

**Così bella che anche i fiori si inchinano:
Firenze raccontata dai viaggiatori cinesi nel
primo Novecento**

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Abstract

So Beautiful That Even Flowers Bow Down: Florence in the accounts of early 20th-century Chinese travelers

After sketching what the general idea of Florence was in China, based on previous writings and testimonies, this article presents the image of the city in the travel accounts of Sheng Cheng, Xu Zhimo, Zhu Ziqing and Zou Taofen. Four different personalities with quite different backgrounds and sensibilities, who visited Florence during Italian Fascism. They mostly present the artistic heritage of the city of Florence, Huacheng, as Sheng Cheng calls it (from Florentia), but they also make mention of its connection to nature, which, in their words, makes the city one with the Tuscan countryside surrounding it. The portrait that these authors want to depict for their Chinese readers is that of a city very much alive, almost organic, but that transcends its real present, being crystallized in an exuberant eternal Renaissance/renascence. The city appears overflowing with artistic

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masterpieces, it appears modern and elegant (the Fascist regime itself was committed to modelling it as a tourist destination), rich, surrounded by a prosperous countryside, a vital and lively city, lush and luxurious, of a beauty that even flowers bow to.

Keywords: Italy and China; travel writings; Florence; Republic of China.