Introduction

The Mediterranean[1] is commonly perceived not only as the cradle of Europe, but also as a conceptual region that cannot be enclosed by the traditional idea of national borders;[2] the region may be indeed better defined by its natural delimitations.[3] Even though its symbolic meaning for European societies is well acknowledged, very few studies have attempted to investigate the perception of the Mediterranean by the Chinese people, exploring its formation, development, and relevance. More specifically, this article aims to assess if and to what extent the Mediterranean came to be described and perceived as a transcultural space in China, taking as a case study a fundamental but unknown travelogue, *Oumei manyou riji* □□□□□□ [Diary of a journey in Europe and the United States]. Given that the Mediterranean has been defined not as "un passage, mais d'innombrables paysages. Non pas une mer, mais une succession de mers. Non pas une civilisation, mais des civilisations entassées les unes sur les autres,"[4] it would be difficult to aim for an all-encompassing representation in the limited span of an article. For this reason, I decided to focus on the description in *Oumei manyou riji* of relics both as cultural finds and comparison examples. In fact, as brilliantly described by Predrag Matvejević, "Mediteran nije samo zemljopis"[5] [the Mediterranean is not only geography] and should be described adopting other perspectives than mere geographical ones. Even though descriptions of people might work as well for the purpose of this article, I decided not to concentrate on those provided by Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou, since they are one of the most difficult themes when dealing with the Mediterranean.[6]

The choice of both *Oumei manyou riji* and the Mediterranean as a focus is not a coincidence. The former is a fundamental milestone in the late Qing and Republican era odeporic production. The authors of this travelogue, almost unknown in present secondary literature, are Chen Yifu □□□ (1869–1948) and his son Chen Dayou □□□ (exact dates unknown); they were not literati or diplomats, as were most of the authors of previous travelogues of this period, but were known in the first place as entrepreneurs. They were, however, well integrated into the scholarly milieu of the epoch: famous personalities, such as Yang Shounan □□□ (1868–1948), Jin Liang □□ (1878–1962), and Zhao Yuanli □□□ (1868–1939), wrote the prefaces and annotations for *Oumei manyou riji*. Both this integration in the world of scholars and the entrepreneurial formation account for the specific role of *Oumei manyou riji*. As evidenced in secondary literature,[7] Chen Yifu's background was strongly linked to

his historic era, and consequently this was true also of his (and his son's) travelogue: he was a renowned patriotic entrepreneur in a semi-colonial China and dedicated his life to revitalising his country mainly through industrial development.

The Mediterranean, on the other hand, has always been intimately linked to China. It was Marco Polo, a Mediterranean, who discovered and presented China to his Western contemporaries;[8] we shall see further on in this article the connection between Polo's city of birth, Venice, and China. Furthermore, previous research has already drawn a fruitful comparison between the historical layers of the Mediterranean and those of China.[9]

1. **The first steps toward Europe**

According to research by the anthropologist David Tomas,[10] cross-cultural contact contributes to the formation of spatial zones between opposing cultures, particularly "when cultural elements, such as material artefacts and human bodies, are deployed against or are projected into alien territories." These zones between cultures can be indeed described as transcultural spaces; even though such spaces are difficult to perceive, given their transitory nature, and are the "ephemera of cultural contact," they are worth studying for a variety of reasons. In fact, they penetrated the Chinese cultural layers, also thanks to the contribution of the first explorers of the Song and Yuan dynasties, continuing with the Jesuit and Protestant missionaries, until the production of travel diaries, especially after the first Chinese diplomatic mission to the West in 1866.

As for the transcultural representation in *Oumei manyou riji*, before switching to artefacts and cultural relics, we shall start the analysis of the representations of Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou's trip with one of the most noteworthy relevant topics: food. Food is indeed considered a transcultural commonplace par excellence and "has long been used as a powerful means to establish and maintain relationships with individuals and groups."[11] Chinese people travelling with the Chens felt the necessity to bring their own chef, since there were many Chinese on the ship from Shanghai to Europe (Chen 1937, p. 9B:[12] "□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□"). Even though in *Oumei manyou riji* we can read different descriptions of travellers from China integrating well with others on board the ship, they all felt the need of keeping food as a connection with their motherland; indeed, cookbooks were an instrument used in European colonies to retain ties with the motherland, as well as for group

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solidarity,[13] and this was no exception.[14]

As hinted above, one of the peculiarities of the diary is the distinct cultural and working background of the Chens when compared to authors of previous travelogues;[15] this discrepancy is projected in many representations of foreign cultural and material landscapes within Oumei manyou riji. For example, Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou’s entrepreneurial experience is mirrored in the descriptions of the ship they were travelling on, with numerous data and technical terminology about engineering aspects of their travel, such as fuel consumption and boat parts, or details about the speed of different means of transport they were moving with. This information was provided by the authors in brackets in English.

Oumei manyou riji is also representative of the social stratification and the view that Chinese travellers thought Westerners had on the topic. The Chens, in fact, describe in detail the classes in which the ship was divided, focusing in particular on the presence of many Indians (“印人”). Among them, they reflect Chinese people’s surprise at the fact that men wore earrings and women had rings or pearls on their noses. Also, according to the author of Oumei manyou riji, as the section close to the infirmary was extremely dirty, all passengers passing near it had to hold their noses, given that “Westerners pay utmost attention to hygiene” (Chen 1937, p. 9B: “有統艙均下等社會人士其中印人甚夥男多帶耳環女有穿鼻孔以環或珠者艙內污穢最奇者船上醫室即在其旁旅客莫不掩鼻而過西人最重衛生”).

Oumei manyou riji can be read as a source of historical information, provided by Chen Yifu and his son through the prism of their travel account. They mention (Chen 1937, p. 10A) a picture taken by a certain “賀公使,” conceivably a reference to the general He Yaozu 賀耀組 (Ho Yao-tsu, 1889–1961), who was ambassador to Turkey between 1934 and 1936. Allusions to other political figures are scattered throughout the travelogue: “張賀二公使” includes a reference to perhaps Zhang Jingjiang 張靜江 (Chang Ching-chiang, 1877–1950) or most likely to Zhang Huichang 張惠長 (Chang Wai-jung 1899–1980), ambassador to Cuba from 1935 to 1937.

Of course, as on a modern cruise, the authors of the travelogue also enjoyed moments of leisure: they focus in particular on a night-time dance party (Chen 1937, p. 10B) in which we read about a wonderful Asian woman and an Italian man dressed as an Arabian dancer moving on the stage (“某華女士飾旗裝甚華麗盧夏二女士亦均參加九時奏音樂舞者登場紙條紛飛亟形熱鬧尤以一意國男子作阿拉伯舞者最為出色”).

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“Transcultural masquerades” as well are “characterized by mimicry, alterity, and the tensions and pleasures,” which are associated with the cultural diversity of the age of colonialism.[16] The Chens thought this masquerade was worth recording in their travelogue, perhaps because it could convey a feeling of exoticism to attract more readers.

2. The Mediterranean as a cultural landscape

The real immersion in the atmosphere of what we commonly perceive as the Mediterranean starts after their arrival in Cairo. The Chens focus on the climate of the capital city and its Egyptian museum (Chen 1937, p. 11A), where a lot of relics on display strike the Chinese travellers’ attention. The authors carefully describe the rationale behind the idea of mummies (“古物多種陳列門前多石棺石像均極龐大樓上有木乃伊[Mummy]多具埃及人信靈魂不滅之說”), including notes on the process of preservation of bodies and of sarcophagi. The Chinese travellers are particularly struck by the sarcophagus of “Tutan Khamen.” We find in this passage for the first time a storytelling technique often used in Oumei manyou riji: the analogous products back in the Chens’ motherland, China, would pale in comparison with the exquisiteness of the techniques of Egyptian objects and artefacts (“製造之巧妙雕刻之精緻直使我東方古國退避三舍”).[17] At times, as shown later in the article, this technique is applied instead to point out weaknesses of Western artefacts or values, providing examples of transcultural comparisons and highlighting the Chens’ mixture of pride and confrontation towards their own culture.

The Chens complain about the lack of time to properly appreciate the museum and its contents in Cairo. After a short break in the hotel, the convoy proceeds to visit other relics, including the pyramids and the Sphinx. On the journey from their hotel to their destination, the travellers had to pass through a portion of desert and change cars for camels; Oumei manyou riji adopts this break from the cultural immersion in the Egyptian landscape—both natural and cultural—to provide a description (Chen 1937, p. 12A) of the temperament of camels and linguistic considerations as to why in Chinese pyramids are called jinzita 金字塔, also furnishing detailed information on their measurements, as was typical with the Chens’ entrepreneur background.

According to the traditional vision that pyramids were essentially either the embodiment of Egyptians’ mathematical knowledge or the representation of historical authority,[18] the Chens analyse them as products that were built so the power of the Pharaoh could be

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perceived concretely by his subjects (“小民望而生畏其君主威權可見一斑”).

The stay in Egypt is distinguished by the insistent mention of the unfavourable weather conditions, for example when travellers had to step off the camels and strongly felt the heat. After paying a gratuity, they were allowed into the pyramid, where they finally found refreshment from the scorching temperature while the guide, who could speak English, explained the interiors (Chen 1937, p. 12A).

Once the convoy finished visiting Cairo, it headed for a boat to Port Said, in which we read a description of men wearing hats and women with black veils on their heads, similar to Chinese Buddhist nuns; the Chens compare them to Western sisters (“此處男子多著土耳其式帽穿寬大長袍類我國僧侶女多頭披黑紗由後觀之略似西洋女教士”).

An important portion of the convoy’s passage in Egypt is significantly devoted to the description of the Suez Canal, which passengers learnt about through a small booklet they purchased (“散步波賽街中購得運河略圖一冊附有簡短說明對混合之歷史略得梗概”). Even though the Suez Canal cannot be considered a relic, it is indeed a fundamental leg for Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou as Chinese travellers: the Suez Canal is one of the two doors to the Mediterranean and also served as

privileged access to the sea for many Chinese travellers to Europe after 1869.[19] As reported in detail in Oumei manyou riji, the booklet narrated the history of the canal: after conquering Egypt, Napoleon once planned to excavate the canal in order to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. However, given a mistake in the measurement,[20] the feat could not be accomplished. It was the French diplomat and entrepreneur Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805–1894) who would promote and complete the construction, which the authors provide specific information on, including depth, width, and measurement. Before that, communications between Europe and Asia could pass only through the Cape of Good Hope. As was typical with their practical backgrounds, the Chens detail the shortened distances between various cities in the two continents before and after 1869 and, most of all, the cost of the construction. According to the Oumei manyou riji, half of the financial capital was provided by the French and half by “Mohommed Said” (sic.: in Chinese 賽氏, Chen 1937, 12B), a reference to the Egyptian political figure Mohamed Sa’id Pasha (1822–1863). Control, however, was soon gained by England; in fact, by December 1875, the British government became a large shareholder of the Suez Canal Company, owning forty-four percent of the shares, only one percentage point less than France.[21]

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According to Chen, most of the boats crossing the canal were consequently those of France and England, but some were also from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Norway, Japan, the USA, and even the extremely small Free City of Danzig. Compared to the number of foreign vessels, Chinese boats were never seen crossing the Suez Canal, as supposedly confirmed to the Chens by a long-standing local worker (“於一八六九年所過船舶以英法為多荷德意挪日美次之即蕞爾坦澤自由市亦有船隻通過獨具有萬餘里海岸之我國竟付缺如無怪有工作於該河數十年者竟以未見我國船隻為異也”). As seen in other examples throughout this article, complaints by the authors on China’s attitude compared to other visited countries are not uncommon in Oumei manyou riji. At times, therefore, not only the Mediterranean, but more generally the West, is used both as a transcultural paradigm and a cross-cultural comparison example to point out the weakness of their native land. The opposite is also true: instances where Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou’s commitment and pride for their native country point to deficiencies in the places they visited are not uncommon (see, among others, Chen 1937, 27B: 廣場之東舊時城垣猶存惟甚矮小無我國城垣之雄壯: “Ancient bastions are located East of the square, but rather short and small; they cannot compare to the magnificence of bastions in my country”).[22]

3. Italy as the main Mediterranean goal, between cultural relics and comparisons

Other than Egypt, the main representative of the Mediterranean in Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou’s Oumei manyou riji is Italy; a substantial portion of the diary is devoted to the peninsula for a variety of personal and historical reasons.[23] The authors describe Italy as the cradle of beautiful landscapes (“人言意大利為藝術淵藪信不誣也”; Chen 1937, p. 13A); the first detailed introduction to the country is about Venice and the Doge’s palace (“總制府”).

Venice is presented as the city of water, with no signs whatsoever of chariots (“有澤國之稱出門除步行外概須乘船無車馬踪跡,” Chen 1937, p. 13A), and as the first city in order of importance in Italy and Europe as well. That is why, as the saying goes, you can skip visiting Rome, but you cannot miss sightseeing in Venice (“意大利之本冠全歐而威尼斯又為豪商富賈所集故有甯不遊羅馬不可不遊威尼斯之諺語,” Chen 1937, p. 13A).[24] This infatuation for the city of Venice is a pervasive topic in Chinese literature and related textual production, starting at least from the fourteenth century and the well-known account of Marco Polo (1254–1324); in fact, the Italian city has been long compared with the Chinese city of Suzhou. Even though the presence of bridges in the latter[25]—although at times overestimated in numbers—makes the comparison plausible, there is a subtle difference in the way Suzhou itself was interpreted: while Europeans perceived it mainly

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through the comparison with Venice, Chinese, Japanese, and other East Asians could “appreciate Suzhou on its own terms—or rather, in terms of its preeminence in scholarly Chinese culture […].[26] The opposite, however, is not true for Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou’s travelogue: Venice is not examined in comparison with Suzhou, but only for its personal beauty and cultural relics. In Oumei manyou riji the Italian city is particularly praised for its mosaics (“文石”): with their different colours and patterns, mosaics are an Italian specialty, as the Chens put it, making the buildings of Venice similar to oil paintings (“以各色碎石砌成各種花樣如人物花鳥建築等遠觀與油畫無異[…]此為意大利特產發源於茲地”; Chen 1937, p. 13B).

Like contemporary tourists, the members of the convoy are fascinated by the antiquity of Venice’s buildings, St. Mark’s Church in particular, dating back to the eleventh century, according to the authors’ information (“聖馬可教堂即有十一世紀物,” Chen 1937, p. 13B). An interesting switch in the narration can be read here: “隨父親及俞君[…]” [following my father and Mister Yu…]. We might infer that the whole diary is narrated from the point of view of Chen Dayou, reporting the words his father Yifu dictated, and that only at times the paternal figure emerges; however, we do not know who the Mister Yu referred to is.

The description of St. Mark’s Square is extremely detailed. The Chens emphasise it as the most flourishing and beautiful part of Venice, and dedicate a careful representation of the square itself, St. Mark’s Campanile, its peculiar pigeons, and the general atmosphere of the city (“鐘樓造於十五世紀[…]飛鴿成羣畧不畏人飼之則就手中來食[…],” Chen 1937, p. 13B). They particularly refer to the fact that on Sunday nights only music in the square could be heard, given that the musical penchant of Italian people was higher than all other countries. The Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari is the next step of their visit to the city; as usual in Oumei manyou riji, the authors detail the time of completion of the church and information on the relics stored inside, such as the heart of the artist Antonio Canova (“意人音樂興趣獨高於各國也[…]此處最華麗教堂之一意名雕刻家坎喏瓦[…]葬心於此,” Chen 1937, p. 13B).

The bridge of Rialto elicits enthusiastic appraisals from father and son, particularly for its barrel vaults; the Chens heard from unspecified sources that the bridge has five to six hundred years of history, and the visit is a chance to buy some mosaics, as well as witness the glassblowing process taking place on the bridge stalls (“利奧爾陀橋[…]有窗頂形[…]當場製各器皿以示作法,” Chen 1937, p. 13B). Most of the workers of these stalls were women and their craftsmanship was so excellent that an expensive table could be sold for ten thousand liras,

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corresponding to approximately twenty thousand custom gold units,[27] literally leaving people breathless (“往觀製花邊者多女工價亦奇昂一大桌布花樣為某名人設計售十萬里耳合我國二萬元左右令人咋舌,” Chen 1937, pp. 13B–14A).

The description of St. Mark’s Basilica the following day follows the same pattern seen in Oumei manyou riji: it was built during the ninth century, but restored in the eleventh. In the passage we see for the first time in the travelogue an appreciation of Western cultural relics for their supposed resemblance with Oriental counterparts: the five cupolas on its top have an “Oriental feeling” (“圓頂五尊頗具東方氣象,” Chen 1937, p. 14A). This was due perhaps to the presence of four horses, brought from Constantinople and moved to Paris by Napoleon for only a short period; the fact that they were moved to other places during the First World War was an epitome of their value (“四銅馬立門上騰躍如生一二零四年由君士但丁堡[…]以此拿破崙曾移至巴黎但不久即歸還歐戰時亦將四馬藏避他處可証其寶貴,” Chen 1937, p. 14A).

The convoy also visited the Doge’s palace, with its famous painting “Il paradiso” [The paradise], probably the largest one in the world. The last stop before a visit to the Lido is St. Mark’s Campanile. In this case, it is a hotel that is used as an example: the Excelsior, a new building in the Lido. There is a discrepancy, however, in the dates of construction reported in the travelogue: while it is true that the Excelsior opened in 1907 or 1908, in 1937 a new place was built close to it to host movie screenings, one of the most advanced movie theatres in Italy at that time and a success for the hotel as well.[28] The magnificence of the building, as well as the completeness of its interiors, filled Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou with regret that there was nothing comparable in similar seaside resorts in China, such as Qingdao and Beidaihe (“我國青島北戴河諸地即無類此者,” Chen 1937, pp. 14B).

4. History, literature, and other considerations on the road to France

The journey of the convoy to Verona, passing by Padua and Vicenza, is a chance for the Chens to describe in careful detail the history of Romeo and Juliet, from the tragic plot to their burial site, to the history of the Verona Arena, compared with Rome’s Colosseum. As read earlier in this article, this is not the first time that Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou mix various literary, historical, and broadly-defined cultural elements in Oumei manyou riji; their travelogue is a testimony of both the places visited and their relevant cultural heritage. This should come as no surprise, since according to previous research, recording travel

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experiences can open various discourses on the others: “Fondamentalement discours sur l’Autre, regard sur l’hétérogène, le récit de voyage offre donc la perspective exaltante et démultipliée de l’ouverture sur les discours des autres.”[29] This enriches the travelogue, even though it makes it depart from its original heuristic intention: “le voyage livresque qu’il effectue le constitue en genre littéraire mais le détourne de sa mission première et heuristique, qui est de rendre compte du monde nouveau découvert.” This link with reality makes the travelogue a factual text, keeping at the same time connections with fiction: “Ainsi, alors même qu’il est ancré dans le réel, le récit de voyage—genre dit «factuel» (Genette)—entretient des liens avec la fiction.”[30]

After crossing the border between France and Italy, in which to the Chens’ surprise there was not much difference in the landscape, with the exception that Italian roads were better equipped (“□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□” Chen 1937, p. 28A), the convoy arrives in Nice. Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou take note of the extremely high prices of local meals, with the cost of a meal equivalent to one month of school meals in China (“□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□”).

A visit to the Casino de la Jetée, dismantled only a few years after their visit to Europe, was their next stop after a short break in the hotel. As soon as they got inside the building, the visitors were asked about their ages. Mister Xia, one of the members of the convoy, replied twenty-one, since according to the regulations, people under that age were not allowed inside. The authors describe the one-hour tour inside the casino and some of the attractions, including dance representations—this is also a chance to compare them to the relevant shows in China, this time to the detriment of the latter (“□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□” Chen 1937, p. 28B). A more involved visit to the Monument aux Morts, honouring the fallen of the First World War, is brushed off with few characters: “□□□□□□□□□□□□□” (We went back on the same road, passing by the hotel and stopping at the Monument aux Morts). The visit to the city of Nice is concluded with climatological considerations about the Mediterranean; Nice is in fact known for its Mediterranean climate among the Chinese, even though there were different opinions in other accounts of the time, particularly pertaining to the city’s famous “vent de Bise.”[31]

Conclusions

In *Oumei manyou riji*, the Mediterranean appears at first glance as a collection of places,

more than a unitarian, even if fluid, entity. Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou's background as entrepreneurs justifies the presence of technicalities and description of infrastructures; their "hidden" role as scholars, however, surprisingly entails descriptions of cultural and immaterial landscapes of the cities visited, from Egypt to Italy to France, from Port Said to Nice to Venice. The pattern used for the descriptions of historical landscapes and cultural relics in the travelogue is indeed almost the same throughout the text: a brief introduction, with historical information highlighting the old history of the relic itself, and considerations about the cultural and historical novelty of the place visited. Most of the time, however, this was only meant to arouse the reader's interest more than out of a sense of pure exoticism—and comparisons from different perspectives and different outcomes with similar products in the motherland. It is exactly the last point that makes it possible to consider the description of the Mediterranean in *Oumei manyou riji* as "transcultural": at times, these comparisons take the form of the authors using the countries visited as an epitome to point out what they consider weaknesses of their motherland, at times weaknesses—from various perspectives—of the Western countries visited.

The transcultural production depicted, including cultural artefacts and relics, is an extremely complex matter: "the space of transcultural art is not Euclidean, but interstitial—between cultures, experience and imagination, memory and loss, desire and anxiety, and dream and reality."[32] The art described by the Chens places itself exactly at the intersection between two or even more different cultures, the imagination, experience, and expectations of the traveller and the entrepreneur, and of the Chens' desire for their country to imitate—or reject—the places and relics they saw.

On the other hand, contrary to the tangible artefacts and cultural relics presented in *Oumei manyou riji*, the contact zones produced by travel narratives are imaginary. These zones can be described as "atopia," a term that Roland Bartes indicated as a product of texts: "le système est en lui débordé, défait."[33] The atopic space of transcultural arts has spatialities and temporalities that "may offer cultural self-criticism or a momentary interrogation […]":[34] this was exactly the case of the Chens' descriptions of Europe, and the Mediterranean in particular, with self-criticism and interrogations for a possible model for China, as well as judgements and suggestions on the Western countries visited.

Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou's travels can indeed be considered a mixture of three of the five

steps in the so-called "□□□□□□□ (five shengs pattern of experoutination)":[35] the "industrial experoutination" (*shengye* □□), the "idealistic experoutination" (*shengsi* □□), and the "trade experoutination" (*shengyi* □□). Although it most likely started due to the first intention, in order to study the industrial technologies of Western countries, *Oumei manyou riji* resulted in a pleasant and culturally-connotated text, particularly pertaining to the Mediterranean section of the travels, to which most of the text is dedicated. This is mostly due to the father and son's background and the unique era China was going through at the time: in the semi-colonial era after the Opium War, China's view of the West was especially complicated. The fear and shame brought by the defeat in war and colonisation, the admiration of new technology, and the yearning for a modern society form a mixture of pride and confrontation towards the Chens' own culture. Chen Yifu was a patriotic entrepreneur and philanthropist in this era, and his determination and contribution to revitalise China through industrial development are renowned and evident within the written characters of *Oumei manyou riji*.[36]

More generally, the two "worlds" presented in this article, the Mediterranean and China, were always connected; in fact, they were two of the main passages in the travels around the Old World. However, until the nineteenth century, there was an imbalance between the European knowledge of China, and the knowledge of Europe and the Mediterranean by the Chinese people.[37] The odeporic production put into records starting from the first mission to Europe in 1866 tried to successfully fill that gap. The admiration, and at times criticism, by the father and son recorded in their travelogue and analysed in many episodes above is derived exactly from this discrepancy and the complicated historical factors of China's history in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century.

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Endnotes

[1] This article was conceived from a conference panel, organised by Prof. Renata Vinci for the AISC (Italian Association for Chinese Studies) biennial meeting, held at Sapienza University of Rome in September 2023.

[2] Predrag Matvejević (Michael Henry Heim, trans.), *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 10 and passim.

[3] David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xxiii–xxiv.

[4] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée: l’espace et l’histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), 8.

[5] Predrag Matvejević, *Mediteranski brevijar* (Zagreb: Grafički Zavod Hrvatske, 1990), 13.

[6] Predrag Matvejević (Silvio Ferrari, trans.), *Mediterraneo: un nuovo breviario* (Milano: Garzanti, 1993), 60.

[7] Gabriele Tola, “An Unknown Diary Across Italy and Europe: *Oumei manyou riji* and the Late Chinese Rediscovery of the Other,” *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* 20 (in press) no. 1.

[8] Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, 75.

[9] Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, 157.

[10] David Tomas, *Transcultural Space and Transcultural Beings* (Reprinted edition. New York: Routledge, 2018), 15. I would like to thank Dr. Michèle Thériault for providing me a copy of this text.

[11] Madeleine Leininger, "Transcultural Food Functions, Beliefs, and Practices," in *Transcultural Nursing: Concepts, Theories, Research & Practice*, ed. Madeleine Leininger, Marilyn R. McFarland (New York: McGraw-Hill Education. Third edition), 205.

[12] For the sake of legibility, quotations from *Oumei manyou riji* are pointed out in this article without the addition of a footnote for each.

[13] Karen Bescherer Metheny, Mary C. Beaudry (eds.), *Archaeology of Food: An Encyclopedia* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 116.

[14] Other examples of transcultural comparisons, including Rome's Holy Stairs and Trevi Fountain are examined in Tola, "An Unknown Diary Across Italy and Europe."

[15] Tola, "An Unknown Diary Across Italy and Europe."

[16] Edgar Cabanas, Razak Khan, Jani Marjanen, "Travellers: Transformative Journeys and Emotional Contacts," in *Encounters with Emotions: Negotiating Cultural Differences since Early Modernity*, ed. Benno Gammerl, Philipp Nielsen, Margrit Pernau (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 70.

[17] The *chengyu* used by Chen, *tuibi san she* □□□□, means to withdraw one *she* (a unit of measurement roughly corresponding to thirty *li* □) in order to avoid confrontation.

[18] Avner Ben-Zaken, *Cross-Cultural Scientific Exchanges in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1560–1660* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 114–115.

[19] Liu Shanling, "Zhongguoren chu she Suyishi," *Xungen* (2002) no. 3: 25–29.

[20] A ten-metre difference between the two was wrongly calculated; see Robert T. Harrison, *Gladstone's Imperialism in Egypt: Techniques of Domination* (Greenwood Press: Westport,

London, 1995), 42.

[21] Robert L. Tignor, *Capitalism and Nationalism at the End of Empire: State and Business in Decolonizing Egypt, Nigeria, and Kenya, 1945–1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 42.

[22] Tola, "An Unknown Diary Across Italy and Europe."

[23] Refer to Tola, "An Unknown Diary Across Italy and Europe."

[24] The saying, of which I was not able to trace the Italian version, presumably derives from one of the travel books Chen Yifu and Chen Dayou consulted or from the guide that was accompanying them and other travellers during the trip.

[25] Yi-Wen Wang, Christian Nolf, "Historic Landscape and Water Heritage of Suzhou Beyond the Tourist Gaze," in *Suzhou in Transition*, ed. Beibei Tang, Paul Cheung (London; New York: Routledge, 2021), 69.

[26] Peter J. Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 4.

[27] The currency issued in China at the time of travel, known in Chinese as *guanjinyuan* □□□.

[28] Jan Andreas May, "«Queen of the Arts» – Exhibitions, Festivals, and Tourism in Fascist Venice, 1922–1945," in *Creative Urban Milieus: Historical Perspectives on Culture, Economy, and the City*, ed. Martina Heßler, Clemens Zimmermann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 220.

[29] Centre de recherche sur la littérature des voyages, *Miroirs de textes: récits de voyage et intertextualité* (Nice: Publications de la Faculté des lettres, arts et sciences humaines de Nice, 1998), X.

[30] Centre de recherche sur la littérature des voyages, *Miroirs de textes*, XI.

[31] John Ramsay M'Culloch, *A Dictionary, Geographical, Statistical, and Historical of the Various Countries, Places, and Principal Natural Objects in the World*, vol. III (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1866), 437.

[32] Julie F. Codell (ed.), *Transculturation in British Art, 1770–1930* (Reprinted edition. London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 9.

[33] Roland Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973), 49.

[34] Codell, *Transculturation*, 10.

[35] Wu Bihu, Huang Shanhui, Zhong Lina, et al. "Youli fazhan fenqi, xingshi yu yingxiang: yi ge yanjiu kuangjia de jiangou," *Lüyou xuekan* 37 (2022), no. 3: 61–62.

[36] This aspect is thoroughly analysed in Tola, "An Unknown Diary Across Italy and Europe."

[37] Wu Bihu, Huang Shanhui, Zhong Lina, et al. "Youli fazhan fenqi," 55.