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Book Review

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Life Story and Pictures of Hasan Rıza, the Martyr Painter

by Süheyl Ünver

Edirne, 2015

135 pages

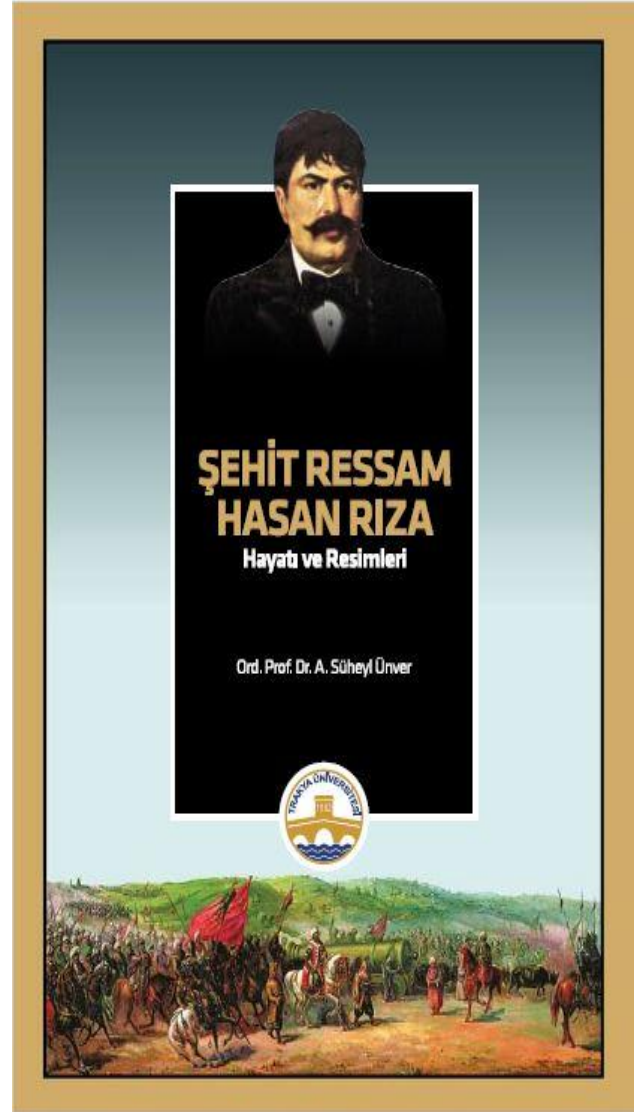
ISBN 9789753741859

His works are probably near us or in the hall of a museum that we have already visited or will visit later. And we pass them by irrelevantly. Süheyl Ünver gives information about his works, their explanation and where their originals are for everybody who wonders, wants to know and visits.

Hasan Rıza who added meaning to Contemporary Turkish Art is a great personality in our Painting Art history. Even though his works are known quite much, unfortunately, he is not known sufficiently as his works. He has got works in many branches such as landscape, portrait, but, particularly, he painted war scenes in the canvas. He illustrated himself as one of the heroes of the painting he drew. This situation is like a signature he used in his paintings. For instance, in the work which described entrance of Fatih the Conqueror from Topkapı to İstanbul that we met in the history pages for a long time, known by many people and supposed to have been belonged to Zanora, the one who painted the painting of a janissary who was next to the white horse Fatih the Conqueror rode and had a rifle in his hand was not anybody else, but our painter.

There used to be war painters who painted what they saw while they were walking around the fronts throughout the years when the usage of cameras were not common. As one of them, Hasan Rıza was born in Üsküdar in 1858, joined the army as a volunteer when 1877-78 Russian War broke out, was charged with guarding the Italian newspaper painter. The friendship between the Italian painter and him shaped his life, he left the army and it conducted him to work with the Italian painters in Europe.

As a result of the researches made by Süheyl Ünver about this patriot painter whose paintings were known by everybody, the resource called 'the Life story and



paintings of Martyr Painter Hasan Rıza was published firstly in 1971. Today, this book which still continues to preserve being the most comprehensive resource about Hasan Rıza was adapted to today by a more understandable Turkish by Nurullah Koltaş and provided it to be more comprehensive for the new generation.

In his work deal with Hasan Rıza, Süheyl Ünver firstly gave a place to his biography, thus, allowed us to learn significant breaking points of his life from our painter. His first journey to join the army, the friendship between him and the Italian painter he was charged with guarding, his first disappointment, why he went to Europe choosing his love for painting at the year he will graduate as a military officer from the Navy School and how he felt when he returned 12 years later. Hasan Rıza mentioned about why he refused the officer rank and chose being a painter after he returned Turkey: “My clear expressions telling my wish and need for a quiet life far away from the rank and the awards spent from the national treasure provided me to live in such this way since then” (p. 21).

In his book, our author mentioned several points related to Hasan Rıza's approaching for 'art and more topics' and reflection of his education in Florence, Napoli in Italy to his art. Besides, he gave place to the sentences of Hasan Rıza about his art told by himself. Hasan Rıza who had a workshop in Karaağaç, Edirne was martyred as he was trying to save his paintings when Edirne was occupied in 1913. If you go to Edirne, visit the tomb stone on which having a painting of a painter's canvas certainly at Martyr's cemetery located near the bridge in Karaağaç. And pay attention to what Süheyl Ünver mentioned about what must be done for Hasan Rıza Bey. As our painter said 'To gain great people to a nation, you have to teach the great people that nation raised'. How many great people who died next to its country's border while trying to save his art can you find?