

<p style="text-align: center;">THE BEGINNINGS OF ALBANIAN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE PRESS OF SHKODRA</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Social Science</p> <p>Keywords: written press, Albanian language, the journal <i>Ishkodra</i>.</p>
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Abstract

The first journal with an informative aim in the Albanian territories was published in the year 1879. Albania was still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and for the Albanian Renaissance publishing in the Albanian language was still a challenge because the Albanian language was at risk of disappearing as a written language because of the 500 year Turkish rule. In the poor and undeveloped Albania of that time, in Shkodra in the year 1879 the journal ‘*Ishkodra*’ started publication. This journal also brought a novelty to the Albanian market: the creation of the advertisement in the written press. For the first time we have the birth of the advertisement as a medium. The journal, besides being used for information, played a key role for the local merchants, who used to increase their sales. At that time the only option available to reach consumers was through the pages of journals. In this context the journal took an important role, which becomes even more important if we look at the historical period in which the first journal appeared. In this work we have analyzed: The way in which the advertisement took off in the Albanian written media and its characteristics; The Evolution of the advertisement in the journal *Ishkodra* as the first Albanian journal and then in the other journals which arose at that time.

Based on different research we know that the first journal of informative nature published within the territories of Albania is the journal “*Ishkodra*”, published in 1879 in the Albanian and Turkish language in the city of Shkodra as an official organ of the Shkodra Vilayet. Despite its political views, at first a proponent of the High Porte and then an advocate and important voice for the national union, this newspaper remains the first informative journal to have been published in the Albanian territories. Being a massive means of communication, “*Ishkodra*” was used by the times businesses for the advertising of their products. Besides being the first journal, “*Ishkodra*” had in its papers the first advertisements in the Albanian written press as well. For every row of advertisement a “grosh” was paid and for yearly advertisements three “mexhide” for the whole year. A few years later, around 1910 again in the city of Shkodra, new journals were created “*Koha*”, “*Besa Shqiptare*”, “*Taraboshi*”, “*Shqipnia e re*”. The advertising in these newspapers was improving through time, occupying a special page of the newspaper.

In this work, we will analyze the beginnings of the Albanian advertising; we will closely examine the specific features of the advertising in the Albanian press and the way it has evolved through the years.

1 – The political and economical conditions which gave birth to the journal and then to advertising

In 1879 in Shkodra the first journal inside the Albanian territories, called ‘*Ishkodra*’ was published. The birth of the journal, the local press and advertising in Shkodra was no coincidence

because in this period of time the city of Shkodra was one of the important centers of politics and commerce in the region. We will first analyze the political conditions and then the economic conditions which influenced the birth of the journal and the advertising.

The Political Situation

It was first the political conditions that gave the first stimulus for the rise of the written press. The High Porte aimed to strengthen its central powers and to increase its control on the provinces and because of this reason in 1864 it undertook an administrative reform, creating 4 Vilayets: *Shkodra, Janina, Manastir* and *Kosovo*¹. Another strategy was the creation of journals as means of propaganda. On the 24th of June 1879 the Ottoman Empire published in Albania the first organ of the press the journal *ISHKODRA*. Despite its political line, in the beginning favoring the High Porte and then later supporting the unification of Albanian territories, this was the first journal in the Albanian territories with the aim of informing the population. Being a means of massive communication this journal was used by businesses at the time in order to advertise their products, which means these advertisements were the first ones published in a journal in Albania. As the political conditions changed, the need for an independent nation arose and the risk for the separation of Albanian territories increased, educated and nationalist intellectuals like Dom Ndoc Nikaj, Hile Mosi, Terenc Toci etc. were driven to create journals in Shkodra i.e. *Koha, Shqipnia e Re, Taraboshi, Besa Shqiptare, Atdheu'*. Until 1913 in Shkodra there were 7 journals published, all in service of the national cause. They were however also used by local merchants to advertise their merchandise.

The economic situation

At that time Shkodra was the center of the Vilayet and foreign consulates were placed there. In the area of *Bexhisteni* there were 3500 shops even though the city had a population of only 50 thousand people. An important component was the fact that the river Buna was a sailable river, available to merchant ships. Fabrics, dresses, leather, tobacco, gunpowder were all sold in the market. The merchants had their own agencies in foreign nations, inside a new organism was created in order to regulate trade affairs, a trade court. The post office was also created in order to serve foreign costumers². Having on one side a vibrant economic life and of the other a flourishing media environment, the perfect conditions for the birth of advertisement on the written press were created.

In their pages, the journals asked local merchants to buy advertising space. Because this was such a novelty at the time it caused increased interest from the part of the merchants. The publishers, being the educated elite, used this opportunity in order to fund their intellectual missions.

¹ Akademia e Shkencave, *Instituti Historisë, Historia e Shqipërisë II*, Tiranë, 1984, p.46.

² Hamdi Bushati, *Shkodra dhe motet*, Shkodër: Rozafat, 1999, p.233.

Eduard Barni, which is considered as the father of public relations, says, the positions and opinions of mass media influence and shape the public³. In this context the journals in Shkodra served also as offices of public relations for the national cause, independence, national unification and the protection of the Albanian language.

2 – The Beginnings of Advertisement in the Written Press in Albania

Ishkodra

The *Ishkodra* journal 1879. This journal can be considered as the first journal in the Albanian language with an informative aim written in Albania, and specifically in Shkodra. It is also the longest lasting journal with 24 years (1879-1880, 1897-1903). Beginning as an official organ of the Shkodra Vilayet, this journal in 1880, was the first journal to speak for the independence of Albania.

The journal ‘*Ishkodra*’ was a weekly journal and was published in 4 pages with dimensions 50+30 cm. This journal had developed the advertising for local merchants and others. For every line of advertising the price was 2 *gros*, and for a yearly advertisement the price was 3 ‘mexhide’ pro year⁴. In the pages for example there were advertisements for employment during the years where the Turkish administration was being replaced by an Albanian one from Shkodra. This Journal one year after its birth turned to and supported the League of Prizren, being so the first and only journal to support the cause of national independence. Because of that the journal offered positive and very much needed marketing to the national cause on the national and international stage. Another interesting advertisement on the pages of the journal which helps us assess the economic development of the city is this advertisement:



Fig. 1 Advertisement from the journal “Ishkodra”⁵.

³ Joe Marconi, *Marrëdhëniet Publike*, Tirane: UET Press, 2010, p.16.

⁴ Hamdi Bushati, *Shkodra dhe motet*, Shkodër: Rozafat, 1999, p.118.

Hasan Kaduku was the first Albanian dentist. Reading this advertisement we learn that 110 years ago in Shkodra there was a dentist who offered teeth removal, medication and implants.

Elcija e Zemres t'Jezu Krisctit

Elcija e Zemres t'Jezu Krisctit is considered as an established press organ, published periodically in the Albanian language, in Albania. On March 1891, the first edition was published. It was a monthly journal of the catholic clergy and specifically of the Jesuit order in Shkodra. The fact that this periodical was published in the Albanian language would give it even deeper importance, especially because later on this journal would start publishing content which wasn't directly connected to the religion⁶. During its activity this journal was known for supporting the church and propagating information regarding the catholic faith to its believers. On the other side we can find on the pages of the same journal an advertisement for the dentist Hafiz Hasan Kaduku, who was at the same time an imam of the Muslim faith, which speaks for the atmosphere of religious tolerance and cooperation which this journal supported.



Fig.2 Advertisement from the pages of “Elcija e Zemres t’Jezu Krisctit”⁷

Koha–Bashkimi

The first number was published in 1910 (01.01.1910). It was a weekly political, social, cultural and literary journal written in the Albanian language. It partly contained articles in the Turkish language. Starting with the second edition it changed its name from ‘Koha’ to ‘Bashkimi’. It was closed in 1911. It was reopened after the declaration of independence, specifically 18.05.1913 with the name ‘Besa shqyptare’. It temporarily changed its name to ‘Zani i Shkodres’

⁶ Hamdi Bushati, Shkodra dhe motet, Shkodër: Rozafat, 1999, p. 122.

⁷ Elcija e Zemres t’Jezu Krisctit, vjeta16, viti 1906, dhetuer nr 12, p.4, www.radioislame.com

in the year 1915 and later continued with its previous name until 07.05.1921. It was published and lead by D.Ndoc Nikaj⁸.

Bashkimi

Bashkimi, 1910. In the pages of this journal international problems and social problems were also discussed, offering the reader information on a variety of topics. This journal played a crucial role for the national cause being one of the most patriotic voices of the time. Here as well, advertisements were present. Some of the frequent subjects were alcoholic beverages, travel agencies, services, building material, etc.

On the pages of this journal on the 8th of May and the 20th of March 1910 we find an interesting advertisement with a quite artistic writing for the time, which tries to sell local product. This is the writing for the Shkodra beer:

Drink ‘Shkodra beer’ ‘The summer is coming and it is getting warmer. Everyone, tired from the hot temperatures or from the walk or from work wants to drink a bottle of beer and to quench his thirst. So which beers shall we then drink? I would say that everyone who wants to drink beer should buy the ‘SHKODRA BEER’ sometime because we will be content and after trying it the first time we will not stop asking for it again, in other words we will never be able to drink another beer. A big reason is for the citizens of Shkodra to drink this beer because they have arrived this good day to see the work of our country be made and should be very happy to see such a good and beautiful beer being called the same name as their city Shkodra. As patriots like we are let us always drink this beer ‘SHKODRA BEER’.

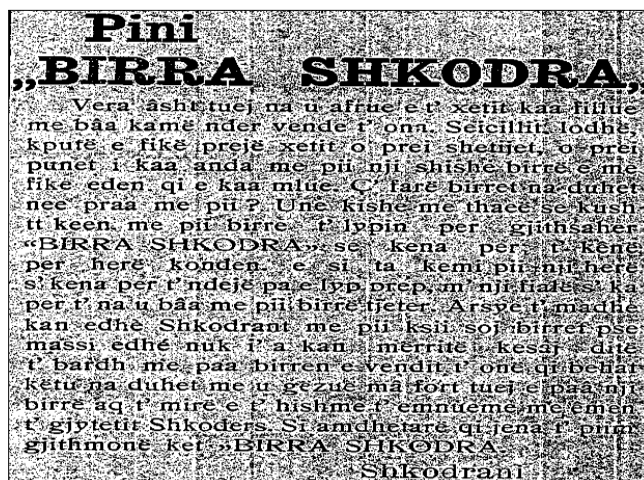


Fig.3 Advertisement from the journal “*Bashkimi*”⁹

⁸ Hamdi Bushati, *Shkodra dhe motet*, Shkodër: Rozafat, 1999, p.119.

⁹ *Bashkimi*, 8 Mai 1910, n.10, p.3.

But in the journal *Bashkimi* you can also see the advertisement of two different products, which is today called convergence. An interesting idea for the time, in order to best use the advertising space which was bought. So for example the advertisement from Shan Gura says:

“I sell in the city cement of the best quality one oke 30 grosh, one package 26 grosh, one barrel 25 grosh. The best wine on the market, grape brandy (raki) mixed 4 grosh and 3 grosh.”



Fig.4 Advertisement from the journal “Bashkimi”¹⁰

In a similar way the advertisement ‘Kafe Shkodra’, includes an advertisement with different articles like: coffee, soap for hair, face powder, chocolate, biscuits, wine and brandy (raki). This advertisement is found in the journal *Bashkimi* on the 20th of March 1910, 12th edition.

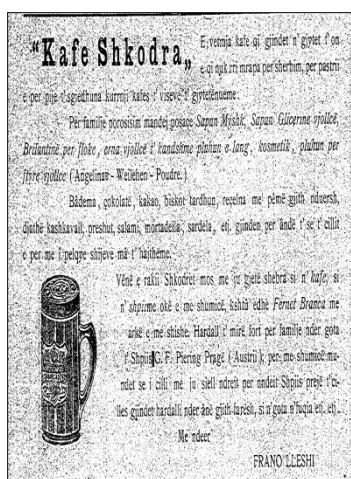


Fig.5 Advertisement from the journal “Bashkimi”¹¹

¹⁰ Bashkimi, 8 Mai 1910, nr.10, p.3.

¹¹ Bashkimi, 20 Marc 1910, nr.12, p.6.

Besa shqyptare

Besa shqyptare 1913. This journal is the continuation of the journal ‘Koha’ and ‘Bashkimi’. We can observe an increased professionalism in the page layout and at the same time in the style of writing. This example is an advertisement for a theater show:

‘Notice: whether the weather is good or it is raining we always have interesting shows’ – Grand-Kino Skoptiko - Theater elektrikut - from Monday 24-XI - until Sunday 30 XI 1913.

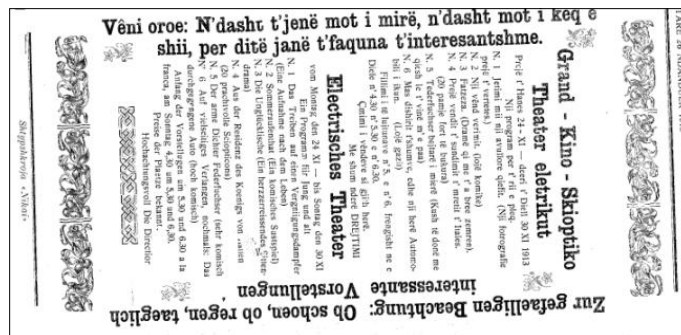


Fig. 6 Advertisement from the journal “Besa shqyptare”¹²

In another advertisement for the wine “Serravalla” in the journal “Besa Shqyptare”, 26th of November 1913 it is written: “Very useful to give strength to the body, to restore health as soon as possible to those who are sick. Makes food taste better. It has won 23 medals. Honored by 7000 medical witnesses – IT TASTES IN THE MOUTH”. This particular advertisement focuses on the alleged health benefits of wine by making people believe that it has a medical certification.



Fig. 7 Advertisement from the journal “Besa Shqyptare”¹³

¹² Besa shqyptare, 26 Ndanduer 1913, p.4.

¹³ Besa shqyptare, 26 Ndanduer 1913, p.5.

Taraboshi

The journal *Taraboshi* was published in Shkodra, in the year 1913 under Tarenc Toci, written in Albanian and Italian and is the first daily journal. The quality of the advertising in this journal is quite high, as there are advertisements which take one full page and are of high quality when it comes to the page layout. Let us take one advertisement from this journal from the 18th of December 1913.



Fig. 8 Advertisement from the journal “Taraboshi”¹⁴

The price for an advertising page in the pages of different journals varied from 6 to 7 *gros*, while the price of a ¼ of a page was 1 *gros*. In a journal we find on average 4 to 6 advertisements of different forms and formats, but always in the middle pages and never on the front pages. On every case the first pages of the journals were always dedicated to the national cause, national unification and the teaching of the Albanian language.

Page Layout

Even though the press in Albania was still in its beginning, the page layouts of the advertisements in the first journals were of good quality. A few elements of graphic design can be recognized even in these early journals and especially in the ones from 1913.

- Every Advertisement has an illustrative picture
- Every Advertisement has its own style when it comes to typography
- Every Advertisement has its own center of visual effect
- Every Advertisement stores the balance between the picture and the typography
- Every Advertisement creates contrast in writing

¹⁴ Taraboshi, 28 Shtator 1913, p.3.

The Style of Writing

The style of writing of the advertisements is very clear, with a simple language which is understandable to most. The message of these writings is simple and the quality of the product is often highlighted, and later the price and the address, which are basic principles present in modern advertising as well.

What do these Advertisements Represent?

From these advertisements we can partly understand the level of the economic, social and cultural development in the city. So from the advertisements we can understand that 110 years ago:

1. The city of Shkodra was an area in which strong economic development took place and where the production of local produce and then its advertising flourished. Shkodra beer, building material, cement, travel agencies are some of these examples.

2. The city of Shkodra was an area with rapid cultural development where theater shows in different languages took place. The city had developed photography, musical bands, printing presses, journalism and book sales.

3. The beginnings of modern medicine were taking place

4. The city enjoyed religious tolerance and cooperation. In the journals of that time in Shkodra we can find advertisements of a Muslim imam dentist in the pages of the catholic journal.

Conclusion

The press in Shkodra in the years 1879-1913, at a time when the Albanian nation was in an important crossroad, had an important influence. The role of the city of Shkodra in the field of media was not a coincidence. The great number of journals, magazines and newspapers came as a result of wide range of intellectual and patriotic activists which included important Albanian intellectuals. They brought modern ideas to the written press and upheld the Albanian national cause. Besides these patriotic activities, the written press in Shkodra brought novel ideas about advertising in the written press. In this context we can say that advertising in media was first born in Shkodra.

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