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**SCULPTORS WHO WORKED IN BAKU IN THE 20<sup>S</sup>  
OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**  
**(Y. I. Keilikhis, S. D. Erzia, Y. R. Tripolskaya, P. V. Sabsay)**

**Abstract.** The article deals with sculptors' works who worked in Baku in the 20s of the last century. The works of four well-known sculptors – Y. I. Keilikhis, S. D. Erzia, E. R. Tripolskaya and P. V. Sabsay are highlighted. The author notes that each of them contributed to the development of national Azerbaijani sculpture. They also taught in higher schools and technical institutes and trained specialists in sculpture. The image of the poet Sabir created by Keilikhis is interesting. It is the first large monument in the Orient. The two-figure alto-relievo – “Drillers” that has survived to this day attracts attention with expressiveness and dynamism of the characters. The author of this composition is S. D. Erzia. P. V. Sabsay and E.R. Tripolskaya's works, which decorate the city to this day, are also interesting. These are plastic images of the writer-educator M. F. Akhundzadeh and the poetess Khurshidbanu Natavan.

**Key words:** Azerbaijani sculpture, monumental art, alto-relievo, Y. I. Keilikhis, S. D. Erzia.

**Introduction.** Sculptors from Russia had a unique role in the development of sculpture in Azerbaijan in the 20s of the 20th century. Since there were few local specialists at that time, the work of these artists was of some importance [1, p. 14]. The article deals with four sculptors' – Y. I. Keilikhis, S. D. Erzia, R. S. Tripolskaya and P. V. Sabsay's work. These sculptors who came to Azerbaijan at the beginning and in the 20s of the century created interesting works. Except for S. D. Erzia, all of them tied their fate to Azerbaijan, lived here until the end of their lives and died here.

**The interpretation of the main material.** Honored Art Worker of Azerbaijan Y. I. Keilikhis (1872-1950) created many memorable works in the 20s and 30s. His contribution to the development and teaching of plastic arts in our republic was not small.

Y. I. Keilikhis arrived in Baku in 1908. This period was characterized by the strong development of the Azerbaijani national culture on the enlightened-democratic ground. Our first national opera “Leyli and Majnun” was staged that year. Realistic visual art also began to develop in those years.

Y. I. Keilikhis’s sculptural work was of a professional nature. He first studied sculpture in Odessa, then improved his art in Petersburg and abroad (mainly in Florence).

Keilikhis worked as a teacher in Baku even before the revolution and he created a private sculpture studio here in 1909. Let’s remember that artists and architects like Y. S. Samorodov and I. V. Edel organized creative workshops in Baku in those years.

Keilikhis’s work had an absolute Azerbaijani character even before the revolution. He created a bas-relief of the well-known Azerbaijani intellectual Sh. Mahmudbeyov, worked on many characters (“Porter”, etc.) on the national theme. These works, which mainly have the character of easel art, were among the first works made by the sculptor who was professionally educated in Azerbaijan.

There was his bust made by Y. I. Keilikhis in a hurry and therefore not of very good quality in the Fountains Square (this garden, which was previously called Parapet, was named after K. Marx at that time) in the center of Baku (1920).

Of course, Keilikhis’s main monumental work is the monument of our immortal poet M. A. Sabir erected in Baku in 1922. This monument was the first monumental one in the Orient world. Besides the outward resemblance, features that reflect the poet’s poetic thoughts and inner world are evident in the image of Sabir. The general appearance of the monument, especially the closed dome on the pedestal, stalactite (muqarnas) and shabaka art examples reflect its rich national content (Fig. 1).

Stepan Dmitriyevich Erzia (1876-1959) had a certain role in the teaching and promotion of sculpture in the 20s. Erzia worked in Baku during 1923-25, taught at the Art School, participated closely in the creation of the sculpture department in that school together with Y. I. Keilikhis (Keilikhis worked at Industrial Institute).

The first Azerbaijani female sculptor, Zivar Najafgulu gizi Mammadova, who studied in the sculpture department of the art school, practiced in Erzia and Sabsay's workshops and learned the professional secrets of plastic arts from them during those years. Z. Mammadova, who matured as a sculptor in the 30s and 40s, created bust-portraits of Azim Azimzadeh, Huseyngulu Sarabski, Mashadi Azizbeyov, Hero of the Soviet Union Huseyn Aliyev and others.

While teaching in Baku, Erzia was also engaged in creative work, he created a series of characters of Baku oil workers in 1924 [5]. This monument group, which was erected on the gable and cornice of the Central House of the Union of Miners (currently the Union of Composers of Azerbaijan) in Baku, is considered Erzia's main work in Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, many monuments created by Erzia were removed during the renovation of the facade of the buildings [6], only the two-figure group of "Drillers" on the gable remained (Fig. 2).

S. D. Erzia's diverse artistic work was comprehensively studied in the Russian Soviet art studies of the 50s and 70s and albums and monographs reflecting his work were published. It is interesting that the short-term Baku stage of Erzia's life, who was an experienced teacher and sculptor, was not ignored. V. Trofimov published a monograph covering the Baku period of Erzia's life and work back in 1977 [7].

Another sculptor who contributed to the development of national sculptural art is People's Artist of the USSR Pinkhos Vladimirovich Sabsay (1893-1980). He came to Baku in 1926 and at first worked in the field of easel plastics. Sabsay's pedagogical work in Baku started from this time.

P. V. Sabsay's first monumental work in Baku is monument of M. F. Akhundzade erected in Baku (1930). Although the monument was not very successful in terms of outward resemblance and the template nature of the pose, it is nevertheless notable for being the author's first large-scale work at that time. Also, this monument is Sabsay's only monumental work that has survived to our time (Fig. 3). Other monumental works created by him – monuments reflecting the Soviet ideology do not decorate the city today.

Sabsay's many interesting plastic portrait works are stored in the Art Museum named after R. Mustafayev. "Oilman M. P. Kaverochkin" (marble, 1955), "Artist S. Bahlulzadeh" (wood, 1963), "Oilman G. Babayev" (wood, 1967) and others can be mentioned among them.

There are also Sabsay's busts kept in the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. These are the busts of immortal Russian poet A. S. Pushkin and

outstanding Azerbaijani writer S. Rahimov. There is a certain closeness and connection between both characters and these works have a more appropriate effect as an object of comparison. Both of these busts reflect the character of writers.

These works reflect Azerbaijani and Russian cultural relationships. Also, these relationships are manifested at different levels. In our opinion, it is possible to distinguish two levels here:

- The Azerbaijani sculptor exhibited the literary image of Azerbaijan in Moscow;
- The Azerbaijani sculptor exhibited Russian literary image in Moscow.

P.V. Sabsay's pedagogical work is also of great interest. He worked actively in the creation of the sculpture department at the Azerbaijan School of Art in 1940 and headed that department for more than twenty years (until the beginning of the 60s). This information is noted in B.V. Weimarn's book-album about Sabsay [4].

It is necessary to mention the name of another master – a female sculptor who contributed to the development of Azerbaijani sculpture in the 20s. She is Yelizaveta Rodionovna Tripolskaya (1881-1958), who worked in Baku for a long time.

Y.R. Tripolskaya was born near Poltava, Ukraine, studied sculpture in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Paris. Her work is related to Ukraine, Russia, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

The Baku stage of Tripolskaya's sculptural work is divided into two periods. These are the 1920s and the mature periods of the sculptor's work. She arrived in Baku in 1922. She lived in Baku until the end of her life and died here.

When Tripolskaya had just arrived in Baku back in the 20s, she was faced with various tendencies of neo-constructivism in architecture. So to speak, it became fashionable to decorate facades, belvederes, gables of buildings with architectural ensembles in those years. The interiors of public buildings were also decorated with grandiloquent sculptural groups (moulding or circular). As a rule, characters of workers (oil workers), peasants and athletes were created; the theme of youth was also widespread. Y.R. Tripolskaya's first works in Baku reflect exactly those traditions. Most of those monuments have not survived to our time. Tripolskaya's bas-reliefs such as "Agriculture", "Music", "Science", "Prometheus" remain in the interior of the building of the ANAS Presidium [3].

Already at that time, Y. R. Tripolskaya also created monumental works, most of which were of an ideological nature (busts of party leaders, an ensemble of grave monuments created on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the death of 26 Baku commissars, etc.) that have not survived to our time. Those works can be seen in old photos of Baku. But, Tripolskaya also had works that reflected absolute Azerbaijani culture and our real national and spiritual wealth. The most important of them is the monument of Khurshidbanu Natavan [2] located in the stanzas of the National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi (Fig. 4). The monument is one of the successful works of the author and coincides with the second, mature stage of her work in the Baku period.

Conclusion. So, four sculptors' works who worked in Baku in the 20s of the last century were highlighted in the article. They had certain contributions to the development of the national art of making in Azerbaijan. Today, they have not been mentioned for a long time. The modern generation does not remember these masters. But, some of their works have survived to our time. We consider that these sculptors' names, who reflected a part of our cultural history, should not be forgotten and should be passed on to future generations.

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## **XX ƏSRİN 20-ci İLLƏRİNDƏ BAKIDA İŞLƏMİŞ**

### **HEYKƏLTƏRƏŞLƏR**

**(Y. İ. Keylixis, S. D. Erzya, Y. R. Tripolskaya, P. V. Sabsay)**

Məqalədə ötən əsrin 20-ci illərində Bakıda fəaliyyət göstərmiş heykəltəraşların yaradıcılığından bəhs edilir. Dörd tanınmış heykəltəraşın - Y. İ. Keilixis, S. D. Erzya, E. R. Tripolskaya və P. V. Sabsayın yaradıcılığı işıqlandırılır. Müəllif qeyd edir ki, onların hər birinin milli Azərbaycan heykəltəraşlığının inkişafında xidmətləri olmuşdur. Onlar həmçinin ali məktəblərdə və texnikumlarda dərs demiş, heykəltəraşlıq üzrə kadrlar hazırlamışlar. Keilixisin yaratdığı şair Sabirin obrazı maraq doğurur. Bu, Şərqdə ilk böyük abidə idi. Günümüzədək gəlib çatmış ikifıqurlu qorelyef – “Qazmaçılar” obrazların ifadəli ekspressivliyi və dinamikliyi ilə diqqəti cəlb edir. Bu kompozisiyanın müəllifi S. D. Erzyadır. P. V. Sabsay və E. R. Tripolskayanın şəhəri bu günə qədər bəzəyən əsərləri də maraqlıdır. Bunlar yazıçı-maarifçi M. F. Axundzadənin və şairə Xurşidbanu Natəvanın plastik obrazlarıdır.

**Açar sözlər:** Azərbaycan heykəltəraşlığı, monumental sənət, qorelyef, Y.İ. Keilixis, S.D.Erzya.

***Хазар Зейналов (Азербайджан)***

## **СКУЛЬПТОРЫ, РАБОТАВШИЕ В БАКУ В 20-Х**

### **ГОДАХ XX ВЕКА**

**(Я. И. Кейлихис, С. Д. Эрзя, Е. Р. Трипольская, П. В. Сабсай)**

В статье говорится о творчестве скульпторов, работавших в Баку в 20-х годах прошлого века. Освещается творчество четырех известных ваятелей - Я.И.Кейлихиса, С.Д.Эрзи, Е.Р.Трипольской и П.В.Сабсая. Автор отмечает, что каждый из них имеет заслуги в развитии национальной азербайджанской скульптуры. Они также преподавали в ВУЗах и техникумах, готовили кадры по скульптуре. Интересен образ поэта Сабира работы Кейлихиса. Это был первый крупный памятник на Востоке. До наших дней сохранился двухфигурный горельеф «Бурильщики», привлекающий внимание глубоко выраженной экспрессией и динамикой образов. Автором этой композиции является С.Д.Эрзя. Интересны также работы П.В.Сабсая и Е.Р.Трипольской, по сей день украшающие город. Это пластические образы писателя-просветителя М. Ф. Ахундаде и поэтессы Хуршидбану Натаван.

**Ключевые слова:** скульптура Азербайджана, монументальное искусство, горельеф, Я.И. Кейлихис, С.Д. Эрзя.

## FIGURES



**Fig. 1. Y. I. Keilikhis.  
Monument of M. A. Sabir in Baku.  
Reinforced concrete, cement, stone.  
1922.**



**Fig. 2. S.D.Erzia. “Drillers”.  
The pediment of the building in Baku.  
Cement, metal scrap. 1924.**

**Fig. 3. P.V.Sabsay.  
Monument of  
M.F.Akhundzadeh  
in Baku.  
Bronze, granite. 1930.**



**Fig. 4. Y.R.Tripolskaya.  
The monument of  
Khurshidbanu Natavan in  
the stanzas of the National  
Museum of Azerbaijan  
Literature named after Nizami  
Ganjavi of ANAS in Baku.  
The statue is under construction.  
Tinted reinforced concrete.  
1943.**

