

PHILANTHROPIC AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES IN SHKODRA, DURING THE LATE 19TH CENTURY AND THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract

Philanthropy in Albania, and specifically in Shkodra, has a history of its own, which is related to the past social, economic, and historical conditions of the Albanian population. The first traces of philanthropy among Albanians can be found in the Middle Ages. Our study on the philanthropy in Shkodra, is based on the period starting from the end of the 19th century to the first decades of the 20th century. Most of the philanthropic activities at this time were made when the country was under the Ottoman Empire, thus acquiring distinct features from that period even in the years to come. It is important to note that the focus of these charitable and philanthropic activities, in most cases, has been to support the development, modernization and emancipation of the Albanian people. Help in grand supporting the people in need has been common practice since the early times in Albania. For this particular time of our study, the main source of this philanthropic activity was the Catholic Church. During the nineteenth century, new historical developments began to take place, which would also make an impact on the extension of the charitable and philanthropic activities. In Shkodra, in the field of charitable and philanthropic activities, stand out organization sestablished by the initiative of the Catholic clergy. Many charitable institutions were created by the clergy with the goal of helping the poor and the needy. The College of St.Francis Xavier, which aimed at helping the orphans as part of its mission, was one of the institutions opened by the Catholic Associations of Shkodra. Philanthropic activity was also conducted by civilians who took personal charity initiatives to help the needy without relying on the clerical institutions. One of them was Tef Pogu, who was undoubtedly, the greatest benefactor of Shkodra.

Keywords: *philanthropy, catholic church, charitable, charitable institutions.*