

# **Materiality and the history of politics**

“Layers and Connections of the Political”  
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## Abstract

Flowing beards, severe redingotes crossed by tricolor sashes, plumed hats and shiny helmets. The city streets and squares of Italy during 1848, the year of the national revolution, presented a panorama that was as chromatically rich as it was symbolically dense, often directly referencing to plots and images of the major cultural products of the time (opera, theatre, historical novel, painting). The revolution affected the bodies of patriots, that became tableaux vivants for the claims of the “Risorgimento”, and produced a new process of politicization of objects and elements of daily life. In the framework of an increasing historiographical attention to the symbolic aspect of political actions, the paper focuses on these visual and material elements (cloths, hats, marks, objects), as narrated, represented (and criticized) in a wide documentation of memories, illustrated magazines, lithographs and leaflets published between 1847 and 1850.

## Author information

**Carlotta Sorba** is professor in Contemporary European History within the Department of History, Geography and the Ancient world at the University of Padua, Italy. Since 2012 Sorba is director of the CSC (Interuniversity Center of Cultural History), founded by a convention between the University of Padua, Bologna, Venice, Pisa, Verona and Salerno. Her research interests include the cultural history of 19th century Europe, especially the relationship between cultural productions (music, theatre, proto-mass culture), society and politics. Among her last publications: *Il melodramma della nazione. Politica e sentimenti nell'eta del Risorgimento* (Rome: Laterza 2015); a special issue of the journal "Contemporanea" (4, 2017) on *The clothing of politics: dress, appearances and political identities (XIXth-XXth centuries)*; with Enrico Francia an edited volume on *Political objects in the age of revolutions* (forthcoming Rome: Viella 2020).

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**Wednesday, 23 June** - Session 13 - **10,30-12,00 CET (Webex)** - Panel – *The political life of things. Material culture and politics in Risorgimento Italy*

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