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Soviet Monumentalist Ye. V. Vuchetich: The Sources Review

Abstract

The article reviews historical sources on life and creative work of a prominent Soviet sculptor-monumentalist Yevgeny Viktorovich Vuchetich. The fonds of the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art and those of the Russian State Archive of Film and Photo Documents, which have so far escaped the attention of researchers, have enabled the author to analyze the sculptor's creative work and also his way of solving organizational problems, when implementing large projects. The documents demonstrate that Ye. V. Vuchetich managed to construct large-scale monuments only through his great talent, hard work, and help of like-minded associates. Such historical source as personal records deserves much scholarly interest. Ye. V. Vuchetich's letters, which have not yet been studied by the researchers, reveal little known facts of the sculptor's wartime life and his perception of the Great Patriotic War, which became the principal topic of his creative work. Surviving fragments of Vuchetich's speeches, interviews, and notes show his strong character and his devotion to his work. Controversy in Vuchetich's relationship with state authorities is mentioned in his son Victor's unpublished memoirs. Victor collected unique facts about running creativity contests, difficulties faced by the great master in his work creating monumental compositions, sensitive relationships within the Soviet cultural elite. The memoirs demonstrate that as he became a high-profile sculptor, Vuchetich was able to overcome bureaucratic obstacles with greater ease. Newsreel footage and photographs are of special interest among other historical sources. Despite their staged nature, they show details of the daily life of Soviet cultural intelligentsia. Photographs of monument models, completed works, their fragments and copies characterize the process of creating his world famous monuments; they also reflect evolution of the original design.

Keywords

Ye. V. Vuchetich, historical source, monumental sculpture, monument, Great Patriotic war of 1941-1945, Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, Russian State Archive of Film and Photo Documents.

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