

**AUDI AND THE ADVERTISEMENT**  
**POTUŽNÍKOVÁ, MARTA, *AUDI-WERBUNG 1909–1965. EINE***  
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Ivan Jakubec



Marta Potužníková, a graduate of the marketing and social communication at University of Zlín, continued her research at Universities of Paderborn and Regensburg in Germany. Her extensive doctoral dissertation focuses on advertising used by distinguished German automobile company AUDI during 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dissertation is successful and rich in terms of its contents, visuals and library-craft.

Monograph with the exception of introduction, a chapter on the discussion of structure, methodology and state of past and current research on the theme, and the conclusion (unconventionally called resume); is divided in to 3 differently structured chapters. The first of these chapters (comprising 56 pages, about one fifth of the whole text) deals with the automobile advertisement. This chapter is further subdivided in to four shorter sections with the discussions on general concept of advertising, automotive advertisement culture, brand advertisement, and finally automotive advertisement during interwar period. Next concise chapter (30 pages, one tenth of the whole text) is related to the methodology of the research on advertising. This chapter is subdivided in to two sections focusing on semiotics and different considerations for analytical model.

The last chapter, the most extensive (290 pages, two third of whole the test) is devoted to the detailed analysis of the automobile advertisement. This chapter contains sub-chapters dedicated to the research of studied material, also briefly sketched the chronological development of vehicle enterprise the Audi-Werke till 1965, finishing in a very detailed and richly structured semiotic analysis of advertising. The whole work is complemented with the standard bibliography, a list of abbreviations, illustrations and tables, a list of sources of illustrations, and a combined index of names, subjects and locations (index).

The milestones for the research were chosen very clearly and appropriately, focusing on the development of the company from its origin in 1909 in Zwickau (Saxony), until 1965 with the recreated Audi brand (1949 in Ingolstadt in Bavaria). This period in the history of company's development (in fact, not just the company) was very dramatic. The perception of cars was very different during different phases of the history. Before world war I, cars were perceived as luxury items. This evolved to further practical usage of cars during world war I. This followed the interwar period and its democratization when cars became quite accessible for wider layer of society continuing to the usage of cars during world war II and post world war II periods.

Author selected 211 items of advertisements including posters, printed media (front pages, section pages, etc.), and 43 items of company catalogues, anniversary booklets, advertising leaflets, posters, maps, corporate labels and transparencies slides as the basic means of research. She mostly used the materials from company archive of Audi, AG in Ingolstadt and from the National archives in Chemnitz, Saxony. The full collection of advertisement items could be considered as an appropriate



choice. The author concluded that the advertisement material could be a basic source for the research on history of culture and business. Investigating advertisement themes and the other advertising material can reveal the important links between the advertisements and the background information that needs to be conveyed.

During the analysis of 30 years period (1909–1939), the crux of advertisement by Audi focused on key themes of auto-sport, luxury, war, technology, women and cars, and travelling. Various artistic and technical values contributed to the evolution of cars and helped them to be established as a sport item, status symbol, war machine, technology product as well as pure means of transport and travelling. Until first world war, the topic of sport car was dominant, and enriched further during interwar period by a string of topics: quality, efficiency, reliability. Just as before war, the themes of luxury and luxury items with attributes like joy, pleasure, life style and individuality prevailed, additional characteristics like elegance, modernity, beauty, comfort and economy amplified these themes during interwar periods. Car was not only taken as a luxury item but also as consumer goods. War theme resonated with reality. Possessing car became a power factor. After first world war, theme of car being a symbol of automobile technology with emphasis on comfort and safety gained importance. This bonded to reliability, speed and capacity as well as to the other factors at the same time like a beauty, elegance and presentation. Towards the end of 1930s theme of automobile technology joined together with the auto-sport. The theme “women and car” goes along with the advertisements in Audi since its inception. At the beginning the woman ,just’poses with the car or is the passenger with the man (in a passive role) emphasizing good taste and life style. After First World War, woman started appearing as a driver, initially for the sport cars and later car being her professional necessity. This not only demonstrates the emphasis on the beauty and elegance but also towards the appreciation and desire for self-fulfillment and individuality.

Last theme was travelling. This theme had been resonating since mid-twenties for car being a mean of travelling and transport with typical characteristics of proximity to the nature, freedom, independence; as well as technically efficient, reliable and with low running costs.

I do have few comments relating to only certain areas of work. Firstly, the title does not accurately reflect the scope of the work as the analysis of advertising was focused only till 1939, the first 30 years of the company. The period 1939–1965 is discussed only on three pages (if not considering three additional pages about the semiotic development after world war II). In relation to the advertisement, the question arises about the effectiveness of advertisement. Whether advertisement helped to sell more cars to the consumers. Perhaps the one answer could be the number of sold cars. Work contains a resume only in German. Interesting schema no. 6 (p. 304) related to decisive themes in printed medias could have been conducted in a clearer and easier way. However, these comments, in any way, do not undermine the high quality of the work. For Czech readers, vehicle manufacturer Audi is not completely unknown. Zbrojovka Ing. F. Janeček (Prague — Michle), for example, had licensed one of its type in 1933.

Finally, it is important to appreciate author's achievements which is even more creditable keeping in mind that only few vehicle manufacturers (Mercedes-Benz, Škoda, Volkswagen) were dedicated towards „their“ advertising. At the same time, this work is a worthy continuation of the publication on history of Audi as a company (P. Kirchberg, T. Erdmann, R. Hornung). Work is not only important for the specialists focusing on development and effectiveness of media and advertising (particularly aiming for car sales) but also for economic, cultural and social historians due to its deep analysis of advertisement transformation, contents, forms and resources. In fact, some of the contemporary advertising posters retained their significance until today.

**Ivan Jakubec**

Institute of Economic and Social History, Charles University  
Ivan.Jakubec@ff.cuni.cz

