A STUDY ON ADVERTISEMENTS IN "HARB MECMUASI": IN PURSUIT OF POLITICAL CONTENT

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ABSTRACT

More explicitly under erratic conditions, merging consumption culture with political content can be found in many forms of symbolic consumption such as foreign, domestic or specific product biases. This study focuses on advertisements in a political journal from this point of view. Being discussed by many scholars in consideration of the Ottoman press, Ottoman modernization came across the First World War in the early 20th century. The press had already begun its shaping efforts on public sphere and highlighting product origins in introductory articles and advertorials before. During the War, a political propaganda journal, based on the impressive glory in Gallipoli Front and depicting superiority of the nation in every page, Harb Mecmuası was released by the Ottoman polity. In this study, it is aimed to examine advertisements in Harb Mecmuası to reveal any possible symbolic and/or political content attached in line with the political cohesion efforts the journal was intended for. 87 advertisements in the complete 27-issue collection are transcribed to Latin alphabet for content analysis based on product information given, adjectives used and general wording. The analysis revealed that almost in every case, information given about product origins were limited to name of retailers, producers or place. Merely, the words "Osmanlı/Osmaniyye" for Ottoman or "Türkiye/Türk" for Turkish were used in the advertisements less than 10 times and without any significant stress. Exceptionally, it is found that a museum on history, science and commerce proudly promised sections on Ottoman heroism and glory in the advertisement. Nevertheless, the term "Ottoman" is used in shop names of military leathercraft, pharmacy and an underwear store. Also it is found that a jewelry store defined itself "Türk" and a tailor being the largest in "Türkiye", but no further association with being Ottoman or Turkish is loaded on the retailers, products or implicit qualities. Although, Ottoman press was then highly utilized as ideological apparatus, being weak in political propaganda any form of significant political content is not determined in Harb Mecmuası advertisements. Given the fact that the journal was published only for two and a half years and shut down with the end of the War, absence of a regular advertisement regime is comprehensible. Yet lack of political content in advertisements during the War is still remarkable since it also means that the unification effort of the journal is not interiorized as anticipated.

KEYWORDS

Ottoman press, Harb Mecmuası, advertisement, product of origin.

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