The Sculptor Alexander Plămădeală and the Architect Eugene Bernardazzi: Creators of the Monument to Stephen the Great in Chișinău

Abstract:

In the National Archives of the Republic of Moldova, there are several interesting documents connected with the history of the creation of Chiɛinău's monument to Voivode Stephen the Great (1457-1504), created by the sculptor A. Plămădeală. From the memoirs of the sculptor's wife, we learn about several variants proposed in the process of creating the monument. The first design, made in 1924, depicted Stephen III in medieval armour, his head bare, resting both hands on his sword. The pedestal, designed by architect Eugene Bernardazzi, was to represent a fortress tower. The special committee for the construction of this monument asked Plămădeală to design more variants that they could choose from. In particular, he was asked to depict Stephen with the symbols of Christianity, the cross and the gonfalon, in his hands. Plămădeală and Bernardazzi presented the second variant as a full-sized plaster mock-up, raised on a wooden pedestal, depicting Stephen III as a medieval knight in armour, with a raised visor and leaning on a sword, with the Christian symbols in his left hand. However, the committee did not approve this version either, so Plămădeală continued to search the best solution. Finally, in late 1924, they gave their seal of approval to a depiction of the crowned Voivode in rich gospodar's clothing. His right hand clutched a sword, and his left one raised the cross high. The monument was cast from bronze in Bucharest at the Ryshkanu atelier. The installation of the statue and its pedestal in Chiɛinău began in 1926, at the intersection of Gogol (Banulesku-Bodoni) Street and Alexandru Cel Bun (Ɛtefan cel Mare) Street near the park, and it was formally opened in May 1928. Nowadays this monument is one of the most important sights, which the citizens of Moldova and guests to this capital treat with special respect and pride.

Keywords: *Stephen the Great, Alexander Plămădeală, Eugene Bernardazzi, monument, Chiɛinău.*