

**Italian Orientalist Paintings and Their Public Reception  
during the Risorgimento Period:  
Case Studies on Francesco Hayez and Alberto Pasini**

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## **Abstract**

In nineteenth-century Italy, specific forms of Orientalism and Oriental studies developed. In the art domain, many Italian artists painted Orientalist subjects and many of them travelled to the East. However, compared to those of French, British, and German Orientalist paintings, Italian Orientalist works were not considered important nor have been sufficiently studied.

The nineteenth century in Italy is the age of unification, and the discourse of identity is complex. Recent historiography of the Risorgimento has discussed the entanglement of Orientalism and the Risorgimento from the perspective of travel and colonialism, while the interpretation of the Risorgimento as the birth of a new public sphere has been strengthened. I argue that Italian Orientalist paintings can be contextualized within the entanglement between a developing public sphere, Orientalism, travel literature, and Risorgimento discourses of identity.

By analysing different types of publications on two Italian painters, Francesco Hayez and Alberto Pasini, during the Risorgimento era, I aim to shed light on the characteristics and public reception of Italian Orientalist paintings. Although Italian Orientalist paintings have not been considered important in the historiography of Orientalist paintings and Italian art history, they played a crucial role in identity discourses in the public sphere, contributing both to shaping the image of the East in the eyes of the Italian public and to the construction of nationhood and nationalism.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgment.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 1 The History of the Risorgimento and Italian Orientalism</b>	<b>12</b>
1. 1 Italy and the Risorgimento.....	12
1. 2 The Reception of Orientalist scholarship in Risorgimento Italy ..	16
1. 3 The Entanglement among Romanticism, Orientalism and the Risorgimento.....	20
1. 4 Italian Orientalist Painters as Travellers and the Question of Nationhood .....	24
<b>Chapter 2 Francesco Hayez: Leading Romanticist and Orientalist Painter in Risorgimento Italy .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2. 1 Francesco Hayez as a Risorgimento Figure in Milan .....	29
2.2 Orientalist Paintings of Francesco Hayez .....	37
2.3 Public Reception of Francesco Hayez’s Orientalist Paintings during the Risorgimento.....	44
<b>Chapter 3 Alberto Pasini: Painter Travelling in the Orient during the Risorgimento .....</b>	<b>56</b>
3. 1 Alberto Pasini as an Italian Orientalist Painter in Other Countries .....	58
3. 2 Orientalist Paintings of Alberto Pasini .....	60
3. 3 Public Reception of Alberto Pasini’s Orientalist Paintings during the Risorgimento.....	65
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Primary Sources.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Secondary Sources .....</b>	<b>76</b>

## Introduction

Italian Orientalist paintings have not been widely discussed and criticised in the dispute of Orientalism. This is due to the lateness of Oriental studies in Italy compared to northern European countries. As emphasised in previous studies, Italy was not a centre of Oriental studies in the nineteenth century, unlike France and England. However, the European trend of Orientalism did have an impact on Italian intellectuals, and the reception of Orientalism in Risorgimento Italy was distinct and different from that in northern European countries. Barbara Spackman discusses how Italian Orientalism is different from British and French Orientalism. She points out that Edward Said, in his seminal study on Orientalism (1978), wrote almost nothing about Italian Orientalism except for “side glances to Marco Polo and Dante,” and later postcolonial studies followed Said’s direction (Spackman 1). She also points out that in the Italian situation, compared with Britain and France, “Italy comes late both to unification as a nation state and to the colonial enterprise” (2).

According to Fabrizio De Donno, who reviewed Spackman, the influence of European Orientalism on the discourse of the Risorgimento is intertwined with concepts of “modernity, nationhood, and Europeanness, as well as assessments of the value of the ‘Orient’ (particularly India) and ‘classical antiquity’ as civilisational and aesthetic categories” (24). India held significant importance as an object of Orientalist study not only for Italy but also for other European countries in the nineteenth century, largely due to the formation of Indo-European concepts (De Donno 26). In Italy, the epicentre of classical art, there was a reluctance among Italian intellectuals to embrace Orientalism, which was more common throughout European culture. This reluctance stemmed from Italy’s lag behind France, England, and Germany in the realm of Orientalism. Orientalism was frequently employed as an expression of Romanticism, and the rejection of Romanticism by the Italian intelligentsia was also influenced by the fear of losing the hegemony of classical antiquity. In the context of Risorgimento-era Italy, Orientalism was, in some respects, viewed as the antithesis of

the Italian classical tradition, while new trends in literature and art often intertwined Orientalism and Romanticism (De Donno 26).

De Donno states, “The challenge for Risorgimento Italians was to respond to the identity discourses of Indo-Europeanism while embracing and renewing their classical identity” (29). Based on this challenge, my intention is to delve into Orientalist paintings in Risorgimento Italy from the perspective of the public sphere, focusing on the public reception of Orientalist paintings. In addition, I aim to consider Italian Orientalist paintings from more various perspectives, such as national politics and regional identities. While previous studies—e. g. Spackman and De Donno—have mainly focused on the connection between Italian Orientalism and literature, I believe that Italian Orientalist painters were also intellectuals who were strongly affected by this discourse as well as by Italian travelling writers. Although Italian Orientalist paintings have often been overlooked in both Italian art history and European Orientalist painting, they can be seen as representing how Risorgimento Italians responded to various identity discourse while grappling with the crisis of Classicism.

Since Edward Said published his book, *Orientalism*, in 1978, the word “Orientalism” has been regarded as the terminology which indicates the power gap between the West and the East. Edward Said mainly discusses literature, without mentioning paintings, however, Said’s concept of Orientalism has been applied to art history by later scholars. Linda Nochlin, an American art historian, reinforces Said’s theory by describing the power gap between the West and the East observed in Orientalist paintings in her book, *The Politics of Vision*, which was published in 1989. Nochlin insists that Orientalist paintings are not the artworks of documentary realism, but the expression of a fictional world imagined by European artists, using Jean-Leon Gerome’s *Snake Charmer* (late 1860s) as her primary example.

John M. MacKenzie, a historian of imperialism, opposes the theories of Said, and by extension Nochlin, in his book, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, published in 1995. MacKenzie criticises Said’s conclusions about Orientalism by offering us different perspectives on Orientalist art, suggesting that the Western view of the East has been more complex and interactive than Said’s

theory suggests. He believes that the West's portrayal of the East in art is done with more respect and aims for a hybrid culture. He also notes that the East has inspired European art, despite being influenced by colonial power dynamics.<sup>1</sup> His perspective on Orientalist art opens up different ways to analyse Orientalist paintings, going beyond a Saidian approach. According to Reina Lewis, who reviews Mackenzie's book and supports his theory:

As an antidote to the spuriously vague definition of imperialism—anything distasteful to late twentieth-century anti-racist sensibilities—which he sees in the work of Linda Nochlin and others in Said's camp, MacKenzie argues that we should study in detail the temporal relationship between cultural production and colonial and imperial activity (134).

This argument is important for my thesis from the perspective of chronology, as we will see that great interpretive caution is needed regarding the mobile boundary between the Risorgimento and the beginning of colonialism in Italy. Moreover, in a more recent book edited and published by Ian Richard Netton in 2013, Mackenzie says that Said's book *Orientalism* was highly influential beyond "Said's own literary field," suggesting two examples: "it became the foundation text of the group of historians known as the post-colonials" and "it also influenced a number of art historians who found in it new ways of interpreting Orientalist art" (117).

In terms of the study of images and history, British historian Peter Burke also responds to Edward Said's *Orientalism* in his book *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence* (2001). Burke states that Said deals with literature and not "the cultural stereotypes of what he called

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<sup>1</sup> MacKenzie's way of considering Orientalism and art could be seen in the exhibition, *Inspired by the East: How the Islamic World Influenced Western Art*, which was held from 2019 to 2020 at the British Museum, with the support of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. MacKenzie writes the first chapter of the catalogue, entitled, *The Orientalism Debate*, in which he deals with the fact "that the arts reveal the manner in which the East offered inspiration at a whole variety of levels" (28). According to the catalogue, it was "the first joint exhibition between the British Museum and a Malaysian museum" (9). The curators, William Greenwood and Lucien de Guise aim to "broaden the horizons of the movement in time, place and medium, exploring the idea of the Orient as much as genuine involvement with the region" (15).



the ‘Oriental genre tableau’, but his ideas can be—and have been—used to analyse the paintings of the Middle East by European artists” (129). While Burke acknowledges Said’s impact on the analysis of Orientalist paintings as representations of the power balance between the West and the East, as mentioned above in “The Imaginary Orient” by Linda Nochlin, he also points out the complexity of Orientalist paintings. This complexity indicates the existence of what might be called “oriental orientalism” (130): for example, according to him, the owner of *Turkish Bath* (1862) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) was the Ottoman diplomat Khali Bey. In addition, a Turkish painter, Hamdi Bey, studied in Paris and painted Oriental scenes in the Western style (130). As John MacKenzie criticises Said’s theory, concluding that Western approaches to the Orient have been much more ambiguous and genuinely interactive than Said allowed, Burke successfully offers us wider approaches to Orientalist paintings.

### Historiography of Italian Orientalist Paintings

From the perspective of art history, Orientalist painters in Italy have not received as much scholarly attention as their counterparts in France and Britain. Nineteenth-century Italy was not a centre of art, and within the broader history of Italian art, painters from the nineteenth century have not garnered the same level of scholarly interest as their predecessors. In 1987, Caroline Juler published an important source book on Italian Orientalist painters, *Les orientalistes de l'école italienne (Orientalists in Italy)*. The book introduces 47 Orientalist painters and contains biographies and several works by each artist. Juler also wrote a chapter of the 1998 exhibition catalogue edited by Rossana Bossaglia, that I will discuss later. Juler discusses the history of the relationship between Italian painters and the Orient briefly in the chapter, “L’italia e l’europa orientalista” (*Italy and Orientalist Europe*), focusing mainly on the fifteenth century. Although she discusses Italian painters of the fifteenth century in the beginning of the chapter, she focuses on French and British Orientalist painters in the rest of the chapter, rarely mentioning Italian painters of the later centuries. She concludes that Italian Orientalist painters did not play a pioneering role in the nineteenth century,

however, Italy's broad contribution can be seen in the context of an openness to the "wisdom of the Oriental philosophy," as an intermediary between two separate worlds (56).

Between the 1990s and the 2010s, scholarly attention for Italian Orientalist painters grew considerably. In 1998, the exhibition, *Gli orientalisti Italiani: cento anni di esotismo 1830-1940* (*Italian Orientalists: 100 Years of Exoticism 1830-1940*), was held in the Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi, a place rich in oriental-inspired furnishings, according to Ugo Perone, an assessor for Culture of the City of Turin (Bossaglia 11). Bossaglia, the editor of this catalogue, also wrote the preface of Juler's book mentioned above. In the preface of the catalogue, Bossaglia insists that "Italy was completely neglected when Orientalism as an artistic genre was of increasing interest to international culture and gave rise to important exhibitions, and it was neglected more due to misinformation than to a critical stance" (15). This exhibition can be regarded as the first one to shed light on Italian Orientalist artwork in the nineteenth century. Bossaglia introduces Juler's book as the first book on the theme of Italian Orientalist painters in the nineteenth century, and states that after its publication, a number of subsequent publications and, above all, exhibitions on individual artists, especially Alberto Pasini, have been held in Italy (15). Bossaglia begins this exhibition with Francesco Hayez due to the importance of Venice regarding the history of Orientalist paintings in the fifteenth century and the prominence of Hayez, the renowned Venetian painter of the nineteenth century (5).

In 2011, Emanuele Angiuli and Anna Villari curated Italian Orientalist paintings at the Chiostro del Bramante in Rome. According to the website of the exhibition, the curators carefully picked almost 80 works to display and began with Francesco Hayez. It states that the Venetian painter Francesco Hayez is particularly important Orientalist painter although he is not unique and he had never travelled to the East. After Francesco Hayez, Ippolito Caffi is introduced as another Venetian painter, who travelled extensively to locations such as Constantinople, Smyrna, Ephesus and Cairo. After the Venetians, painters from Parma, firstly Alberto Pasini and then Roberto Guastalla are introduced, both of whom travelled to several Near Eastern countries. On his travels, Guastalla

brought along not only a palette, easel and brushes, but also a new tool, the camera. Stefano Ussi, from Florence, is described as a painter who lived in Egypt for a time and worked for the Pasha. Later, he went to Morocco with his friend Cesare Biseo, who also served the Viceroy of Egypt. During this trip, they were inspired to beautifully illustrate the travelogue *Morocco* by Edmondo De Amicis. Many other artists, like Federico Faruffini, Eugenio Zampighi, Pompeo Mariani, Augusto Valli, Giulio Viotti, Achille Glisenti and Giuseppe Molteni were also captivated by the allure of exploring new places, and the fascination they inspire. In Naples, there was Domenico Morelli, who, never having been to Eastern lands, skillfully portrayed veiled odalisques, Arab characters, and the mystical ambiance of Mohammedan prayers. Artists like Vincenzo Marinelli, Fabio Fabbi, Sicilian Ettore Cercone and Apulian Francesco Netti also created scenic paintings with exotic and erotically charged themes. It is noteworthy that Francesco Hayez is again set as the starting point among these various artists, just as Bossaglia decided in the exhibition of 1998. In 2022, Giuseppe Abbiati published *Pittori orientalisti italiani tra '800 e '900 (Italian Orientalist painters between 1800 and 1900)*. Abbiati organises data on biographies, public and private artworks, museums, as well as bibliographies of 369 Italian Orientalist painters. This book can be called the first systematic study on Italian Orientalist art between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century. However, these early studies on Italian Orientalist painters lack in-depth analysis in social and historical context.

### Subjects, Methodologies and Sources

This dissertation sheds light on the public reception of Italian Orientalist paintings during the Risorgimento era, focusing on two prominent Italian Orientalist painters in the period. It can be said that more and more researchers are studying the connections between Orientalism in Italy and the Risorgimento, as demonstrated by the works of De Donno, Spackman, Vicente Lowndes (2012), Lyttelton and Minuti (2021), Falcucci, Giusti and Trentacoste (2022). However, almost all earlier studies are about travel literature, without paying sufficient attention to Orientalist paintings. Drawing upon the concepts and methods discussed above, this dissertation focuses on a close study of

Orientalist paintings in order to offer new perspectives on both the Risorgimento and Orientalist art in Italy, bringing to light the relationship between the two phenomena in novel ways. For this purpose, I will analyse the work of two important painters, Francesco Hayez and Alberto Pasini.

The importance of Francesco Hayez as an Italian Orientalist painter is mentioned above. He was a leading Romantic historical painter of the nineteenth century in Italy, who also ventured into Orientalist art. Hayez painted several Orientalist artworks, even though he had never travelled outside of Europe. Hayez is indeed famous as a representative Romantic painter of the Risorgimento period rather than an Orientalist painter. I consider that looking at him enables us to delve into the challenge of how Italian painters reacted to many different identity discourses and the crisis of Classicism. In order to see him not only as an Orientalist painter, but also as a unique painter who connects Orientalism to the Risorgimento, his non-Orientalist paintings are also the subject of my research. Fernando Mazzocca, the leading expert on Hayez, highlights the importance of Oriental subjects for Hayez, stating that the Orientalist component is by no means secondary in the vast repertoire of Hayez's paintings even if the vast literature on Orientalism has not been held in great consideration and has been ignored (68). In order to analyse the public reception of Hayez's Oriental paintings, the articles of the newspaper, *Corriere della Sera* and the article of the journal, *Biblioteca italiana, ossia giornale di letteratura, scienze ed arti* (*Italian Library, i.e. Journal of Literature, Science and Art*) are considered. Most importantly, the catalogues of exhibition, such as the retrospective exhibition<sup>2</sup> of Hayez held at Pinacoteca di Brera in 1883, provide us with sources regarding the public reception of Hayez. In addition, his memoir *Le mie memorie* (*My memoir*) is significantly important because it shows us Hayez's thoughts on the public reception of his Orientalist paintings.

Alberto Pasini, a generation younger than Hayez, is widely regarded as the most outstanding Orientalist painter among Italian artists in the nineteenth century. In contrast to Hayez, Pasini travelled outside of Europe several times and was ordered to paint for the Qajar Shah of Iran Nasr-

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<sup>2</sup> The field of Exhibition History is worth noting as methodology of my thesis. The website of British Art Studies gives us the starting point regarding the idea that exhibitions offer us to venture "entangled art histories of Asia and Britain" (Saloni, Mathur) <https://britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-13/why-exhibition-histories>

al-Din Shah (1831-1896). Due to his relationship with famous French Orientalist painters, “Pasini was probably the best-known Orientalist artist of foreign origin in France” (Thonton 124). As for sources to delve into the public reception of his Orientalist paintings, I will refer the articles of Florentine journal, *Nuova Antologia*, and a few articles published in the periodical illustrated journal, *L'illustrazione Italiana* will be discussed. In addition, newspaper *Corriere della Sera*'s articles are examined. In addition, the catalogue of the Venice International Art Exposition in 1909 will be thoroughly examined. In contrast to Hayez, Pasini's success was based in France despite the fact that he returned to Italy in the late stages of his career due to the political situation during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). Given the situation of Pasini, his national identity as an Italian travelling artist also should be considered within the context of the Risorgimento and Orientalism.

### Structure of the Thesis

In Chapter 1, I explain the background of Orientalist paintings in Risorgimento Italy. Firstly, the history of the Risorgimento is reviewed in order to connect it to Orientalism. This chapter consists primarily of a literature review of earlier studies on Risorgimento and Orientalism, especially De Donno and Spackman.

Chapter 2 sheds light on the case study of Francesco Hayez. In 2.1, I organise his biography and introduce his paintings, not limited to his Orientalist paintings within the context of the Milanese intellectual community regarding the independence of Italy during the Risorgimento. In that context, I deal with the connection between the Risorgimento and the Greek War of Independence from the perspective of Romanticism and patriotism. I aim to show that Hayez played a significant role as a Risorgimento figure in Milan. In 2.2, I introduce his Orientalist paintings and explain the relationship between his Orientalist paintings and the political situation of Italy during the Risorgimento. 2.3 is the most important part of the chapter and considers the public reception of his Orientalist paintings.

In Chapter 3, I discuss Alberto Pasini as an international travelling Orientalist painter from Italy, paying special attention to his role in shaping Italian public perception of the Near East through

his paintings and drawings, and to the reception/discussion of his national identity. In 3.1, I overview Pasini's biography, focusing on his relationship with French artists and his travels. In 3.2, I refer to his Orientalist paintings in the context of his travels to the Eastern countries. 3.3 is the section which examines the public reception of his Orientalist artworks.

## Chapter 1

### The History of the Risorgimento and Italian Orientalism

In recent studies, the Risorgimento historiography has been examined from various perspectives. The year 2011 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “the birth of Italy” and the celebration “took place in the midst of much public controversy” (Isabella 247). The connection between the Risorgimento and the public sphere is one of the most recent approaches. According to Isabella, Risorgimento has been interpreted as “the birth of a new public sphere” through direct engagement “with the reasons for the new and overwhelming appeal of the national message, as well as with its reception and dissemination in society” (262). Utilizing this new interpretation of Risorgimento as the public sphere, this chapter follows the history and the historiography of the Risorgimento in order to develop the discussion regarding the public reception of Orientalist paintings during the Risorgimento in Chapters 2 and 3.

#### 1. 1 Italy and the Risorgimento

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Italian peninsula was occupied by French revolutionary armies and Italy was thrown “into a period of radical change, as extraordinary as it was complex” (Riall 4) until unification in 1861. After the defeat of Napoleon in 1814 and the Congress of Vienna in 1815, French domination was terminated, and Austria gained power to control the Italian peninsula by defining the Restoration of ancien regime rulers, along with most territories under Austrian rule and former boundaries before the French occupation (Riall 10). The unification of Italy was influenced by the uprisings of the 1820s and 1830s against the decisions made at the Congress of Vienna. The unification process started with the Revolutions of 1848 and was completed in 1871 with the taking of Rome, which then became the capital of the Kingdom of Italy. As Lucy Riall describes, the period of the Risorgimento, along with the events of Italian unity, are highly mythologised in contemporary history and are also a source of political dispute. Beneath the legends and the arguments, there exists a complex reality which occurred in 1859-60 (35). Garibaldi’s notable

triumph ultimately resulted in his own failure, and the merger of the North and South happened amidst a backdrop of suspicion, letdown, and public chaos. Italy was united, but Venice remained under Austrian control, and the Pope in Rome was safeguarded by a French military presence (Riall 35).

The history of the Risorgimento has received renewed attention and has been studied from various perspectives after long being considered “a phase in the national history that, if not forgotten, seemed only of secondary relevance to the life of contemporary Italy” (Patriarca and Riall 1). The moment “has recently acquired the status of a major battleground” (1). In recent studies of the Risorgimento, nationalism, national identity, race and Romanticism are discussed, bringing to light their deep connections. Riall states that nationalist politics were always the main task in the history of the Risorgimento and Italy was regarded as the proof of the connection between nationalism and nation-state formation due to its political unification (117). Regarding the culture of the nation, Riall argues that:

One of the starting points of recent research is a re-evaluation of the roots of Italian nationalism. Thus, even if a political Italy did not exist before the middle of the nineteenth century, it seems clear that a strong and growing sense of cultural ‘Italian-ness’ (*italianità*) prevailed among a small educated elite long before. Culture, and not politics or economics, was the real sign of Italian identity. In the eighteenth century, this identity was expressed in the intellectual interests and associational life of elites throughout the peninsula, and in their language, literature, music and visual arts, and it was further shaped by the presence of the Catholic Church and by opposition to it. (122)

*Il bacio* (*The Kiss*) (Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera) (Fig. 1), a painting by Francesco Hayez, is mentioned by Riall alongside Romantic novels, poems, and operas in which “both patriots and the wider reading public ‘discovered’ a national community and a common past” (123). Paul Ginsborg directly



approaches European Romanticism and the Italian Risorgimento, pointing out that “many scholars have touched upon the relationship between Romanticism and the Risorgimento, but very few, if any, have worked upon it in a seriously analytical way” (18). Ginsborg illustrates the influence of Romanticism in the process of the liberation of Italy for nationalists from the perspective of the concentration on individual development and the privilege of certain relationships and passions (33). His examination of “Romanticism’s role in the formation of individuals, with specific reference to the Italian case in the first half of the nineteenth century” (18), rooted in the idea of “public and familial spheres” (23), is interesting because it shows an approach to the history of the Risorgimento from the perspective of the public sphere in the first half of the nineteenth century in Italy.

Alberto Mario Banti deals with Italian national identity in the Risorgimento, stating that “Italian national identity has long been a lost theme in historiography; perhaps it should instead be said that it has never actually been a proper historiographical theme” (10). Edoardo Marcello Barsotti also contributed to the study of the Risorgimento and national identity, paying particular attention to the idea of race. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Patriarca and Banti, Barsotti has effectively reinforced a perspective based on the concepts of race and nationality within Risorgimento historiography.

Fabrizio De Donno’s examination of Italian Orientalism contributes to the discussion of the history of the Risorgimento in relation to Orientalism, in addition to cosmopolitanism and the previously discussed topics of nationhood and the cultural politics of identity. De Donno expresses that his study of Italian Orientalism essentially seeks to understand Italy in the context of the relationship between Europe and the Orient, focusing on not only how the concept of Orientalism is represented in Italy, but also how Italian Orientalism is linked to other forms of Orientalism in Western countries (19). Additionally, he aims to show “both the domestic and international dimensions of Italian Orientalism by exploring the links between the historical and cultural predicaments of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Italy on the one hand, and Orientalism as a pan-European phenomenon of global dimensions on the other” (19). I believe that De Donno’s

approach broadens the view of Risorgimento history, and my dissertation aims to contribute to this achievement by revealing further complexities through the consideration of public perception as understood in relation to Italian Orientalist paintings. In addition to utilising these paintings as case studies, I will also review De Donno's interpretation of the Risorgimento. Therefore, the following sections in this chapter are arranged to reflect the structure of De Donno's book. I aim to illustrate how Italian Orientalist paintings are related to the history and culture of Risorgimento in the following sections.



**Figure 1 Il bacio, 1859, oil on the canvas, 112×88 cm, Pinacoteca di Brera.**

### 1. 2 The Reception of Orientalist scholarship in Risorgimento Italy

Like Orientalism in other European countries, Italian Orientalism started with a great concern with Indology and this greatly affected the study of other Oriental subjects, for instance, “Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, as well as Judaism and Coptism, Turkology and Sinology and, more broadly, colonial scholarship, ethnography and anthropology” (De Donno 141). Behind the popularity of Indology in Europe, there has been the division of “Aryans and Semites as the two major civilisational and spiritual categories” (141). In terms of the characteristic of Italian Orientalism compared to “European counterparts,” De Donno explains that generally there are two main focuses of Orientalists:

one on the ancient Orient in relation to the past origins and progress of European nations, and Italy in the first instance; and another on the contemporary Orient, in the context of international relations, with an emphasis on the civilisational duties of the modern European nations, and Italy in particular towards the ‘non-modern’ Oriental world. (141)

Italian Orientalism focuses more on the Orient in the past and this is due to the complexity of the national and racial identity of Italy during the Risorgimento. De Donno emphasises the importance of Indology in Orientalism in Italy, mentioning that “in the field of Indology, Italian Orientalism was more concerned with the construction of the Aryan identity of the Italian people than with Italian colonialism” (12). Through the study of the past of Europe and Italy in relation to the East, scholarship about the past “provided the new Italian nation with identity, and in particular that Western identity that enabled the new European nation to define itself as ‘modern’ in light of Aryan historical progress” (142). In short, in terms of the role of Orientalism in Italy, De Donno concludes that Orientalism could “ultimately define Italy’s Europeanness and Westernness at this moment in history” while Classicism was also useful (142).

In the discussion of national identity constructed through the unification process, there were not only linguistic and philosophical approaches, but also the concept of race, which approached more directly the difference between “Italian” citizens among Europe and others outside Europe. Barsotti highlights the importance of race in terms of the national identity, stating that “race became an object of major focus, to the point of being considered, along with language, the most important marker of nationality” (2). As for the connection between the linguistic approach and the concept of race, Barsotti explains that:

The very notion of *Aryan*, in fact, born in comparative linguistics to describe the alleged ancestors of the Indo-Europeans would end up being used as a synonym of a racist taxonomy as the equivalent of white or “Caucasian”. (142)

The division between Aryanism and Semitism had been studied from various perspectives and Indology, which was aimed to prove that Italian people could be categorised as Aryan, was the main concern of Italian Orientalism during the Risorgimento.

As the pioneer of Indology in Italy, Angelo De Gubernatis is one of the most important Italian Orientalists. De Gubernatis was Professor of Sanskrit at the Istituto di Studi Superiori Pratici e di Perfezionamento (Institute of Practical and Advanced Studies) of Florence and played an important role in making Florence the centre of Oriental studies in Italy in the context of Indology and attempted to claim Italian primacy in Oriental studies compared to its European counterparts. De Gubernatis “brought the fourth International Congress of Orientalists to Florence in 1878, and the ninth to Rome in 1899” (De Donno 148). The Congress in Florence in 1878 has been discussed more due to the importance of the city as the centre of Orientalism in Italy. As for the congress, Eva-Maria Troelenberg explains that “the conference itself was mostly a philosophical, linguistic and philological undertaking, with the clear aim to promote Italian orientalist studies within a larger transnational academia and in the young Italian nation” (4).

As De Donno, Troelenberg, and Marie Bossaert discuss, the Congress of 1878 is notably studied by Filipa Lowndes Vicente, “who has explored the world of Florentine Indology through the international networks of De Gubernatis” (De Donno 12). Vicente explains the collaboration between De Gubernatis and Indian scholar José Gerson Da Cunha for Indian exhibitions<sup>3</sup> and De Gubernatis’s work in India, in order to argue that Italian Orientalism was not merely a manifestation of monolithic European colonialism, as per Said’s theory (2012, 12). Given the discussion regarding Orientalism in Florence, we can see that a regional perspective is important to address Italian Orientalism in the Risorgimento era. Bossaert also reviews Vicente’s book and adds more regional perspectives, discussing the study of Chinese at the Collegio dei Cinesi (the College of the Chinese) in Naples, Japanese at *the* Scuola superiore di commercio di Venezia (Venice Advanced School for Commerce), and of Turkish in Naples and Venice, where the teachers were Ottoman Armenians (6). In terms of Asian studies, Rolando Minuti introduces *Il costume antico moderno* (*Ancient and modern customs*) by Giulio Ferrario as an example of “the Italian contribution to the field of historical studies on the non-European world,” focusing on “the iconic representation of Asia” (163). *Il costume antico moderno* is a huge collection of twenty-three volumes edited, partially written and published in Milan by Giulio Ferrario between 1817 and 1834 (164). It is noteworthy that the French edition of this book is “created in parallel with the Italian edition,” aiming at it being studied by readers “not just from Milan, not just Italian but European” (166). Regarding the French edition, Minuti explains that:

This French version was certainly appreciated and had a significant impact on the several histories of the world, as well as histories of the traditions and customs of all peoples of the universe, released in France during the nineteenth century. (166)

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<sup>3</sup> According to Vincente’s article published in 2021, “the focus on India” was “one of the most obvious differences between the Florentine event and its former counterparts” (12). The 1878 Congress is the “culmination of Florence’s Orientalist experience” (14). Especially Indian studies “continued to predominate over studies of other parts of Asia” (14). After the 1878 congress, “the idea of creating an Indian museum in Florence was launched” (15).

There were several journals translated from French to Italian as well. “A number of illustrated travel magazines circulated in Italy in the wake of Italian Unification” (Tacchi 1). In Milan, Emilio Treves and Edoardo Sonzogno launched periodicals “on the market as they expanded their existing catalogues of books about travel and new discoveries” (Tacchi1). In 1863, *Il giro del mondo. Giornale di viaggi, geografie e costumi* (*Around the World. Journal of Travel, Geography and Custom*) was published by Treves, and it continued to be published weekly until 1880 (Tacchi 1). In 1878, Sonzogno launched *Giornale illustrato dei viaggi e delle avventure di terra e di mare* (*Illustrated Journal of Land and Sea Journeys and Adventures*), which remained in print until 1890 (Tacchi 1). Tacchi explains the impact of these publications:

These periodicals became a significant channel for cultural ‘translation’, conveying knowledge to a wide audience: the middle class, and the emerging working classes, who benefited from increasing literacy but had remained excluded from the upper echelons of knowledge circulation. (1)

As above, I intend to shed light on the reception of Orientalism in Risorgimento Italy from European, national and regional perspectives. Besides Florence, as mentioned by Adrian Lyttelton, in other places such as Turin,<sup>4</sup> Piedmont,<sup>5</sup> and according to Bossaert, additionally Sicily,<sup>6</sup> Oriental studies were approached in different ways. Following this perspective, I intend to shed new light on the reception of Orientalism in Risorgimento Italy by using different scales and point of views, European, national, and regional.

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<sup>4</sup> Orientalism in Turin is “strongly linked to the ambitious cultural programmes of the Savoy monarchy”( Lyttelton 111). “It is in the Risorgimento period that the first Italian chair of Indology was established in Turin with Gaspare Gorresio, which is the event that marked the birth of the new modern professional Italian Orientalism, or *orientalistica*” (De Donno 5)

<sup>5</sup> “A different kind of Orientalism flourished in both Lombardy and Piedmont, where it was associated with the activity of the *semai* (silkworm egg merchants)” (Lyttelton 111).

<sup>6</sup> See for example the *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* by Michele Amari (Bossaert 5).

### 1. 3 The Entanglement among Romanticism, Orientalism and the Risorgimento

As I repeated, Italian Orientalism mainly indicates philological and literature studies, often about India. This section aims to connect De Donno's analysis on literature with my work, art historical analysis, focusing on Romanticism and Orientalism. Firstly, I review De Donno's argument regarding Romantic Orientalism while referring to Ginsborg and Riall's analysis on the Risorgimento and Romanticism. Secondly, I show how Francesco Hayez is involved in this entanglement of Romanticism, Orientalism, and Risorgimento. In *Italian Paintings in the Age of Unification*, published in 2021, Watts shows us the detail of Hayez's history paintings in the context of the Risorgimento. Watts does not specifically mention the Orientalist aspects of Hayez's work, however, the analysis of his paintings is so important that the book is examined more in Chapter 2.

It is obvious that Romanticism and Risorgimento are deeply connected as Ginsborg mentions that "Many scholars have touched upon the relationship between Romanticism and the Risorgimento" (18). According to Ginsborg,

Romanticism was simultaneously many different things: revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, individualist and communitarian, democratic and aristocratic, cosmopolitan and nationalist, realist and utopian, anthropocentric and in awe of nature, activist and contemplative, mystical and sensual. European Romanticism was vast and amorphous, lacking a single text (like the *Encyclopédie*, 1751–72) which could serve as its manifesto, or a self-reflexive capacity to fix its canonical ideas. (19)

Ginsborg adds that Romanticists "also have an essential explanatory role to play in our understanding of political movements like the Risorgimento," in short, "in a hierarchy of importance, these privileged relationships are with love, with nature, with journeying, with dreaming, history and death" (21).

Riall insists on the importance of culture in the context of Italian nationalism. Despite the fact that political Italy did not exist before the unification, "it seems clear that a strong and growing sense

of cultural ‘Italian-ness’ (*italianità*) prevailed among a small educated elite long before” (122). Italian identity was in the process of being constructed during the Risorgimento, however, Italian-ness was shown in the culture before the nation was politically born. In addition, the culture in that era was highly affected by Romanticism. Orientalism can be said to be part of the Romantic subjects in the realm of culture, for instance, literature, opera, and visual arts.

In relation to “aesthetic matters in Risorgimento Italy”, European Orientalism had raised the disputes that are “related to the reception of Romantic Orientalism in Italian Romanticism” in the context that “the Orient was domesticated to set an emerging Romantic nationalism against a more established Classicist nationalism” (De Donno 45). Given De Donno’s argument, it can be said that the binary opposition between Classicism and Romanticism can be applied to the opposition between Classicism and Orientalism in Italy. The reason Classicists refuse Romantic Orientalism is that “Classicists considered the Romantic trends unpatriotic, and argued that (Neo) Classicism and the tradition of Renaissance humanism constituted the real *national* tradition of Italy” (46).

Milan is the most important city for Romanticism in Risorgimento Italy because “The reception, support and diffusion in Risorgimento Italy of the Romantic ideas occurred primarily at the hands of a small number of figures”<sup>7</sup> who were the first to call themselves Romantics in Risorgimento Italy and lived all in Milan (De Donno 47). At that time, Milan was part of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, under Austrian rule after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. For Romantic writers in Milan, “Classicism epitomised the inactivity of pre-revolutionary Italy, which Napoleon definitely dissolved in the Battle of Lodi” (47). It can be said that the quarrel between Romanticism and Classicism is rooted in the negative feeling towards Austrian rule and in the aspiration towards the revolution like in France, against the old regime. Italian Romantics sought to spread Romantic and patriotic ideas and one of their strategies involved publishing “the liberal, anti-Austrian journal,

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<sup>7</sup> The main Romanticists in Risorgimento Italy were Ermete Visconti, Pietro Borsieri, Silvio Pellico, Giovanni Berchet, and Ludovico Di Breme (De Donno 47).



*Il Conciliatore*” (47). Nevertheless, their Romanticist promotion did not last long in Risorgimento Italy because they were arrested by the Austrian government or had to seek asylum (48).

This situation is perfectly shown in *Il bacio* by Francesco Hayez. This artwork was exhibited in 1859 in Brera to celebrate the end of the Second War of Independence, a victory assisted by France’s aid for the House of Savoy. It is widely said that the iconography in *Il bacio* represents the patriotic message through the colours of the man and woman’s clothes, which correspond to the colours of Italian and French national flags. This masterpiece is a Romanticist painting with the expression of love and can be regarded as the visual artwork which connects the Risorgimento and Romanticism.

My main argument in this section is that Francesco Hayez as a painter allows me to connect Romanticism, the Risorgimento and Orientalism. In order to explain this entanglement, I describe the Orientalist aspect of Hayez below and the more detailed biography of Hayez is shown in Chapter 2. Hayez’s artistic involvement in the Romantic and Risorgimento movement started in Milan. During his time in Milan from 1818 to 1820, Hayez painted *Pietro Rossi* (Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera) and was successful in obtaining commissions from the city’s liberal aristocracy thanks to the reputation of this history painting. According to Fernando Mazzocca, *Gli abitanti di Parga che abbandonano la loro patria* (Brescia, Civici Musei d’Arte e Storia), painted by Hayez in 1831, represents the beginning, and remains the cornerstone, of Italian philhellenic painting, constituting the first opportunity in the nineteenth century to approach the Eastern world (Mazzocca 68). Moreover, Hayez himself recalled in his memoir that he had chosen this theme, not only for its Risorgimento value, which represented patriotic sentiments and suited the situation at that time, but precisely because of the costumes, although modern, being Greek lend themselves greatly to art (68). The picturesque value of the Greek costumes, the style of which appeared exotic, would also be exalted in his later production on Greek history, which took place during the 1830s (68).

In terms of Hayez’s teaching career, he already obtained a temporary professorship at the Accademia di Brera in 1822. His formal association with the academy extended from 1850 to 1878.

During this time, Hayez identified strongly with the ardent nationalism of his peers, when he was a still relatively unknown artist and was driven by revolutionary fervour during the 1820s. One of Hayez's early ventures into Near Eastern themes is a painting of Venetian artist Gentile Bellini working for the Ottoman Sultan Mohammed II in the 15th century, depicted in 1834. Hayez also applies European Orientalism in paintings to the topologically homogeneous series of biblical heroines, *Tamar of Judas* (Varese, Civic Museums), *Rebecca* (Milan, Brera Academy) and *Ruth* (Bologna, Palazzo D'Accursio). In 1861, Hayez played an important role as an Orientalist donating some of his books to the Accademia di Brera. These books covered a wide range of subjects, with many focusing on the past and present of the Near East. Notable among them were Cesare Vecellio's *De gli habitanti antichi et moderni (On Ancient and Modern Clothes)* and an illustrated account of the customs of Syria and Asia Minor published in 1841, known as *Giornale di Carovana (Journal of Caravan)*. Other works included *Lettres sur l'Orient (Letters from the East)* by Baron de Bussières and *Delle Indie Orientali* by G.P. Maffei, translated from the original Latin by Fra Serdonati. Additionally, Hayez's collection featured a compilation of one hundred etchings under the title *Costantinopoli effigiata e descritta con una nota sulle chiese dell'Asia Minore (Constantinople Described and Illustrated with a Note on the Churches of Asia Minor)*. Finally, his collection included a copy of *The Thousand and One Nights*, translated by Antoine Galland and accompanied by two thousand French engravings.

In conclusion, this section describes the relationship between the Risorgimento, Romanticism and Orientalism, dealing with Francesco Hayez's case. Hayez is a key figure whose history paintings link the Risorgimento, Romanticism and Orientalism. From a geographical point of view, this section is concerned with Italy and international relations within Europe. The next section looks at the Risorgimento and Orientalism in painting from a larger perspective, focusing on the relationship between Orientalist paintings and travel to the East.

#### 1. 4 Italian Orientalist Painters as Travellers and the Question of Nationhood

In the previous section, I discuss Italian nationhood in the context of the Risorgimento with Francesco Hayez's patriotic and Orientalist aspects. This section aims to broaden the view towards Italian Orientalist painters in terms of their involvement in national identity construction processes in a larger perspective by focusing on Italian travellers to the East. Firstly, I deal with Italian travellers to the East not limited to painters but also "inhabitants of the Italian peninsula who, through the historical accidents of forced exile, desertion, or opportunism" (Spackman 1), travelled to the East during the Risorgimento and their connection to Oriental studies. Then, I introduce Alberto Pasini, as an example of an Italian Orientalist painter, who travelled to the East, in order to explain the connection between Orientalist paintings and the Risorgimento from a different perspective.

In order to discuss Italian Orientalist painters who travelled to the East, it is necessary to refer to Italian travellers to the Orient and the relevant historiography. Barbara Spackman deals with travel literature of Italian travellers to "the Ottoman-governed lands during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (1) discussing their relation with the construction of national identity. She argues that "the political instability of home (an Italy that is not yet a nation state) leads to a heightened volatility of identity abroad, one that allows reversibility between Orientalisation and Italianisation to become visible" (7). As for European travellers to the East, Rana Kabbani mentions that the journey commences for the traveller with the support of a nation or empire, providing strength in military, economic, intellectual, and often spiritual aspects (1), however, it does not seem it can be applied to the Italian case because of the instability of national identity and state structures during the era. This is the difference between Italian travellers and travellers from other European countries, as Spackman mentions that "the porous and riven national identity of these Italian travellers positioned them differently than their British and French counterparts in relation to the predominantly Muslim world in which they found themselves" (1).

The academic interests towards Italian travellers to the East have been increasing. In 2021, Guido Abbattista edited *Global Perspectives in Modern Italian Culture: Knowledge and*

*Representation of the World in Italy from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, which included several perspectives on Italian travellers' experiences and their view towards the East. For instance, Rolando Minuti deals with *Il costume antico e moderno* (*Ancient and Modern Customs*) as a representation of Asia and Francesca Tacchi discusses Illustrated travel journals in the nineteenth century in order to observe "The world seen from Milan" (208). In terms of Italian travel literature, Falcucci, Giusti and Trentacoste edited *Rereading Travellers to the East: Shaping Identities and Building the Nation in Post-unification Italy*, which aimed to show new perspectives on the connections between nation building and Orientalism between the Risorgimento and the Republic. It deals with Italian travellers to a wide range of Eastern countries, such as China, Japan, Iran and East Africa.

As seen above, Italian travellers and travel literature have been discussed in relation to national identity and Orientalism. I believe that Italian Orientalist paintings which are drawn by artists who travelled can be called "travel paintings" and be observed as historical evidence like travel literature. Even though Italian Orientalist paintings have not been regarded as important compared to French and British Orientalist paintings, when discussing national identity and Orientalism, Italian Orientalist paintings can be observed in different ways from other European counterparts. As an Italian Orientalist and travelling artist, I introduce Alberto Pasini, the most prominent Italian Orientalist painter, who travelled to many countries through his artistic career.

As for national identity, it is worth to note that Alberto Pasini built his career in Paris and has been regarded as a French painter rather than an Italian painter even though Pasini was born in Italy (Saint-Raymond 48). Orientalism was a central focus in Pasini's career, and the primary reason for his ability to work in Paris was the positive reception of his Orientalist paintings by the art market of the time. Thanks to his success in Paris, he had the opportunity to have connections with one of the most influential French Orientalist painters, Théodore Chassériau, who enabled Pasini to join a diplomatic mission to the East in 1855-1856. It was the first travel for Pasini to visit Persia, Turkey, Arabia, and Egypt. During this travel, Pasini produced a multitude of drawings and lithographs,

forming a close bond with the Shah of Persia. The exotic and intricate landscapes and scenes he encountered left an indelible mark on his artistic style. Upon his return to Paris, Pasini continued his artistic pursuits as both a painter and a lithographer. His works were exhibited in Parma, where he was duly recognized as an Honorary Academician by the Academy of Parma in 1856. We can see the complexity of Pasini's national identity as an Italian traveller because his travel to the East was ensured by French support. It is noteworthy that Pasini's could build his artistic career also in Parma in Italy because of the success in Paris with his Orientalist paintings.

His second trip to Constantinople in 1867 represented a momentous encounter. It was there that he met Sultan Abdul Aziz, who commissioned two paintings from him. One of these was an oil painting, titled *Türk Süvari Huaimu (Turkish Cavalry Attack)* and dated 1868, celebrating an Ottoman victory. Despite Pasini's success not being limited in France and Italy, but also extending to Turkey, he had to go back to Italy due to the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). This is because many Italians, including Pasini were considered as allies of Prussia and felt unwelcome in France. While Pasini obtained a home at Cavoretto and continued travelling, he maintained strong ties with France and French artists.

To conclude, Italian Orientalist painters travelled to the East and their paintings should be considered more like travel literature in the context of the connections between the Risorgimento and Orientalism. Alberto Pasini is a case study to represent how Italian Orientalist painters are involved in global entanglement in the context of art and how we can see more interactive and not monolithic relationships between the East and the West.

## Chapter 2

### Francesco Hayez: Leading Romanticist and Orientalist Painter in Risorgimento Italy

Francesco Hayez is the most representative Italian painter in the nineteenth century as can be seen in Pinacoteca di Brera still today. Hayez's Orientalist artworks are displayed in the room of the Italian nineteenth century painter with other paintings of his, for instance, the most famous work, *Il bacio*. The academic interest towards Hayez is not limited to the Accademia di Brera, however. Hayez's Orientalist paintings have been introduced in several exhibitions even very recently. The most recent exhibition, which is entitled *Hayez. L'officina del Pittore Romantico (Hayez. The Workshop of the Romantic Painter)* was held from 2023 to 2024 in Turin. In the exhibition, several Orientalist paintings of Hayez were displayed as a part of the section of civil paintings, historical paintings and biblical subjects.

Given Hayez's prominence as a painter in Risorgimento Italy, it is not surprising that recent exhibitions on Italian Orientalist paintings pay special attention to him as an Italian Orientalist painter. Even though Hayez never travelled to the East, he completed numerous Orientalist paintings. In nineteenth-century Risorgimento Italy, Hayez was the most significant painter of Orientalist subjects, as well as of other subjects such as history and portraiture. This period is the most important in the historiography of Italian Orientalist paintings. Before examining the history of Hayez as an Orientalist painter during the Risorgimento, I will discuss two recent exhibitions on Italian Orientalist paintings in order to illustrate how Hayez has been dealt with as an Orientalist painter in the historiography of Italian art.

The first exhibition, which was entitled *Gli Orientalisti Italiani. Cento anni di esotismo 1830-1940 (The Italian Orientalists: 100 Years of Exoticism 1830-1940)*, was held in 1998 in the Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi in Piedmont. The exhibition was divided into four sections, which correspond to four significant cultural movements in chronological order from Romanticism in the nineteenth century to colonial representations in the first half of the twentieth century. As far as can be seen in

the catalogue, this exhibition can be called as a first important attempt at organising the history of Italian Orientalist painting, which previously had never been looked at carefully. It is noteworthy that the first section of the exhibition begins with “Historical Romanticism: Francesco Hayez” (Bossaglia 5). Bossaglia put Hayez at the outset of this seminal exhibition, connecting Hayez’s venetian origins with the importance of Venice as a centre of Orientalist paintings in the fifteenth century (5).

In 2011, another exhibition, *Orientalisti. Incanti e scoperte nella pittura dell’Ottocento italiano* (*Orientalists. Enchantments and Discoveries in Nineteenth-Century Italian Painting*), was curated by Emanuele Angiuli and Anna Villari in Chiostro del Bramante in Rome. According to the website of the exhibition, the curators carefully picked almost 80 works to display and began with Francesco Hayez to convey the sense of the Orient in the paintings. It states that the Venetian painter Francesco Hayez is not unique, however, he is a particularly important Orientalist painter, although he never travelled to the East. In the catalogue of the exhibition edited by Angiuli and Villari, Fernando Mazzocca, who also republished Hayez’s autobiography, writes the chapter covering Hayez, titled *Suggestioni, temi, e motivi orientalisti nella pittura di Francesco Hayez* (*Orientalist Suggestions, Themes and Motifs in the Painting of Francesco Hayez*). Mazzocca<sup>8</sup> insists that the Orientalist component is by no means secondary in the vast repertoire of Hayez’s artworks (68).

Drawing on these scholarly assessments regarding the importance of Orientalism in understanding the work of Hayez, in this chapter I intend to add a new layer to the study of his artworks, by delving into Hayez’s Orientalist paintings and their public reception during the Risorgimento era. In the first section, I organise the biography and historiography of Francesco Hayez, aiming to discuss his Orientalist aspects in relation to the Risorgimento. Secondly, I introduce Orientalist paintings of Francesco Hayez along with the classification of subjects and propose an analysis of their characteristics. Lastly, I attempt to show the public reception of Hayez’s Orientalist paintings during the Risorgimento period.

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<sup>8</sup> Mazzocca is the most important Hayez scholar, addressing Hayez’s entire body of work, not only his Orientalist paintings.

## 2. 1 Francesco Hayez as a Risorgimento Figure in Milan

Francesco Hayez emerged as a prominent Italian painter during the turbulent period of Risorgimento Italy. Hayez is considered a pioneering neoclassical painter, but is best known as a leader of the Romantic movement in his country (Juler 88) his life and career are detailed in his autobiographical work, *Le mie memorie*, originally published in 1890 and repeatedly republished with additional insights by Fernando Mazzocca, a scholar of Museology and Art and Restoration Criticism. Hayez was born in Venice in 1791 and adopted by his uncle, who was an art dealer. At the very beginning of his career, he was trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. Afterwards, he was sent to Rome where he became a student of Teodoro Matteini. After Rome, in 1823, he moved permanently to Milan, “the heart of the Risorgimento, [which] was where his work would make the biggest impact” (Watts 92). Hayez played a crucial role as a teacher, inspiring his students to delve into historical paintings at the Accademia di Brera. Many of them later gained fame as artists, with some dedicating a portion of their work to Oriental subjects. Hayez continued to receive academic appointments and official recognition within the art world, particularly during the 1850s and 1860s. He became a prominent and revered figure in the Italian art scene, earning numerous honours and prestigious commissions. Hayez’s remarkable artistic journey culminated in his retirement in 1880. Hayez passed away in Milan in 1882, leaving a lasting legacy in Milanese society. His death was widely reported in city newspapers, and a retrospective exhibition of his works was held at the Accademia di Brera one year later in 1883.





**Figure 2** Pietro Rossi, 1818-1820, oil on the canvas, 131×157. 5, Pinacoteca di Brera.

It is obvious that Hayez played the most significant role as a Risorgimento figure in Milan.<sup>9</sup> Laura Watts discusses Hayez as one of the most representative Risorgimento painters beside Tommaso Minardi and Gioacchino Toma in *Italian Painting in the Age of the Unification* (2021). Most interestingly, Watts approaches each painter from a regional perspective and refers to Hayez's artistic career and its public reception in Milan. To fully appreciate Hayez's patriotism, it should be considered that Milan was the central city of Romanticism and also significantly important place regarding the Risorgimento. Regarding the Milanese role on visual arts, Watts states that:

Milan, as a result, became a European, not just Italian cultural centre, and shifted away from other regional academies, especially Rome's Accademia del Regno Italico. After

<sup>9</sup> In the journal, *Westminster Review*, Hayez is defined by Giuseppe Mazzini as below: "He is the chief of that school of Historical Painting called for by the national feeling in Italy; the Artist the most advanced we know in that sentiment of the Ideal that is commissioned to preside over all the labours of the epoch." (Mazzini 1841, 378)

the closure of the Roman academy in 1814, Milan dominated as an artistic stage, especially in regard to history painting, and did so for the remainder of the century. Outside the walls of the Accademia di Brera, the wider Milanese intellectual and literary community shaped an art market that set the stage for Hayez's arrival and the establishment of a Romantic school. (81)



**Figure 3**  
**Portrait of the Count Arese, 1828, oil on the canvas,**  
**151×116cm, Uffizi Galleries.**

According to Watts, *Pietro Rossi* (1820) (Fig. 2)<sup>10</sup> is the “first” Romantic subject for Hayez and made a great success (80). This success fostered Hayez to move to Milan and the Accademia di Brera, “where he filled the professorship” (94). Giuseppe Mazzini popularised the idea that *Pietro Rossi* illustrated a political manifesto and recognised this artwork, which represented a national feeling necessary for the public to envisage revolution (92).

After the exhibition of *Pietro Rossi*, “other patrons solicited works from Hayez reflecting the same nationalist iconography” (Watts 94). However, Hayez had to create artworks, which could escape Austrian censorship, from the period of the exhibition in 1820 at Brera through the unification in 1861. Through the nineteenth century, censorship was varied and inconsistent in the peninsula (94). Various cities under Austrian rule including Milan held Austrian offices for their Department of Censorship, and artists were required to submit every artwork before publication (96). Under the censorship, some of Hayez’s artworks, “like his *Portrait of the Count Arese* (Fig. 3)<sup>11</sup> were so direct in their veneration of liberal sentiment”, they were never exhibited in a public exhibition (97).

Hayez successfully linked historical passions and politics to his contemporary context by employing portraits of himself and his peers in his history paintings. This approach enabled him to evade the scrutiny of censors during the exhibition of his work. According to Watts, Hayez included portraits of prominent Milanese intellectual figures in his mid-century history paintings and also pictured himself in *Pietro the Hermit* (1827-1829) (Fig. 4) and *The Refugees of Parga* (1826-1831) (Fig. 5) (102). These paintings allowed Hayez to “shrewdly demonstrate political engagement without attracting censorship or political retribution” while still appealing directly to the Milanese people who

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<sup>10</sup> The website of Pinacoteca di Brera offers this explanation of *Pietro Rossi*: Pietro Rossi, Lord of Parma, dispossessed of his lands by the Scaligeri, Lords of Verona, is invited to Pontremoli Castle, which he defended, to take command of the Venetian army against his own enemies; his wife and two daughters tearfully beg him not to accept. Hayez exhibited this painting at the Brera Annual Exhibition in 1820 and it was immediately well received by his contemporaries. The subject is inspired by Sismondi’s *Storia delle repubbliche italiane dei secoli di mezzo* (1817-1819), a key text in the democratic culture of the period, although the specific episode is more closely based on Laugier’s *Histoire de la République de Venise* (1758). The emphasis on emotion and the manifestation of affection, as well as the celebration of sacrifice in a real episode of Italian history, immediately led to this work being considered a manifesto of Romantic painting. (<https://pinacotecabrera.org/collezione-online/opere/pietro-rossi/>)

<sup>11</sup> Arese was a former colonel in the Napoleonic army; he was sentenced to three years in prison by the Austrian authorities following his involvement in the patriot uprisings of 1821. Hayez presents Arese as a heroic and humble character in a drama (Watts 100).



were captivated by such subjects (102). “The *Pietro the Hermit* is the earliest example of his strategy” and it was commissioned by Francesco Peloso, a Genovese merchant who supported the concept of Italian republic (103). Peloso collected some of Hayez’s artworks including *Inhabitants of Parga Burning the Ashes of their Ancestors* (1831). The Parga scene, in particular, revisits this earlier theme in the context of the widespread European interest in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832). Italy’s situation directly paralleled the Greek cause, particularly in the Greeks’ efforts to liberate themselves from Ottoman Turkish control (103). Another scene of Parga, *The Refugees of Parga* (1826-1831), was repeated four times “including several more related to the Greek War of Independence more generally” and was painted for the Count Paolo Tosio from Brescia (105). Watts states that Hayez’s self-portrait in the *Refugees of Parga* indicates “a relevance and impact not from its statement of support for Greece, but for how it looks forward to Italian unification” despite the fact that this work was first shown after the London Protocol in 1830 in which Europe recognised Greece as a free nation independent from the Ottoman empire (105).



**Figure 4** *Pietro the Hermit*, 1827-1829, oil on the canvas, 210×280cm, Milano, Private Collection.



**Figure 5** *The Refugees of Parga*, 1826-1831, oil on the canvas, 201×290 cm, Brescia, Musei Civici d'Arte e Storia.

The subject of these paintings was highly influenced by Lord Byron (1788-1824), the English nobleman and Romantic poet who died while fighting in the Greek War of Independence. Even though there is no direct connection between Byron and Italian nationalism, Risorgimento poets and painters were strongly inspired by him (Watts 106). Hayez belonged to “the same Milanese circle of authors strongly influenced by Byron, which also included Giovanni Berchet” (107). Another painting, *Portrait of Carlo Prayer as Alp* (1832) (Fig. 6), depicts “an acquaintance of Hayez from his early years in Rome”, who “died in 1832 while in custody, accused of treason by the oppressive government official of Francesco IV d’Este, the Habsburg Duke” (Watts 102). When Hayez depicted him, he portrayed Prayer as Alp from Byron’s *Siege of Corinth*, a figure who decided to side with the Muslim Ottoman empire after being betrayed by the Venetian government (102). According to an article in the Italian newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, published on 29 June 1901, Carlo Prayer was the director of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Massa Carrara and was imprisoned as a conspirator and

died there. It is obvious that Prayer was regarded as an iconic figure of the Risorgimento as the article explains that his self-portrait was donated to the Risorgimento Museum.

Hayez's patriotic expression hidden in historical and biblical subjects had the purpose not only of avoiding censorship, but also of pre-emptively defending himself against charges of patriotism because Hayez also worked for Austrian rulers, as can be seen in his commission to paint the portrait of the Austrian Emperor Ferdinand I (r. 1835-1848). If Hayez did not express any patriotic sentiment, his popularity in Milan may have not lasted that long, looking at the case of Ambrogio Nava (1791-1862), who also served as president of the Accademia di Brera from 1850 to 1854. Nava was notorious for being an Austrian sympathiser and had aroused the hostility of the patriotic circles.<sup>12</sup> In order to build up a long-term career in Milan, Hayez had to balance between Italian patriotism and the Austrian government. In addition, perhaps he had to show his national identity to patriots more than other Italian painters in Milan, as is suggested by the 1883 catalogue of Hayez's retrospective exhibition at the Accademia di Brera, where the curator states that "the surname immediately reveals him to be neither Venetian nor Italian" (7). Hayez conveyed his patriotic feelings to the public by using historical and biblical subjects in order to escape political censorship. In the following section, I will instead focus on the Orientalist aspects of Hayez's paintings since Orientalism was indeed an important part of Hayez's production, and especially of historical and biblical paintings. From this point of view, Orientalist aesthetic tropes may have had a similar function, concealing the true patriotic meanings of his painting behind a fashionable style; however, as I will try to show, Orientalism played a more complex role in Hayez's work.

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<sup>12</sup> Nava's notoriety resulted in *Ritratto del conte Ambrogio Nava* (*Portrait of Count Ambrogio Nava*), which Hayez painted in 1852 and was vandalised by the Milanese patriot, Carlo de Cristofori. (<https://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/operre-arte/schede/4t010-00063/>)





**Figure 6** Portrait of Carlo Prayer as Alp, 1832, Piacenza, Private Collection.

## 2.2 Orientalist Paintings of Francesco Hayez

It has been said that Oriental motifs appeared for the first time as biblical figures in Hayez's career because they offered him the opportunity to render the female nude with a sensuality that had always been congenial to his temperament (Mazzocca 2011, 68). After that, Hayez applied this Oriental component to civil painting, a new interpretation of the historical genre, as one can see in *Gli abitanti di Parga che abbandonano la loro patria* (*The Inhabitants of Parga Abandoning Their Homeland*).<sup>13</sup> This painting represents the beginning and remains the milestone of Italian philhellenic painting, constituting the first opportunity in the nineteenth century to approach the Eastern world (68). As I discussed briefly above, Greece was ambivalent as a space at the crossroads of Europe and "the East", which was imagined by Western Europe. Regarding this theme, Hayez himself recalled in his memoirs that he had chosen it not only for its Risorgimento value (it represented patriotic sentiments that were all suited to the political condition of the time) but also because the modern Greek costumes greatly lent themselves to art (Mazzocca 68). In this section, I categorise Hayez's Orientalist paintings into two genres: female representation and historical subjects. Biblical heroines and Odalisque are included in the first categorisation. The female representation of Hayez is more influenced by Orientalism from northern European countries. For instance, Hayez's representation of the female figure is often said to be influenced by Jean-August-Dominique-Ingres, who is one of the most famous French Orientalist painters in the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The second categorization includes a wider variety of scene and specific subjects and can be said to reflect the political ideas and events of the era.

Hayez's representation of the female can be divided into two main themes. The first is the odalisque in the harem, which was an iconic Orientalist subject in nineteenth century Europe, while

<sup>13</sup> It is also called *I profughi di Parga* (*The Refugees of Parga*).

<sup>14</sup> During Hayez's stay in Rome, Ingres became the director of the French Academy at the Villa Medici. In 1814, Ingres painted *Grande Odalisque*, which must have inspired Hayez, since he used several elements of it in his own later compositions on the same theme (Juler 88)



the other is the biblical heroine, into which it can be said that Hayez applied an Orientalist element. The subject of the harem appears in *Donne alla finestra dell'harem* (*Women on a Window of Harem*) in 1868 and was repeated in one of the most famous artworks by Hayez, *Vaso di fiori sulla finestra di un harem* (*Vase of Flowers on a Window of Harem*) (Fig. 7). *Vaso di fiori sulla finestra di un harem* is introduced by Mazzocca who says that it was first exhibited in the exposition in Milan in 1881, as a symbolic artwork that represents the artist's vital pictorial capacity at that time, and that this is how critics, and the public viewed the painting as well (2011, 68). Relating to the subject of the harem, Hayez also painted the figure of the odalisque<sup>15</sup> itself, mostly in the nude. *Odalisca* (*Odalisque*) (1839) (Fig. 8) and *Odalisca nel sonno* (*Sleeping Odalisque*) (1867) (Fig. 9) show how Hayez was engaged in the creation of nude paintings throughout his artistic career. Similar to these odalisque paintings, *Bathsheba al bagno* (*Bathsheba at her Bath*) (1841-2) (Fig.10), *Tamar of Judah* (1847) (Fig.11), *Rebecca at the Well* (1848) (Fig. 12) also are artworks that combine female nudity with Oriental costume.

According to Maria Flora Giubilei, these biblical paintings by Hayez influenced later works such as *Servitude of Israel with Tower of Babel* (*The Daughters of Judah in Babylon*) by Giacomo Antonio Caimi (1811-1878) (15). *Tamar* and *Rebecca* are not just Orientalist paintings like the harem subject, but the subject of a certain context with Oriental elements. *Betsabea al bagno* (*Bathsheba at the Bath*) (Fig. 14) of 1834 shows a similar figure as well. The way Hayez applies Oriental elements to other certain scenes is greatly successful and can be observed in his civic and historical paintings as well.

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<sup>15</sup> The definition of the harem and the Odalisque, and the characteristic of odalisque representations are not the aim of this thesis. However, it is noteworthy that the Odalisque was a popular subject among European Orientalists in the nineteenth century and the typology of Odalisque is the same for them. Orientalists in the nineteenth century were interested not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also Egypt, Algeria and other mid-eastern countries. According to Ali, "J. F. Lewis, like many Orientalists, preferred to paint a certain kind of Oriental woman, the Circassian" (40). She explains that the Circassian were "desirable" women and portrayed in harem scenes because of their resemblance to European counterparts (40). She adds that they had "the allure of the exotic oriental but were fair-skinned and light haired, and so conformed to European ideals of beauty" (40). These characteristics of women can be observed in many works of many Orientalists. For example, *Odalisque with Slave*, which was drawn by Ingres in 1839, embodied the Circassian characteristics. The odalisque is fair-skinned and light haired as Ali mentions. Ingres is one of the most influential painters in this period as Director of the French Academy (Naef, 80) and therefore his Circassian odalisque can be counted as one of the sources of later odalisque images.



**Figure 7** Vase of Flowers on the Window of a Harem, 1867-1881, 268×202cm, Pinacoteca di Brera.



**Figure 8** Odalisque, 1839, Milano, Pinacoteca di Brera.



**Figure 9** Sleeping Odalisque, 1867, oil on the canvas, 75×93cm, Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera.





**Figure 10 Bathsheba at her bath, 1834, oil on panel, 107×77cm, Pinacoteca di Brera.**



**Figure 11 Tamar of Judah, 1847, oil on the canvas, 112×84.5cm, Verese, Musei Civici.**



**Figure 12 Rebecca at the Well, 1848, oil on the canvas, 110×84cm, Milano, Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera.**

Hayez's similar approach towards Oriental costume can be seen in *The Portrait of Carlo Prayer as Alp*, which was painted in 1832. Alp is the protagonist of Byron's narrative poem *The Siege of Corinth*, but the figure shows Hayez's acquaintance, Carlo Prayer, in Oriental costume. Byron's *Siege of Corinth*, which was first published in 1816, capitalised on philhellenic enthusiasm (Watts 102). Hayez's inclination for philhellenic enthusiasm can be seen in more paintings. Most famously, the subject of *I profughi di Parga* was repeatedly painted several times since 1826 in the midst of the Greek War of Independence. Valerio Terraroli introduces *I profughi di Parga*, composed with thorough, well-documented, and extensive historical writings, as an example of the representation of Italian romanticism in which the Orient and oriental settings frequently confuses Islamic and Arab-Turkish imageries with Egyptian and Middle Eastern antiquity (39). Parga fits the political situation and artistic trend in the era. Originally Venice ruled Parga before it was given to Napoleonic France, however, Parga was against the French and sought the protection of British forces, which later sold Parga to the Ottomans in 1817 in order to acquire the Ionian Islands (Watts 108). "Hayez followed the *Parga* with similar treatments of other Greek subjects, with two other works focusing on Parga" (Watts 109).

In addition to philhellenic subjects, *Gentile Bellini, accompanied by the Venetian bailo, in the Act of Presenting to Sultan Mehmet II His Painting, in which is Depicted the Beheaded St. John the Baptist* (Fig. 13) of 1834 shows Hayez's strong academic interests towards the Orient. However, it is said that some perplexities were expressed about the lack of rigorous adherence to historical fact in the representation, to real Turkish environmental details, to behaviour studied from period sources (Giubilei 15). This painting is noteworthy because the scene of Mehmet II and Gentile Bellini "referred to the Venetian artistic tradition" and consequently can be seen as an expression of Hayez's regionalism (Watts 118). The relationship between Venice and the Ottoman empire dates back to the fifteenth century and it is interesting that Hayez reflects the historical anecdote regarding the fifteenth century Venetian painter in the nineteenth century Orientalism context.

This artwork was also presented at the exhibition at the Brera Academy in 1834. Being different from the philhellenic paintings of Hayez, this painting shows a direct interest towards the Middle East like other European Orientalists. Related to Hayez's regionalist favour, the episode of Gentile Bellini and the Sultan should have been a suitable subject for Hayez both to express his identity and to respond to the Orientalist trend in art. As mentioned above, Hayez painted many Orientalist paintings in various contexts, and they were exhibited mostly in Milan. In the next section, I intend to discuss the public reception of Orientalist paintings by Hayez during the Risorgimento era.



**Figure 13** Gentile Bellini, accompanied by the Venetian bailo, in the Act of Presenting to Sultan Mehmet II His Painting, in which is Depicted the Beheaded St. John the Baptist, 1834, oil on canvas, 56.6×78cm, Private Collection.

### 2.3 Public Reception of Francesco Hayez's Orientalist Paintings during the Risorgimento

It is obvious that Hayez was regarded as an extremely important public figure in Milan as can be seen in the fact that a statue of him was erected in his name in a square near the Accademia di Brera. Additionally, in 1890, the Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan postponed the day of the distribution of prizes to its pupils until February 10<sup>th</sup> because it was the seventh anniversary of Hayez's death.<sup>16</sup> This is one of the examples regarding the manifestation in which we can see the public reception of Hayez during the Risorgimento era. In order to convey this public reception of Hayez, in this section I examine publications regarding his Orientalist works which were produced during the Risorgimento period. As I mention in Chapter 1, the periodization of the Risorgimento is highly debatable and, for the purpose of the present work, I set it as the entire nineteenth century up to the first ten years of the twentieth century, right before the onset of the Italo-Turkish War in 1911. In addition to publications I introduced earlier in this thesis, I also discuss the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of Hayez as the main source because it conveys the public reception and evaluation of Hayez soon after his death. In addition, Hayez's autobiography, *Le mie memorie*, is also important because in it the painter himself also sometimes refers to the public response to his artworks. For further insight into the public reception of Hayez's Orientalist paintings, especially for early period, the journal, *Biblioteca italiana, ossia giornale di letteratura, scienze ed arti* (*Italian Library, i.e. Journal of Literature, Science and Art*) is considered. One article in this journal, which was published in 1834 and written by Ignazio Fumagalli,<sup>17</sup> a nineteenth century Milanese artist, referred to Hayez's exhibition in the same year.

<sup>16</sup> The postponement of the awards ceremony was announced in the 1890 publication of the official journal of the Accademia di Brera (43).

<sup>17</sup> In 1818, during first visit to Milan, Hayez was introduced to Fumagalli, who was then Secretary of the Accademia di Brera, by Hayez's close friend from Rome, Palagi, he also met other members of the literary and artistic circles, such as Manzoni, Grossi and Visconti (Watts 80).



The 1834 exhibition discussed by Fumagalli is interesting because it was held in the early period of Hayez's career when he was not yet regarded as a promising artist. However, Fumagalli admired Hayez's paintings in his article, introducing the artworks exhibited there as:

The canvases he exhibited this year are numerous; let us begin with an examination of the largest one, in which he portrayed Bathsheba, who, coming out of the baths, has her shoes put on her by an Egyptian slave girl and is assisted by another maid, who, following the custom of the East, administers to her the fragrant ointments. It does not seem to us to be exaggerating the truth when we say that, with the prestige of the beauty of three naked bodies, moved and grasped with unspeakable mastery, he attracts the gaze and the praise of the multitude. It is true that some people do not have eyes trained enough to see well, or souls pure enough to say what they consciously feel, they let their lips pronounce some criticism, and sometimes they surrender to the envy that devours them or to the bad talent that dominates them. However, we do not wish to assert by this that Hayez's work is all perfection, immune from any small defect. (312) <sup>18</sup>

The first artwork that Fumagalli discussed at the exhibition was *Bathsheba at her bath*, which depicts Orientalist costume alongside female nudity as well as the figure of an Egyptian slave. Generally, he highly evaluated Hayez's painting, while he stuck to be a fair critic. Fumagalli also referred to two other Orientalist paintings, *Missolonghi* and *Gentile Bellini, accompanied by the Venetian bailo, in*

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<sup>18</sup> "Molte sono le tele ch'egli ha esibite in quest'anno; e cominciando dall'esame di quella di maggior dimensione, in cui prese ad effigiare Betsabea, che uscita dal bagno vien ricalzata da una schiava egizia ed assistita da un'altra ancella che le amministra, giunta il costume d'Oriente, gli odorosi unguenti, ci sembra di non esagerare la verità dicendo ch'egli col prestigio della bellezza di tre corpi ignudi mossi ed aggrappati con indicibile magistero attragga a sè gli sguardi e gli encomi della moltitudine. Ben vero si è che alcuni o non avendo gli occhi abbastanza educati al veder bene, o l'animo abbastanza puro per dire ciò che coscienziosamente sentono, non lasciano di sciogliere il labbro a qualche censura e di abbandonarsi talvolta all'invidia che li divora o al mal talento da cui sono dominati. Non vogliamo però affermare per questo che il lavoro dell'Hayez sia tutta perfezione, immune da qualunque menda." Unless otherwise stated, all the translation from Italian are my own.



*the Act of Presenting to Sultan Mehmet II His Painting, in which is Depicted the Beheaded St. John the Baptist* as:

This is what we say about the other painting, in which Hayez, with figures of the same size, depicts the event that the Venetian painter Gentile Bellini is said to have witnessed when he was in Constantinople. When Muhammad II, the reigning sultan at the time, learned that there was such an important painter in his capital, he wished to see his work; the Balio of the Venetian Republic presented him the painter, with a canvas depicting the beheading of St John the Baptist. Admiring it, the sultan found that the skull cut from the bust did not offer all the details of the truth, and he was in the process of proving it by having a slave brought in, whom he barbarously destined as a model for the practice of his scimitar. We see all these circumstances so clearly in this little canvas that it is not necessary to say more. What we would like to add is that this picture is a faithful portrait of oriental and Mohammedan customs. From the architectural part of the room to the smallest accessory, everything gives an idea of the luxury and softness of that court; the odalisques, the eunuchs, the clothes of the sultan and the officials around him, the tapestries, the carpets, the cushions, the view of the gardens, everything, we repeat, is indicated and treated rigorously according to the costume, in such a way that one would not know how to wish for more. (314, 315)<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “Così diciamo per rispetto all’altro quadro in cui Hayez colle figure della egual dimensione tolse a rappresentare il fatto avvenuto, dicesi, a Gentile Bellini pittore veneto quando era in Costantinopoli. Venuto in cognizione Maometto secondo, allora regnante, che trovavasi nella sua capitale sì distinto pittore e desiderato avendo di conoscere i di lui dipinti, gli vien egli presentato dal Balio della Repubblica Veneta con una tela in che era espressa la decollazione di S. Giovanni Battista. Ammiratela il Gran Signore, trova che il teschio reciso dal busto non offeriva i particolari tutti della verità, e sta nell’atto di dargliene una prova coll’aver fatto condurre uno schiavo ch’egli barbaramente destinava come esemplare all’esercizio della sua scimitarra. Tutte queste circostanze noi le vediamo raffigurate in quella piccola tela con sì fatta evidenza, che non è mestieri di far altre parole. Ciò che crediamo di soggiungere a tal proposito si è che questo quadretto porge un fedel ritratto de’ costumi orientali e maomettani. Principiando dalla parte architettonica della sala sino al minimo accessorio, ogni cosa dà idea lusso e della mollezza di quella corte; le odalische, gli eunuchi, le vestimenta del sultano e degli ufficiali che lo circondano, gli arazzi, i tappeti, i cuscini, la vista dei giardini, tutto in fine, replichiamo, è indicato e trattato e rigore di costume in modo, che non sapresti più oltre desiderare.”

Seeing Fumagalli's comments for Hayez's artworks, we can see that Fumagalli deals with formal aspects, such as the size of the figure, and the accuracy of the subjects. It is also noteworthy that Fumagalli praises Hayez's ethnographic accuracy, despite the fact that a recent study considers this artwork to be imaginary rather than realistic (Giubilei 15). Observing Hayez's Orientalist paintings, Fumagalli evaluates Hayez as a good, but still improving painter. Public reception regarding Hayez's Orientalist paintings is obviously different between his early career and the later career, moreover, after his death. For example, we can see the changing popularity of *Tamar* and *Rebecca* in the memoirs. In his memoirs, Hayez addresses these two paintings directly:

#### Tamar

Tamar is depicted at the moment when she holds the pledge given to her by Judas, she lifts her veil to see him leave. There is a lot of nudity in this figure, and I thought that the drapery would give it a biblical character. I do not think it is necessary to point out that all this is taken from life, and the type I adopted enabled me to give it the robustness of form and colour required by the figure.

#### Rebecca

Rebecca, a softer and fairer-skinned figure, is leaning on an amphora, which characterises the theme as a solitary figure.

These two figures were also very successful at the exhibition. (165) <sup>20</sup>

In Fumagalli's article and Hayez's memoir, we can see the difference of the public reception regarding these three works of female nudity, the *Tamar*, the *Rebecca* and the *Betsabea*. In the exhibition in 1834, there were some people who did not appreciate Hayez's Orientalist paintings

<sup>20</sup> "Tamar. La Tamar è rappresentata nel momento che tenendo in possesso il pegno datole da Giuda, alza il velo per vederlo partire. Questa figura presenta molto nudo, e dal suo panneggiamento ho creduto darle il carattere biblico. Credo inutile notare che questa è tutta tratta dal vero, il tipo che adoperai mi permise di darle quella robustezza di forme e di tinte richiesta dalla figura.

Rebecca. La Rebecca, figura più gentile e più vaga di colore sta appoggiata su un'anfora la quale caratterizza il soggetto essendo figura sola. Anche queste due figure ebbero esito felice all'Esposizione. "

while Fumagalli highly evaluated them, pointing out the room for improvement. By contrast, in the memoir of Hayez, he simply wrote that the two biblical figures, *Tamar* and *Rebecca* were greatly successful at the first exhibition in which he showed them to the public.

I believe that this difference of the public reception seen in Fumagalli's comment and Hayez's comment in his memoir is not due to the difference of the depicted subjects (Bathsheba versus Tamar and Rebecca), but is rather due to the difference of the periods in which those works were exhibited. Although Bathsheba received criticism from some viewers when it was exhibited for the first time in 1834, it was highly appreciated later as one of his masterpieces in a number of articles published in 1880s. For example, *Bathsheba* is mentioned in the article of *Corriere della Sera*, which reported the death of Hayez on the 11th of February 1882. It gives the biography and praises his achievements, mentioning his most celebrated artworks:

The *Vettor Pisani*, the *Doge Faliero*, the *Tamar*, the *Rebecca*, the *Sansone*, *La morte di Carmagnola*; *Ajace*, grand canvas executed in fifteen days; *Betsabea al bagno*, *Tancredi e Clorinda Maria Stuarda*, *Pier l'Eremita*, *Giuseppe secondo ai magnati ungheresi*; *Il martirio di S. Bartolomeo* for the church of Castenedolo on the Brescian; *Vittore Pisani liberato dal carcere*, *Alberico da Romeo*; *La sete dei Crociati*, grand painting purchased by King Charles Albert and which is in the royal palace in Turin; *Luigi XIV e la Vallière*; *la morte di Marin Faliero*, donated by the artist to the Brera Academy in Milan, are among his most celebrated works. Among the portraits, the most famous is his own, which is in the gallery in Florence and is part of the collection of autograph portraits of famous painters. He also painted portraits of Cavour and D'Azeglio.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "Il Vettor Pisani, il Doge Faliero, la Tamar, la Rebecca, il Sansone, La morte di Carmagnola; Ajace, gran tela eseguita in quindici giorni; Betsabea al bagno, Tancredi e Clorinda Maria Stuarda, Pier l'Eremita, Giuseppe secondo ai magnati ungheresi; Il martirio di S. Bartolomeo per la chiesa di Castenedolo sul Bresciano; Vittore Pisani liberato dal carcere, Alberico da Romeo; La sete dei Crociati, gran quadro acquistato dal re Carlo Alberto e che trovasi al palazzo reale di Torino; Luigi XIV e la Vallière; la morte di Marin Faliero, donato dall'artista all'Accademia di Brera di Milano,

The *Tamar*, the *Rebecca*, the *Betsabea* are introduced among his main works in the news. In addition, the *Sansone* (Fig. 14) and *La sete dei Crociati* (*Thirst of the Crusaders*) (Fig. 15) are also included in the Orientalist paintings among the collection of Hayez. We can see the importance of Orientalist paintings in Hayez's entire body of work in the news coverage of his death, in which the achievement of his entire life are reported to the public. Moreover, it can be said that the public could know of Hayez's Orientalist paintings as part of his most prominent works while his Orientalist paintings were not perceived exclusively as Orientalist paintings; in other words, Orientalist paintings did not have a specific categorisation among Hayez's artworks.



**Figure 14** *Sansone*, 1842, oil on canvas, Galleria d'Arte Moderna.

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sono fra i suoi lavori più celebrati. Fra i ritratti, il più celebre è il proprio, che trovasi nella galleria di Firenze e fa parte della collezione di ritratti autografi dei celebri pittori. Fece pure i ritratti di Cavour e del D' Azeglio.”



**Figure 15** *La sete dei Crociati*, 1838-1850, 363 × 589, Turin, Palazzo Reale.

Further detail of the public view towards Hayez's Orientalist paintings can be found in the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition held at the Brera Academy in Milan in 1883, the year after his death. According to the catalogue, 87 paintings of Hayez were displayed. In the preface of the catalogue, it is said that: "The Catalogue should be preceded by some reminders so that the order and variety of the works that are returning to public view today are better known" (6). Here we can see this exhibition is aimed not only for his friends, colleagues and customers but also for a larger public, who might not be familiar with the painter. The list of the works exhibited is organised chronologically and categorised into four sections: Historical and composition paintings, Portraits and Studio Heads, Flowers and Watercolor paintings and Various drawings. In historical and composition paintings, *La sete dei Crociati sotto le mura di Gerusalemme* (*The Crusaders' Thirst Beneath the Walls of Jerusalem*), *Odalisca* (*Odalisque*), *Un'odalisca presso ad uno schiavo* (*An Odalisque close to a Slave*), *Due odalische alla finestra d'un harem* (*Two Odalisques at a Harem*

*Window*) are listed in chronological order. *Tamar* is included in the category of Watercolor paintings and various drawings.

Although it is said that “the number of works was limited for reasons of space”(6) in the catalogue, the biography of Hayez deals with paintings which were not displayed in the retrospective exhibition as well. The catalogue does not directly mention the Orientalist aspect of Hayez but deals with biblical and philhellenic subjects. As for biblical subject, the catalogue explains that:

Biblical stories trace us back to his earliest works (to which they are related), and he returned to it several times. There are no less than ten or twelve paintings by him in this genre. *L’Incontro di Giacobbe con Esaù* (*The Meeting of Jacob with Esau*) (1844) (Fig. 16) was the greatest among these paintings: in the form of minor paintings, he returned, three or four times, to the *Levita of Ephraim* (1844 and later). Most admired were his full and half figures taken from the pages of Moses, *Susanna al bagno* (*Susanna at the Bath*) (Fig. 17), *Ruth* (Fig. 18), *Rebecca*, *Tamar*, etc., but above all the *Bathsheba* of 1834 (done for the knight Ubaldi) remained in fame. However, these would not have been his greatest works, if it had been possible for him to follow through with one of his thoughts as much as nature would have demanded it, something he would not have failed to do were he to be younger, that of the *Distruzione del tempio di Gerusalemme* (*Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem*) (1867) (Fig. 19), for the felicitous and numerous inspiration of the figures, and at the same time for the purely historical form. It was the painting he donated to the Academy in Venice, and ultimately, transmitted to the Exhibition in Rome. (20, 21)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> “Le storie bibliche, nonché avervi analogia, ci fanno risalire alle prime sue opere, e vi ritornò più volte. Di lui non si contano meno in questo genere di un dieci o dodici dipinti. L’Incontro di Giacobbe con Esaù (1844) ne fu il maggior suo quadro: sotto forma di minori dipinti, ritornò, tre o quattro volte, sul Levita d’Efraim (1844 e in seguito). Meglio ammirate furono le sue figure intere e le mezze, tratte dalle pagine mosaiche, Susanna al bagno, Ruth, Rebecca, Tamar, ecc., ma più che tutto rimase in fama la Betsabea, del 1834, pel cav. Ubaldi. Tuttavia, non ne sarebbero stati i maggiori lavori, se gli fosse stato possibile di estendere a misura quanto natura un suo pensiero, al che in altra età non avrebbe mancato, quello della *Distruzione del tempio di Gerusalemme* (1867) per la ispirazione felicissima e numerosa di figure, ed insieme per la forma prettamente storica. Fu il dipinto da lui donato all’Accademia di Venezia, e da ultimo, trasmesso alla Esposizione di Roma.”

Oriental costumes and motifs in biblical subjects were repeated in Hayez's artistic life and the *Bathsheba* was especially famous among them. It is noteworthy that in 1834, according to Fumagalli, as above, some people did not appreciate *Bathsheba*, however, in 1883, *Bathsheba* was introduced as the painting, which remained in fame.

I repeatedly discuss the importance of philhellenic subjects in the relation to the Risorgimento and Orientalism of Hayez. The catalogue also deals with the subjects of Greece and suggests that modern Greece fascinated Hayez more and was painted more compared to ancient Greece (21). Hayez depicted historical events such as the insurrection of 1820-21 and the subsequent catastrophe of Navarino in 1827, which attracted his attention due to its resonance with Venetian maritime power (21). Hayez found inspiration in the compassion these events evoked internationally and, in the occasion, to portray the picturesque scenes and costumes he was familiar with since his childhood <sup>23</sup>(21). He produced numerous paintings based on these historical events, including notable works like *Esuli di Parga (Exiles of Parga)* (Fig. 5)<sup>24</sup>, *Difesa di Missolonghi* and *Strage di Patras*, in addition to them, *Barca con greci fuggitivi* and *Pirati greci*. In the memoir, Hayez himself also mentioned the public reception of one of his philhellenic paintings, *I Profughi di Parga*, reflecting on the exhibition in 1832:

I was pleased to find that those which I considered the best were also well received by the public and the connoisseurs. This painting in particular met with the general approval of the public, perhaps also because of the subject matter, which was easily understood by all and which must have aroused interest.

It is not by chance that I have spoken of the judgement of the public and of the connoisseurs: for if the approval of the latter must naturally flatter the self-love of the

<sup>23</sup> Hayez was born and trained in Venice. At this point, we can see his regional identity called as a Venetian painter.

<sup>24</sup> This painting is called *Profughi di Parga* in other documents.

artist, for they know how to appreciate all the difficulties overcome to reach a good end, they are not always free from prejudice. When, on the other hand, the public, free of all prejudice, sincerely applauds those works that arouse the liveliest and truest impressions, we see in general that it does not err in his judgments. (159)<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting that Hayez directly referred to the reason why he distinguished the public reception from the response of those who are knowledgeable in art. Moreover, he clarified that the intelligentsia's positive response motivated him more.

*I profughi di Parga* was also dealt with the article entitled *La pittura Lombarda nel secolo XIX (Painting in Lombardy in the nineteenth century)*, published by the *Corriere della Sera* on 22th May 1900. It explains that Hayez's fame, if not his glory, was due to the historical moment that he certainly did not create, but by which he was moulded with versatile docility throughout his long and honourable life. Moreover, the article deals with Hayez's memoirs in which were recognised numerous instances of strong steadfastness in literature, politics even the fine arts. These instances served as prominent benchmarks, highlighting his skilful ability to navigate through changing circumstances. As one of the examples, the *Profughi di Parga* is introduced, saying that the *Profughi di Parga* echoed Berchet's and the Philhellenic enthusiasm.

To conclude, both the Orientalism and the public reception of Hayez were fluid and ambivalent. In his Orientalist paintings with biblical subjects, we observe the emphasis on form and aesthetics. In his Orientalist paintings on Greece, we see an emphasis on empirical reference and politics. In addition, his Venetian identity is also represented in the Oriental paintings. As can be seen

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<sup>25</sup> “[Ma] ne ebbi compiacenza che queste da me trovate le migliori furono anche dal pubblico e dagli intelligenti giudicate buone. Questo quadro specialmente incontrò nel pubblico una generale approvazione, fors’anche per il soggetto facilmente capito da tutti e che doveva destare interesse.

Non a caso parlai del giudizio del pubblico e di quello degli intelligenti in arte: ch  se l’approvazione di questi deve naturalmente lusingare l’amor proprio dell’artista, perch  sanno apprezzare tutte le difficolt  superate per giungere a un buon fine, non sempre sono scevri da prevenzione. applaude sinceramente a quell’opere che gli destano le impressioni pi  vere e pi  libere, vediamo in generale che egli non erra nei suoi giudizi.”



in the *Gentile Bellini, Accomplished by the Venetian Balio*, we can also see an example of how Hayez partially contributed to the spread of negative stereotypes about the Orient. Throughout his life, the Oriental element is referred to by Hayez in various contexts. The public during the Risorgimento did not place his Orientalist paintings in a specific category. The Oriental element was in harmony with Hayez's aesthetic style and the political situation of the time.



**Figure 16**  
**The Meeting of Jacob with Esau, 1844, 208×300cm, oil on canvas, Museum of Civic Arts and History, Brescia.**



**Figure 17** *Susanna al bagno*, 1850, 138×122cm, oil on canvas, London National Gallery.



**Figure 18** *Ruth*, 1853, 137×100cm, oil on canvas, Bologna City Art Collections.



**Figure 19** *Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem*, 1867, 183× 282cm, Venice, Accademia di Belle Arti.

### Chapter 3

#### Alberto Pasini: Painter Travelling in the Orient during the Risorgimento

Italian travellers to the East during the Risorgimento have been attracting more interest from the perspective of the connection between nation building and identity. Barbara Spackman discusses modern Italian travellers in Ottoman lands, analysing literature, such as travel memoirs regarding Egypt. The most recent research, *Rereading Travellers to the East: Shaping Identities and Building the Nation in Post-unification Italy*, also discusses the deeply connected concepts of travel and nationhood in Risorgimento Italy through a rereading of travel literature. In this chapter, I aim to suggest that Orientalist paintings drawn by Italian travel painters also function like travel literature to show the connection between travel and nationhood. As can be seen in Peter Burke's discussion, *Street Scene, Damascus* (Fig. 20) by Alberto Pasini exemplified "'documentary', 'reporting' or 'ethnographic' style, to be found in some nineteenth-century painters of the Middle East (130)". This chapter deals with Alberto Pasini not only due to his prominence as an Orientalist painter in the nineteenth century but also because his style embodies characteristics that are quite different from those of Francesco Hayez, who is discussed in the previous chapter. By highlighting Pasini's speciality as a travelling Italian Orientalist painter, I intend to broaden the discussion of the public reception of Italian Orientalist paintings during the Risorgimento.

There have been further interests in Italy towards Pasini in these thirty years as well. In 1991, an individual Pasini exhibition was held by Vittoria Botteri Cardoso. The catalogue is written by Rossana Bossaglia and Angelo Dragone. This exhibition can be regarded as a milestone in the study of Pasini's artworks. In the catalogue of the exhibition, *Orientalisti. Incanti e scoperte nella pittura dell'Ottocento italiano (Orientalists. Enchantments and Discoveries in Nineteenth-Century Italian Painting)*, which was held in 2011, Anna Villari writes a chapter titled, *Alberto Pasini, viaggiatore, disegnatore e pittore in Oriente (Alberto Pasini, Traveller, Draughtsman and Painter in the Orient)*. According to Villari, "in Pasini's approach, one can indeed perceive an interest that could almost be



described as scientific, at times ethnographic, in an ambivalent relationship typical of that positivist 19th century, which was impersonal, objective, and, at the same time—from Théophile Gautier onwards—so often ‘ill’ with nostalgia for the Orient” (86). In addition, Villari introduces Ugo Fleres’ analysis published in the literary journal *Nuova Antologia* in 1900, according to which Pasini’s artworks are observational rather than inventive, essentially pictorial and picturesque rather than poetic, however, also charged with emotion and suggestion (86). As we will see, Ugo Fleres’ analysis in *Nuova Antologia* is interesting because it shows us how public readership during the Risorgimento was directed to interpret Pasini’s Orientalist paintings. In 2018, the exhibition, *Pasini e l’Oriente: luci e colori di terre lontane* (*Pasini and the East: Lights and Colours of Distant Lands*), was held in Parma, where Pasini was born and became the honorary professor of the Academy of Parma. In the catalogue, Pasini is studied from various perspectives, for instance, his travel from Parma to Constantinople, as well as his activity in the Salon and his relationship with Jean-Léon Gérôme, who is one of the most famous French Orientalist painters.

In order to offer a new perspective, this chapter explores Pasini’s Orientalist artworks and their public reception in relation with complex national identity issues.



**Figure 20** Street in Damascus, 1871, oil on canvas, 23.6cm×40.2cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

### 3. 1 Alberto Pasini as an Italian Orientalist Painter in Other Countries

Alberto Pasini, the most prominent Italian Orientalist painter, was born in 1826, in Busseto, Italy. His father was a civil servant and his mother was Adelaide Grotti, who after her husband's death, took Pasini to Parma, where he started to study at the Academy. While Pasini was raised and studied in Italy, he mainly built his career in Paris and can be regarded as a French painter rather than an Italian painter (Saint-Raymond 48). It can be said that Pasini's success as an Italian painter in Paris in the late nineteenth century was quite extraordinary and unique. The only other Italian painter to follow a career similar to Pasini's in Paris in the 1860s was Giuseppe Palizzi (1812-1889), who was primarily a painter of animals, although it is noted that Palizzi's relationship with the painter-dealer Goupil was considerably shorter than that of Pasini (Saint-Raymond 48).

Orientalism was a central focus in Pasini's career, and the primary reason for his ability to work in Paris was the positive reception of his Orientalist paintings by the art market of the time. Pasini's career started in 1851 when he received encouragement from his mentor, Paolo Toschi, to venture to Paris. This lively artistic metropolis would evolve into a pivotal environment for nurturing his artistic abilities. In Paris, he learned lithography in Eugenio Ciceri's studio while practising painting. The following year he exhibited a series of thirty drawings of landscapes of central Italy, and in 1853 his name appeared for the first time in the *Salon* catalogue for a lithographic essay. In 1854, when the Crimean War occurred, Pasini's career as a travelling artist began. Théodore Chassériau, who was one of the most influential French Orientalists, had a significant influence on Pasini's career because he enabled Pasini to join a diplomatic mission to the East in 1855-1856 as a substitute for him due to his poor health and inability to travel at the time. This journey took Pasini to Persia, Turkey, Arabia and Egypt. During this trip, he produced a multitude of drawings and lithographs, and also formed a close bond with the Shah of Persia. The exotic and intricate landscapes and scenes he encountered left an indelible mark on his artistic style. Upon his return to Paris, Pasini continued his artistic pursuits as both a painter and a lithographer. His works were exhibited in Parma, where he was duly recognized as an Honorary Academician by the Academy of Parma in 1856.

Throughout the late 1850s and 1860s, Pasini embarked on numerous journeys to the East, including visits to Egypt, Palestine, Persia and Lebanon. These travels deepened his fascination with Oriental themes, and his art evolved to portray them with remarkable detail and luminosity. In 1867, Pasini travelled to Constantinople again, where he stayed for a year. From this trip he brought back to Paris over sixty oil studies, countless drawings and orders for paintings (local scenes with modern settings) for the Sultan and the Viceroy of Egypt. In Constantinople, he met Sultan Abdul Aziz, who commissioned two paintings from him. One of these was an oil painting titled *Türk Süvari Hucumu* (*Turkish Cavalry Attack*) and dated 1868, which celebrated an Ottoman victory. Both paintings can be admired at the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. He returned to Constantinople a third time in 1869 and stayed there for a few months. His travels were not limited to the Middle East, he travelled to Venice and Spain as well.

As his career progressed, Pasini's artistic style shifted away from the dramatic scenes that characterised his work in the late 1850s and 1860s. In this period, Pasini's art became more familiar to the Italian public as well. Pasini's reputation was firmly established by 1870. Despite his great success in France, Pasini returned to Italy like other Italians in France because of the political situation. During the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), many Italians, considered as allies of Prussia, felt unwelcome in France. Pasini was among those who returned to Italy. With assistance, he purchased a small farm in the village of Cavoretto, near Turin, using it as a home base between his continuing journeys. He maintained strong ties with France and French artists after his return to Italy.

Throughout the 1870s, Pasini kept travelling. His destinations included Turkey, Spain and Venice, all of which inspired a wealth of paintings. His international renown grew, resulting in prestigious awards such as the Legion of Honour and gold medals<sup>26</sup>. In his later years, Pasini painted with an emphasis on precise, naturalistic detail, diverging from the dramatic style of his earlier Orientalist works. Despite fewer travels, he remained active in the scene through exhibitions and

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<sup>26</sup> In the article of *L'illustrazione Italiana*, published in 1879, four artists participating to the annual Exposition in Rome are discussed. Pasini is introduced as the first artist of the four and it is said that the "Grand Medaglia d'onore (d'oro)" (Grand Medal of Honour (gold)) was awarded to him.

committee memberships. In 1899, Alberto Pasini passed away in Cavoretto, leaving behind a significant body of work that showcased his versatile and innovative approach to art.

### 3. 2 Orientalist Paintings of Alberto Pasini

In both past and recent catalogues of exhibitions of Italian Orientalist paintings, Pasini's Orientalist paintings are described as being distinct from the most famous French Orientalist paintings by artists such as Delacroix and Gérôme. It is widely said that Pasini's Orient shows the real Oriental landscape, people and customs, rather than those of imagination and fantasy which appear in other Orientalist artworks. Dividing the Italian orientalist paintings into four categories (1. Romanticism, 2. Verismo, 3. Symbolism, 4. Colonialism) and defining the period of verismo<sup>27</sup> as one spanning from 1860 to 1890, Bossaglia refers to Alberto Pasini as the most important orientalist painter of *verismo*, which was characterized by documentary interests (6).

In March 1855, Pasini began to travel to the East, "Egypt, Saudi Arabia, South Yemen and the Persian Gulf, finally arriving in Teheran, where he spent a year and a half" (Thornton 124). Pasini was commissioned to complete a number of paintings by the sovereign. In 1856, "via the Black Sea and Constantinople", Pasini came back to Paris, where he started to send paintings of landscapes of "Persia, Arabia, Azerbaijan and Syria to the annual Salons" (Thornton 124). In Paris, Pasini had the opportunity to associate with other travelling Orientalists from various countries, for instance, Prince Soltykoff, Eugène Flandin and Colonel F. Colombari (Thornton 124). As for his works in the 1850s, *Caffè nella pianura del sud* (*Coffee on the Southern Plain*) (Fig. 21) and *Ronda notturna a Ispahan* (*Night Patrol in Ispahan*) (Fig. 22) are shown in Bossaglia's catalogue. Inspired by other travelling Orientalists in Paris, Pasini continued to travel throughout the 1860s and 1870s. His Orientalist paintings were spread to the Italian public via the travel journals and travel books. From 1868 to 1869,

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<sup>27</sup> *Verismo* was an "Italian literary trend and current of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries characterised, thematically, by strict adherence to the actual reality of situations and facts, environments and characters [...] and, stylistically and linguistically, by adherence to the feelings and speech of the represented subjects and their environment." The term was extended, by analogy, to the "Italian painting movement of the figurative arts of the same period, characterized by a similar theme and stylistic technique." ("Verismo" *Treccani Vocabolario online*)

he stayed in Constantinople. In 1873, he travelled to Asia Minor, Syria and Lebanon. Orientalist paintings produced during these travels directly reflect the travel and have played an important role in spreading the image of the Orient to Italian public. For example, these paintings depict remarkably realistic Oriental landscapes: *Bagno turco a Costantinopoli (Turkish Bath in Constantinople)* (Fig. 23) of 1868, *Fontana turca (Turkish Fountain)* (Fig. 24) of 1873, *Mercato di Costantinopoli presso le mura (Constantinople Market at the Walls)* (Fig. 25) of 1880-1890. While Pasini also produced some of the illustration for *Trois ans en Asie* (1859), the travel journal of the infamous French diplomat Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), known for his racist theories, his drawings and paintings were mainly presented to the Italian public through illustrated periodical journal. For example, throughout the 1870's, *L'illustrazione italiana*, a periodical journal based in Milan, also published by the Treves brothers, printed articles regarding Pasini that contained his illustrations and paintings. The articles of this journal that were published in 1876 and 1878, in particular, refer to Pasini's paintings in the Exposition in Paris, such as *Un mandato di cattura in Oriente (An Arrest Warrant in the East)* and *Hunting with Hawks*. These articles indicate that Pasini's success in Paris was reported in Italy via these illustrated journals.

In addition, he frequently visited Venice and travelled to Spain on two separate occasions. Both of these locations also provided him with a wealth of Orientalist subject matter due to the strong influence of the Orient on their culture. They were each considered a crossroads between East and West and were even regarded as internal others within Europe. In particular, Pasini executed many paintings of the palace of the Alhambra in southern Spain. Many of the paintings he produced during this time were exhibited with his Orientalist paintings in his individual exhibition at the Venice International Art Exposition in 1909.

Even after moving to Italy, Pasini kept the relationship with Goupil and "had a faithful following of American visitors to the Salon" (Thornton 124). Visitors bought many of his works, which can now be found in American and Canadian museums (Thornton 124). Pasini not only sent paintings to other countries, but to cities within Italy as well, including to Florence, and particularly



Turin. In Pasini's oeuvre, Orientalist paintings are considered the most important element. Although most of his artworks remain outside Italy, and he is said to be more popular abroad, Pasini has been regarded as one of the most prominent Italian artists in Italian art history of the nineteenth century. He has been compared with French Orientalist painters by both French and Italian art critics. Undoubtedly Pasini was more successful in Paris, however, as we will see, the Italian public seemed to insist that his superiority as an Orientalist resulted from his Italian-ness. The duality regarding his artistic and national identity is entangled with his travels. His artistic career is multi-layered from international, national, and regional perspectives. In the next section, I intend to shed light on the public reception of Pasini's Orientalist paintings in Risorgimento Italy in order to show that Pasini, while not extremely popular in Italy, did enjoy a wide variety of receptions and played an important role in shaping public perceptions of the East.



**Figure 21** Caffè nella pittura del sud, 1856, Torino, Private collection.



Figure 22 Ronda notturna a Ispahan, 1858, Milano, Private collection.



Figure 23 Bagno turco a Costantinopoli, 1868, Milano, Private collection.



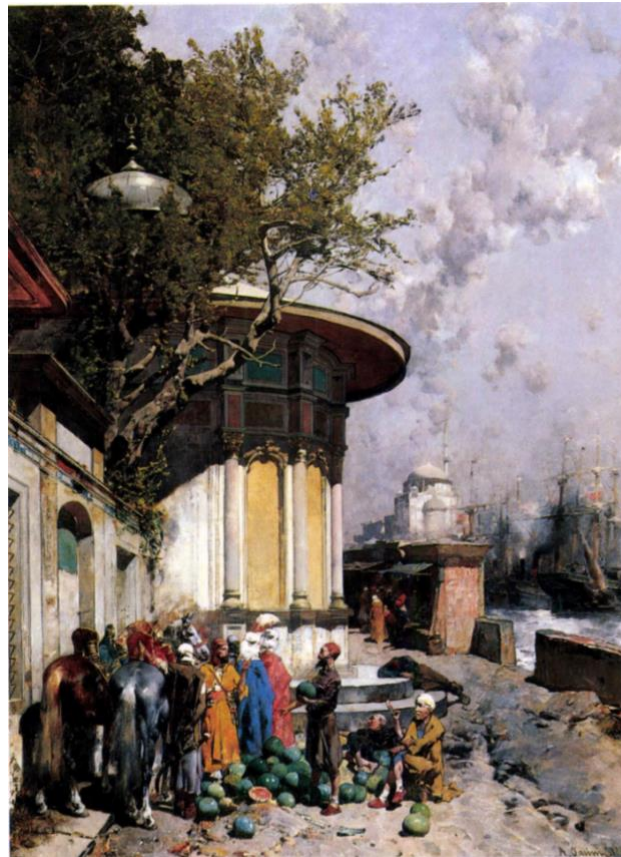


Figure 24 Fontana turca, 1873, Parma, Collection of Art Foundation Cassa di Risparmio.



Figure 25 Mercato di Costantinopoli presso le mura, 1880-1890, Torino, Private collection.

### 3.3 Public Reception of Alberto Pasini's Orientalist Paintings during the Risorgimento

Pasini's Orientalist paintings were popular outside Italy in the late nineteenth century as "he was also present at International Exhibitions; in 1878 he participated in the Universal Exhibition in Paris, where he reached the peak of public acclaim for the Italian section" (Baboni 31). The Venice International Art Exposition in 1909 held an individual exhibition for Pasini, and there one hundred works of his were displayed. According to the general regulations in the catalogue of the Exposition, the most famous artists who had emerged in recent national and foreign Expositions were invited in order to assemble a series of individual exhibitions of distinguished contemporary artists (12). Pasini was one of the artists invited to the Exposition and he had his own room, which was number 22.

In the catalogue of the Exposition, we can see how Pasini was recognised and how his Orientalist paintings were received in the beginning of the twentieth century. The description of his individual exhibition begins with praise directed towards Pasini through criticism of the French Orientalist painter, Benjamin Constant in the journal *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in 1884. In short, the journal refers to the preciseness of the expression of Pasini's Mosque<sup>28</sup>. Soon after that, the catalogue's description of Pasini deals with his lack of popularity in Italy: "Pasini orientalista è pochissimo conosciuto in Italia (Pasini the Orientalist is known very little in Italy)" (86-87). The reason for his relative obscurity in Italy is attributed to the fact that his paintings never appeared in Italian exhibitions, and his dealer, Goupil, tended to sell his paintings directly from his studio to buyers in other countries (86-87). It is noteworthy that this description of Pasini highlights the superiority of his Orientalist paintings compared to those by French artists while referring to his limited popularity in Italy compared to abroad. It seems that the aim of the Exposition is to introduce Pasini's Orientalist paintings and his amazing achievement to visitors, mostly the Italian public. With one hundred paintings in one room in the Exposition, Pasini was advertised as a prominent Italian painter in front of the Italian public.

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<sup>28</sup> The catalogue does not clarify which Pasini's painting of mosque is discussed in the journal *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in 1884.

Pasini's biography in the catalogue also emphasises his connection with Italy from a regional perspective. Although he travelled to many countries throughout his life, in his biography, the travels to the East, to places such as Turkey and Egypt tend to attract more interest possibly due to his prominence as an Orientalist painter. However, this catalogue gives more detail of Pasini's travel to Venice and paintings of Venice than his biographies in other books. Below, Pasini's connection to Venice is emphasised.

Venice (as with Spain where he made an artistic tour with Gérôme) only became a part of Pasini's artistic career in the latter part of his life, and from then on he remained, one might say, in a state of love with the city. He had found in this quiet strip of Italy the memory of his Orient, in the architecture, the atmosphere, the colour and even (which is not difficult to explain with the historical events of the glorious Republic) in the customs and temperament of the people: he found in Venice a reflection of the artistic ideal that absorbed the largest and best part of his existence. (90)<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to see in the catalogue that Venice is regarded as the place where Pasini was reminded of his travels in the Orient. Spain, especially the Alhambra, which Pasini painted frequently, also can be said to be a place which reminded him of what he observed during his trips to the East. Among one hundred of Pasini's paintings displayed at the Exposition in 1909, many artworks with Venetian subjects were included. Many paintings of Spanish subjects, like Alhambra were also displayed. Reading his biography in the catalogue, it is obvious that this individual exhibition shed light on the

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<sup>29</sup>A Costantinopoli fece ritorno ancora una terza volta nel 1869 e vi rimase alcuni mesi. Venezia (come la Spagna dove fece una tournée artistica col Gerome) è entrata nella carriera del Pasini solamente nell'ultima parte della sua vita ed è restata sì può dire allo stato di amore. Egli aveva trovato in questo quieto lembo d'Italia il ricordo del suo Oriente, nell'architettura, nell'atmosfera, nel colore e persino (cosa non difficile a spiegarsi colle vicende storiche della gloriosa Repubblica) negli usi e nell'indole del popolo: egli trovò in Venezia come un riflesso dell'ideale artistico che assorbì la maggiore parte e la migliore parte della sua esistenza.

paintings with Venetian subjects of Pasini no less than his Orientalist paintings even though he is clearly called an Orientalist:

For a decade he consumed Venice with the same love with which he had consumed the Orient: but he did not undertake the same synthesis and elaboration, fusing nature and life into pictorial harmony. So for the Venetian drawings he made an exception that he absolutely never made for those of the Orient, that is, he sold them. (90)<sup>30</sup>

The reason that the Exposition shed light on Pasini's paintings with Venetian subjects may be simply because it was held in Venice. What I would emphasise here is that Venice was considered the place which reminded Pasini of his travels to the East. It can be said that Venice shaped the characterisation of Pasini with its historical role as a passageway between the East and the West. This is implicitly recognized by the catalogue's author. In other exhibitions both in the past and more recently, Pasini's paintings of Venetian subjects receive less focus compared to the middle Eastern subjects. I believe that the Exposition aimed to highlight the specialty of Venice by framing Pasini's great achievement as an Orientalist within the context of his frequent visits to Venice.

The newspaper *Corriere della Sera* shows another aspect of Pasini's reception in a regional context. In an article regarding the Exposition in Venice, Italian painters who had individual exhibitions are introduced. The heading regarding Pasini reads "Alberto Pasini - I piemontesi". According to the article, most of Pasini's artworks exhibited in the Exposition were from the same collection as those displayed in Turin in 1898. According to *Il giornale di belle arti* ( *The Journal of Fine Arts*), the Art Exhibition in Turin was intended to be a notable part of the Italian National Exposition (2). In addition, the director explains that the exhibition deals with the current artists in that period:

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<sup>30</sup> "Per un decennio egli si è sbocconcellata Venezia con lo stesso amore con cui s'era sbocconcellato l'Oriente: ma la sintesi e la elaborazione che fece per questo fondendone la natura e la vita in un'armonia pittorica, non lo intraprese [sic]. Così per gli studi di Venezia egli fece un'eccezione che non avevano avuto mai e che non ebbero mai quelli d'Oriente, cioè ne vendette."

there are so many applications to exhibit, and signed by such well-known names, that it is already legitimate to predict that this Exhibition will have a truly exceptional artistic importance, which will make us return, we believe, to the proud feelings of that memorable 1880, when Italian Art, gathered here in Turin at that time too in noble competition, had such a new and such a confident awareness of its own energy. (2)<sup>31</sup>

The article's author, Edoardo Calandra, begins by first introducing Pasini, with four images of his Orientalist paintings. Calandra's comments appear to be exaggerated, expressing his personal preference for Pasini's work. While Calandra's comments are subjective and emotional, Augusto Ferrero, in the section entitled *Il poeta dell'Oriente (The Poet of the Orient)*, offers a more general view in line with Pasini's biography. Given the way in which Pasini's Orientalist paintings were appreciated in the Turin exhibition, and the fact that the Turin collection was the same as the Venice exhibition, it makes sense that the room for Pasini's solo exhibition in Venice is inside and next to the room for Piedmont, as can be seen on the map.

The connection between Pasini and Piedmont can be found in the biography as well. Due to the political situation, Pasini left Paris and settled at Cavoretto, which was a small village close to Turin. In the catalogue, it is said that:

He built himself a studio there, arranged his mementos and for a number of years divided his time between Paris and the villa in Turin; after 1884, he ended up settling permanently in the villa, making no more than quick trips to Paris. Then he also took pleasure in being a country gentleman, and to friends who visited him, he proudly showed them the exceptional products of his vegetable garden, his vineyard, his fields,

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<sup>31</sup> "Tante sono le domande per esporre, e da così chiari nomi firmate, che già è lecito predire a tale Esposizione una importanza artistica veramente eccezionale, che ci farà ritornare, crediamo, alle orgogliose compiacenze di quel memorabile 1880, quando l'Arte italiana, convenuta anche allora qui in Torino a nobile gara, ebbe così nuova e così sicura coscienza delle proprie energie."

his stable, with greater pride than he felt for his art! But those who were less enthusiastic about this new activity of his could see that the cares of the countryside had not distracted him from painting and in his studio it was possible to find a quantity of prepared or finished paintings of the Orient that accompanied him to Paris or were regularly sent to Goupil to then be dispersed around the world. (91)<sup>32</sup>

Pasini did not come from Piedmont, nor did his artistic career focus on the region. However, there are reasons to link Pasini to Piedmont. Regarding Pasini and Turin, in the article of *Nuova Antologia* published in 1900, Ugo Fleres also refers to the exhibition of Pasini in Turin. Fleres insists that the collection of studies by Pasini was too briefly displayed in the exhibition in Turin and it should have been given more attention (104). It can be seen that Fleres's argument in 1900 was heeded in the Venice International Exposition in 1909.

Even though it seems that Fleres may have affected Pasini's individual exhibition in the Exposition in Venice, Fleres approaches Pasini's career and his artworks slightly differently than the Exposition. In the catalogue of the Venice Exposition, Pasini's lack of publicity in Italy is indicated first, followed by comments on the way in which his artistic achievement is superior to most French Orientalist artists, with a particular focus on the works he produced during his stay in Venice. Moreover, given the emphasis on Pasini's connection to Piedmont, it can be said that he is here regarded in a regional, rather than national context. On the other hand, Pasini is regarded in the national context in *Nuova Antologia* in 1900. Fleres argues that Pasini's paintings should be displayed more prominently in order to distinguish them from other Italian painters' artworks and compares

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<sup>32</sup>“Là si fabbricò uno studio, vi dispose i suoi ricordi e per una serie di anni divise il suo tempo fra Parigi e la villa di Torino; dopo l'84 finì per stabilirsi definitivamente in villa non facendo più a Parigi che rapide escursioni. Allora si compiacque anche a fare il gentiluomo campagnolo ed agli amici che lo visitavano mostrava con orgoglio i prodotti eccezionali del suo orto, della sua vigna, dei suoi campi, della sua stalla, con orgoglio maggiore che non provasse per l'arte sua! Ma chi era meno entusiasta di questa sua nuova attività poteva vedere che le cure della campagna non lo avevano distratto dalla pittura e trovava nello studio una quantità di quadri d'Oriente preparati o finiti che lo accompagnavano a Parigi od erano regolarmente spediti al Goupil per disperdersi quindi per il mondo.”



Pasini as an Italian painter with French Orientalists. In the article, Fleres does not mention Pasini's lack of publicity in Italy, but organises his biography based on the book, *Artisti italiani... (Italian Artists)*, edited by Angelo de Gubernatis with the cooperation of Ugo Matini, and the article *Il poeta dell'Oriente*, by Augusto Ferrero, which is discussed above. As discussed in Chapter 1, De Gubernatis is a leading scholar in Italian Orientalism during the Risorgimento. It can be said that Ugo Fleres's approach to Pasini is to contextualise him within Italian Orientalist studies. Moreover, Fleres's statements seem to argue that Pasini's marvelousness stems from his Italian roots, as can be seen below:

Alberto Pasini sees the Ligurian Riviera and the Andalusian gardens, the deserts of Africa and the Venetian Canals, the beaches of Provence and the Alpine peaks, the Turkish landscape and the Palestinian landscape, with the eyes of a southerner, of an Italian, with his own eyes, without the lens of any school. He reconciles the objectivism that is in the variety of things represented with the subjectivism that is in the stylistic unity of the representation; but in sum, however, his great work acknowledges the superiority of objectivism, without prejudice to his candid personality. (104)<sup>33</sup>

It is noteworthy that Fleres, in praising Pasini's paintings, refers to the artist's eyes as "southern" and "Italian." In emphasizing Pasini's "southern-ness" and "Italian-ness," Fleres distinguishes the painter from Northern European painters and deconstructs the dichotomy between the West and the East. This argument, published in 1900, interestingly exhibits some affinities with Peter Burke's argument (mentioned in the preface), which was published in 2001 and which deconstructs the East/West

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<sup>33</sup>“Alberto Pasini vede la riviera Ligure e i giardini andalusi, i deserti d’Africa e i Canali veneziani, la spiaggia di Provenza e le cime alpestri, il paesaggio turco e il paesaggio palestino, con occhi di meridionale, d’italiano, con gli occhi suoi, senza alcuna lente di scuola. Egli contempera l’oggettivismo che è nella varietà delle cose rappresentate, e il subbiettivismo che è nell’unità stilistica della rappresentazione; ma nella somma, la sua grande opera dà la palma all’obbiettivismo, senza pregiudizio della schietta personalità.”

dichotomy in postcolonial discourses on Orientalist paintings by exploring the complexity of Oriental paintings. The aims and contexts of these two arguments are, of course, quite different: the aim of Fleres, who lived in a transitional period between the Risorgimento and a more nationalistic phase marked by the development of colonialism, is not to deconstruct the postcolonial discourses on Orientalist paintings but rather to emphasize the exceptional characteristics of “Italian-ness” and, in particular, the greatness of nineteenth century Italian art, which was generally regarded as being less important than its northern European counterparts and Italian art of other periods. Fleres states that:

Pasini's importance in the history of art is greater than the value of his work considered in and of itself, because, like the two painters to whom I have compared him, he is one of those artists, now almost all gone, who broadened the horizon of Italian painting, bringing the conscientious study of truth to where the habits of mannerism reigned.

(103)<sup>34</sup>

In conclusion, the view of Pasini differs depending on the exhibition, article, journal even just within Italy during almost the same period. Pasini's Orientalist paintings were contextualised in Italian art history and received as Italian artworks by the public during the Risorgimento. Pasini was considered as an important Italian artist soon after his death in later Risorgimento Italy. Even though he is not regarded as an “Italian” artist, but rather treated as a French artist in other countries, Italian catalogues of exhibitions, journals and newspapers treat him as an Italian Orientalist painter as discussed above. As can be seen in Fleres's comment on Pasini, “the eyes of a southerner, of an Italian,” it is obvious that Pasini is contextualised in Italian art history of the nineteenth century as an Italian Orientalist painter. Furthermore, his superiority is said to result from his “Italian-ness”. We can see Italian

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<sup>34</sup> “L'importanza del Pasini nella storia dell'arte è superiore al valore della sua opera considerata da sé e per sé, poichè, come i due pittori ai quali l'ho paragonato, egli è uno di quegli artisti, oggi quasi tutti scomparsi, i quali allargarono l'orizzonte della pittura italiana, portando il coscienzioso studio del vero là dove regnavano le consuetudini del manierismo.”

national identity was already flourishing, though it was still in the process of being constructed when Pasini was appreciated by the Italian public.

## Conclusion

Italian Orientalism and Orientalists have not been adequately researched compared with their British, French and Germany counterparts. This is due to the late arrival of Oriental studies in Italy opposed to those northern European countries. Although recent scholarship has offered new perspectives on Italian Orientalism and Orientalists, these studies generally focus on travel literature and do not pay sufficient attention to Italian Orientalist paintings. In the historiography of Italian Orientalist paintings, Italian Orientalist paintings have not been considered in any way unique or different from overarching European tradition of Orientalist paintings. My aim has been to shed light on Orientalist paintings in the Italian context by examining the recent historiography of Italian Orientalism, and, in particular, by highlighting the connection of these artworks to the question of national identity.

Taking Francesco Hayez as a case study allowed us to explore several connections between Italian Orientalism and the Risorgimento. A number of his Orientalist paintings, most notably, *The Refugee of Parga* (1826-1831), shows an especially-strong focus on Greece. Greek subjects enabled Hayez to paint patriotic works while avoiding the limitations of Austrian censorship. His artworks with Greek subjects reflect the social and political situation in Risorgimento Italy and often promoted patriotic feelings. When his Orientalist paintings feature female nudity and scenes from the Old Testament, such as Bathsheba, they were not universally appreciated by exhibition visitors, particularly earlier in his earlier career. However, over the course of his career, he became increasingly famous with these Orientalist works eventually being considered masterpieces loved by public. Such was the popularity of these pieces that, upon his death, the *Corriere della Sera* reported them as some of the most important artworks of his life. It is noteworthy that, in the retrospective exhibition held in Brera in 1883, the public did not feel the need to categorise his Orientalist paintings into a specific group, separate from the rest of his body of work. In this sense, it can be said that Oriental motifs and subjects were regarded as fundamental part of his artworks. The Oriental aspects were in harmony with Hayez's aesthetic style and in conversation with the political situation of the time.

Alberto Pasini's case offers us the way to consider Italian Orientalist paintings as distinct from French and other European Orientalist paintings. While Alberto Pasini was not very popular in Italy during his lifetime, soon after his death, he was declared the leading Italian Orientalist painter as compared to French Orientalist painters. As we observed in the case of the international Exposition in Venice, alongside the periodical journals and newspaper reports, Pasini was re-contextualized in the Italian art history tradition and was only reappropriated by Italian art critics as a truly "Italian" painter later in his life. In fact, "Italianess" and "Southernness" are also discussed as the defining characteristics of Italian Orientalist paintings more generally, and the reason for its superiority opposed to French Orientalism. Indeed, Ugo Fleres made significant remarks words to this effect in an important article on Pasini published in *Nuova Antologia*. Regardless, thanks to the publication of his paintings and drawings in travel books, travel journals and illustrated periodicals, Pasini greatly influenced the Italian perception of the East. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the discourse around national identity was still underway, as the era of the Risorgimento yielded to that of colonialism. From the perspective of this transition, it is noteworthy that the 1909 Venice International Exposition took place just two years before the Italo-Turkish War (1911). It can be said that, through Pasini's drawings, the Italian public had a crucial opportunity to develop an awareness of the Orient during the early phases of Italian colonialism and just prior to the major historical watershed represented by the invasion of Libya.

The perception of Italian Orientalist paintings was fluid and ambivalent in Risorgimento Italy. Orientalist motifs and subjects were intermingled in Italian culture and arts. Italian Orientalist paintings during the Risorgimento were also deeply connected to the contemporary social and political situation, including issues of censorship, the beginnings of nationalism and the fantasy of travel. The subjects of the paintings and their public reception were greatly affected by this context. In this sense, although Italian Orientalist paintings have not been judged as important in the historiography of Orientalist paintings and Italian art history, Italian Orientalist paintings can be regarded as characteristic of their era and its politics. By highlighting the ambiguity of the reception

of Italian Orientalist paintings and the image of the East during the Risorgimento, they provide a fascinating insight into the nineteenth century Italian public sphere.

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