately. The list was then supplemented by duplication of the figures of Dmitry Donskoy, Ivan III, Mikhail Romanov, and Peter the Great. Ivan IV was finally removed, although the reason for this exclusion interpreted by modern science is not so straightforward as in popular publications.

Buslaev was the first to express his puzzlement over the absence of Ivan the Terrible both on the monument and on the relief. Since he could find no rational explanations for this, he concluded his speculation by saying, “This way or another, but a Russian muzhik who knows history only from his epic tales, will certainly be trying to look for the figure of Ivan the Terrible on the monument, and will certainly find him in one of the two copies of Ivan III decorating both low reliefs” [15, p. 201]. Of course, Buslaev was wrong, because the “colossal figures” featuring Ivan III among other characters on the high reliefs, were not actually low reliefs. But the historian repeatedly mentions in his article that he cannot pronounce a substantiated judgment only on the basis of a published drawing. Still he was able to suggest an argumentative analysis of those personages designated for perpetuation.

However comic the deliberation of Buslaev seemed, it found its realization in the history of the perception of the monument. As early as ten years after the monument was unveiled, the “Niva” magazine published in 1872 an anonymous article devoted to the monument to Russia's millennium. The author, judging by the words cited below, was not well versed in Russian history and he did not question his right to discuss the historical monument. As a result, his paper confirmed the most astonishing of Buslaev's speculations, “Behind him (Dmitry Donskoi — author's remark), stands the prudent politician and the son of Vasily V, Ivan IV holding the scepter and the orb near the subdued Livonian knight swinging his broken sword” [21, p. 300]. To begin with, Vasily V did not exist at all and Ivan IV was the son of Vasily III, and the writer confuses Ivan III with Ivan the Terrible following the prompt of Fyodor Buslaev. In addition, by some miracle he does not notice the Tatar man who gives the czar a pole with an attached horse's tail to it (a symbol of power). The Livonian knight is just falling — he cannot control his sword. One can flatly state that the writer did not see the monument or observed it inattentively.

On the other hand, a journalist writing for “Niva” magazine should be quite an educated person chosen to write for one of the most read magazines in Russia! One can imagine how murky the idea of the monument was for an average person, predominantly from the peasant class. One has to admit the correctness of Vasily Stasov's words in re-

gards to the monument which he used ten years later, “The monument has been in its place twenty years already. But what for? Who needs it? Does anybody see it in the corner of Novgorod? Other than the money squandered, nothing has resulted from it” [8, p. 483]. We can see that the monument failed to perform its educational, let alone propagandist, function. We will return to the pre-conditions for this later.

To continue with the reasons for why the figure of Ivan the Terrible was excluded from the group of Russian rulers, let us note that the authors of popular texts commonly point out the reluctance of the citizens of Novgorod to have him among those celebrated because of the tsar’s carnage unleashed on the city population. Alexander Antoshchenko, however, interprets this decision in a completely different way, “When the list was finally compiled for the emperor [Alexander II. — O. K.], Ivan IV was removed from it, whom Chevkin had included instead of Ivan III. Marfa Posadnitsa, however, remained on the list unvaryingly, although many conservative-minded correspondents of Mikeschin objected. This change was supposed to historically justify the possibility to revive the traditions of local self-government in the proposed zemstvos (district councils) while maintaining strong central power” [5].

Let us note that this scholar closely links the presence or absence of certain persons on the list to be approved by the emperor as well as those that appeared later on the high relief to pure political and sometimes quite hasty reasons. We cannot consider such arguments sufficiently grounded, as seen in the case of the exclusion of Ivan the Terrible. Do not forget that the monument was meant to stand for centuries and was erected for the widest groups of the population to look at it! But, undoubtedly, it is very indicative that the “unworthy” behavior of Ivan the Terrible in Novgorod was not even mentioned either by Buslaev or by Antoshchenko, let alone the author of the article in “Niva” who did not touch on the subject at all!

It took quite a while to agree on the list of characters for the group “The Educators” and “The Writers and The Artists.” Buslaev cannot see the rationale for this choice, whereas modern researchers make attempts to explain it by various political motifs. In fact, now and then a number of figures were either included in the list or excluded from it. In the case when there is a definite resolution by the emperor, one has every reason to speak about authoritarian censorship. Such information, however, can be found only in a few cases, and it seems reasonable to approach the interpretation of the choice with caution.

One cannot but agree with the fact that the “ultimate decision was to be made by the government which determined the supremacy of the political strategy in their selection of personages worthy of representing Russia’s historical past” [5]. The dramatics of this process has been repeatedly covered by certain scholars and does not require repetition [22; 23], but it did reveal the utmost complexity of the political situation inside the country. It was a time of changes of historical periods, and these changes influenced the whole gamut of social interactions and involved in its dramatic twists education and culture in general and visual arts in particular. The whole reshuffling with the inclusion and exclusion of figures of Gogol, Shevchenko, Nicholas I, Admiral Ushakov, Apraksin and Zoe Palaiologina pointed to some very important features of public consciousness: the perception of the nation’s history was, on the one hand, in embryo state and, on the hand, under the powerful censorship exerted by the state. This was an important message for the future, which offered a sort of calibrated concept of a continuous cultural development of the nation. It was also a propagandist appeal to the citizens for understanding the depth of roots, which

had some unifying force for all walks of life. It was also a naïve belief in the possibility of amending history by traditionally sending politics in reverse.

The final concept of the relief was to be presented in a model 27 meters long and consisting of 109 figures. Of course, Mikeshin was not able to execute the sculptural model of the high relief; instead Schroeder constructed models of the colossal figures for the final approval of the design. Precisely at this moment, Mikeshin had to stop shielding himself behind the label of a beginning sculptor and to turn to the Imperial Academy of Arts for more serious support. Some young sculptors were commissioned to execute Mikeshin's drawings in practice. To tell the truth, we know nothing about other works by Alexander Liubimov who was responsible for executing only 36 figures for one of the sections of the high relief called "The Military and the Heroes," and who did so successfully.

The others working on the high relief, despite their young age, usually were younger than Mikeshin but already had some experience in sculpture, including reliefs production for monuments. For instance, Matvei Chizhov who at that time was a student of the Moscow college of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture under Nikolai Ramazanov, made sculpture works from the age of sixteen. His talent is indisputable, because as early as 1858 his teacher invited him as an aide to work in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior where he produced a grandiose relief "The Descent into Hell" based on Ramazanov's sketches. He also made several reliefs for other churches in Moscow. For the monument to Russia's millennium, he executed 31 figures of the high relief "The Educators" and a part of the composition "The Military and the Heroes" together with Liubimov. Young Nikolai Lavretsky who worked on the relief "The Statesmen" consisting of 26 figures, was by that time already distinguished by the Imperial Academy of Arts with medals of all distinctions for his sculptural works. It was these young hard-working and professional sculptors who take credit for this high relief.

According to Zakharenko's data, the special council of the Imperial Academy of Arts headed by its vice-president Grigoriy Gagarin, closely followed the work in process. The council included Konstatin Ton, Fyodor Bruni, Pyotr Klodt, Professors Pimenov, Pyotr Basin, Alexei Markov and Timofei Neff. From these, we can see that the only sculptors on the council were Pimenov and Klodt, and their opinion unfortunately was not decisive. But these two attacked the work of young Schroeder, based on Mikeshin's sketches, with a storm of criticism. "Pimenov reproaches Mikeshin, — remarks Zakharenko, — who dared to take up such a responsible task which should have been given to "the best artists representing the appropriate stage of progress in the national sculpture of our century" [IV, p. 30] reasonably comparing the works of Schroeder with "the colossal figure" executed by academicians Zaleman and Mikhailov.

However, in general, the council had to meet deadlines and could not risk its reputation before the august co-author of the monument, so, the decision was made without taking into account the opinion of experts, "Given a very short period of time allocated for the completion of colossal statues and a lack of experience of the young artists Mikeshin and Schroeder, we cannot help but do justice to their hard work. Even more knowledgeable masters could not have done as much as these two managed within five months" [IV, p. 55–6]. The recommendations resulted in the following, "it is necessary to correct the faults mentioned by the majority of the council of the Academy of Arts and 'hereafter, to cast the mock-ups in plaster'" [IV, p. 33]. Thus, the fear of the Emperor's displeasure paved the way for the completion of the project. The monument received

its place in the history of Russian sculpture, which, mind it, experienced difficult times during those years.

The material presented in the given paper makes it possible to come to a few very important conclusions. Mikeshin's rather presumptuous remark that overnight "the composition of the monument was ready and the main groups were also prepared in almost the same forms in which they were later sculpted" [16] by no means reflects the actual situation. First of all, it becomes clear that both the initial plan and the actual work on the project introduced significant amendments to the future monument. Outstanding specialists in various fields, from historians to engineers, not to mention the whole team of sculptors contributed to the development of the concept and artistic design of the monument. As a result, over a short period for such a grandiose construction, a rather situational project dedicated to the founding of the Russian state turned into an artwork whose main theme was the history of the Russian statehood development, represented as the history of its culture. Of course, the reference to the authorship of this monument should also be amended, and after the names of its real creators — Schroeder, Lyubimov, Zaleman, Mikhailov, Chizhov, Laveretsky — there should be modestly added: after the drawing of Mikhail Mikeshin.

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