ITALY'S ENCOUNTERS WITH
MODERN CHINA

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ITALY'S ENCOUNTERS WITH
MODERN CHINA

IMPERIAL DREAMS, STRATEGIC
AMBITIONS

Edited by

*Maurizio Marinelli and
Giovanni Andornino*

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ITALY'S ENCOUNTERS WITH MODERN CHINA

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	vii
<i>Introduction</i>	ix
Maurizio Marinelli and Giovanni Andornino	
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxi
1 Projecting <i>Italianità</i> on the Chinese Space: The Construction of the “Aristocratic” Concession in Tianjin (1901–1947)	1
<i>Maurizio Marinelli</i>	
2 At the Dawn of Modern Italo-Chinese Relations: Ludovico Nocentini’s Experience	27
<i>Aglaia De Angeli</i>	
3 The Italian Presence in China: Historical Trends and Perspectives (1902–1947)	49
<i>Guido Samarani</i>	
4 Rethinking the Distance, Reframing the Exotic: Italian Tales of Shanghai through the Republican and Early Maoist Eras	67
<i>Laura De Giorgi</i>	
5 The Beginning and the End of the Idyllic Relations between Mussolini’s Italy and Chiang Kai-shek’s China (1930–1937)	89
<i>Michele Fatica</i>	
6 The Normalization of Relations between Italy and the People’s Republic of China	117
<i>Enrico Fardella</i>	
7 Strategic Ambitions in Times of Transition: Key Patterns in Contemporary Italy-China Relations	147
<i>Giovanni Andornino</i>	

8	Economic Relations between Italy and China <i>Giorgio Prodi</i>	171
9	The Role of the Italian Development Cooperation in Sino-Italian Relations <i>Rosario Centola</i>	201
10	Italy's Engagement with the People's Republic of China in the Context of the EU-China Strategic Partnership <i>Pietro Sferra Carini</i>	219
	<i>Bibliography</i>	247
	<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	251
	<i>Index</i>	255

FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

1.1	Cemetery and marshes in the territory of the Italian concession	2
1.2	Map drawn in November 1901 by the coast guard Filippo Vanzini	14
5.1	Book cover of Margherita Sarfatti, <i>Dux</i>	90
5.2	Front page of the <i>Town and Sportsman</i> , vol. 2, no. 8, August 1935	91
5.3	The Dux as soldier, orator, statesman, farmer, and flyer	92
5.4	The degree of Yu Pin. <i>Il Corriere della Sera</i> , November 17, 1933	95
5.5–5.6	Document dated July 19, 1935. Signed by Bartolomeo Chinazzi	100
5.7	“Signor Mussolini gift plane arrives,” <i>North China Daily News</i> , 5 August 1935	101
5.8	The entrance of the SINAW factory	102
7.1	Visits of heads of state, heads of government, or foreign ministers from and to countries in the Asia-Pacific region	159
7.2	China-related resolutions, orders of the day, and questions raised before the Italian Parliament, XVI Legislature (2008–2012)	161
7.3	Divergence in Italy’s voting behaviour vis-à-vis P5 countries at the UN Human Rights Council	164
8.1	Trade dynamics between Italy and China	176
8.2	China’s trade balance with select EU countries	185

TABLES

8.1	Economic structures of China and Italy compared	174
8.2	Chinese imports from Italy	177

8.3	Italian imports according to broad economic categories (BEC) codes	179
8.4	Chinese exports to Italy	180
8.5	Top ten Italian products exported to China	182
8.6	Top ten Chinese products imported in Italy	184
8.7	FDI in China	186

INTRODUCTION

Maurizio Marinelli and Giovanni Andornino

The history of relations between Italy and China has long been beclouded by myths, projection biases, intellectualization, and, not infrequently, stereotypes. What has hindered the development of a sustained and productive engagement and cross-cultural dialogue between the two countries in the modern era? Does the all-too-common misinterpretation lie in the problematic nexus between geographical and cultural distance, or is there something more (historically, politically, and economically) that deserves to be explored? These pivotal questions represent the challenge that has motivated us to put together this edited volume. We believe that the often simplistic imagery constructed around the relationship between the two countries is no accident, nor can a superficial reference to the “tyranny of distance” entirely account for the diffuse illiteracy in the multiple encounters between two polities that are otherwise recognized as ancient civilizational matrixes and that today rank among the ten largest economies in the world. Michael Yahuda used the expression “the tyranny of distance” to epitomize the geographical chasm and physical gulf that allegedly contributed to perceptual distance and misunderstandings in the Sino-European encounter.¹ However, the salience of the geopolitical datum, originally studied by Geoffrey Blainey with reference to Australia’s “distance” from the rest of the world,² is essentially reversed in the case of Italy’s engagement with China: it is not the remoteness of the interlocutor, but rather the *proximity*—to the point of encapsulation, as in the case of the Holy See—of several powerful and entrenched global actors that has historically determined Italy’s structural fragility in pursuing a coherent foreign policy toward partners lying outside its core strategic horizon.³

China has traditionally been one such partner. Italy’s projection toward the Celestial Empire—and then Republican and Communist China—has mostly developed as a peripheral extension of a broader, fundamentally Eurocentric (and later Euro-Atlantic) game, with

China's domestic dynamics featuring as intervening variables, if at all. Ever sensitive to culturally—and politically—determined incentive structures, Italian academia, while expressing ambitious and often fruitful sinological research agendas, has itself struggled to encourage a sustained effort to explore the workings and the rationales of contemporary bilateral Italo-Chinese relations. The lingering condition of widespread misrepresentation and misperception of these relations may thus be conceived of as a long-term cognitive by-product of the discontinuous and parochial commitment by Italian élites to a productive dialogue and a steady engagement with China.

This attitude has disconcertingly endured not only through the Cold War, when Italy's embryonic China policy was necessarily shaped by systemic considerations, but also in more recent years, even though Deng Xiaoping's renewed push for reforms and opening up in 1992⁴ could have featured prominently in Rome's attempts to redefine its strategic orientation on the global stage.⁵ Whereas—unlike Japan, Australia, France, or the United Kingdom—Italy does not have a geopolitical or security dimension to its relationship with China, its political economy, essentially premised on manufacturing and exports, is in fact in structural need of dynamic trade partners. In the aftermath of the 1989 Tian'an men political crisis, Rome's early overtures had seen China emerge briefly as such a potential interlocutor. The abrupt collapse of a *guanxi entente* between apical figures in the two political establishments following the dislocation of the Italian political system in 1992, however, severely damaged Rome's credibility as a reliable partner for China's fast-paced development.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Italian domestic “pendulum” between right- and left-leaning coalitions in government produced only limited contention between traditional Atlanticism and pro-European politics; policy options premised on the exploration of new trajectories remained interstitial.⁶ Indeed, at times of crisis—as in 1992, and again following the 2008 global financial crisis—Rome's generally bipartisan tendency has been to react through an “anchoring” to the traditional bastions of its stability: the European Union (EU), NATO, and the United States.⁷

The slow process of reinstitutionalization of Sino-Italian bilateral relations following the 1992 debacle was rendered all the more complicated by the centrifugal impetus suffered by the Italian foreign policy system in the wake of disorderly federalist reforms in the early 2000s.⁸ The coming into force of the 2003 “La Loggia” law, which defined the contours of the new powers entrusted to regional governments pursuant to the freshly amended constitution (Constitutional

Law no. 3, October 18, 2001), inaugurated a schizophrenic trend, with Italian regions rapidly increasing their foreign relations in the absence of a politically and institutionally mature context.⁹ The expectation that subnational units would prove effective in their engagement with China in the trade and culture realms quickly turned out to be unrealistic: in 2007 an ad hoc scheme to leverage the specificity of individual Italian regions within a more integrated effort supported at the center by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was launched.¹⁰

Only in recent years have policy-makers and academics attempted more organized reviews of China's place in Italy's current foreign relations. A "strategic reflection group," established in 2007 on the initiative of the then minister of foreign affairs Massimo D'Alema, brought together career diplomats, scholars, and policy analysts for little over a year. The outcome was the bipartisan *Rapporto 2020. Le scelte di politica estera* (Report 2020. The foreign policy choices), which explicitly—though not unanimously—argued for a selective enlargement of the G8 to a small number of emerging actors, beginning with China.¹¹

The fortieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2010, and the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Italy's unification in 2011, proved influential catalysts for a more systematic reflection. In 2010 the Historical Archives of the Italian Senate supported the publication of a volume on the reestablishment of bilateral ties based on newly declassified documents, while a variety of other works by practitioners and historians of modern China—some of whom are contributors to this volume—were published in the run-up to 2011.¹²

This edited volume is an attempt to join this wider intellectual pursuit by offering a detailed and critical account of the most salient historical junctures and of the key contemporary dynamics shaping the reiterated encounter between Italy and modern China. While this unique collection has been conceived, from the very beginning, for publication in the English language, it is not so much a *summa* of digested academic literature already circulating in Italian, as the outcome of an in-depth and ongoing research project offering scholarly analysis from fresh perspectives and based on original sources. In their aim to serve as a first port of call for anyone who is committed to seriously exploring lesser-known interactions between China and European countries—and to facilitate relevant comparative efforts in historical, economic, and political studies—the following ten chapters are intentionally interdisciplinary in nature. They are also testimony to an attempt to bridge the gulf between scholarly and policy debates,

thanks to the presence of eight chapters written by academics and two chapters specifically authored by governmental officials with extensive expertise acquired through their privileged operational positions on the ground in China.

This edited volume thus intends to problematize the traditional scholarship about Italy's relationship with China. Even today, a positive (and too often uncritical) aura still dominates the narrative of interactions between Italy and China. The two countries have been portrayed as representatives of venerable civilizations, each of them upholding a specific set of universally influential ideas and unique customs. Analytically, two distinct phases have been identified in their relationship. The first stretches from antiquity to the end of the eighteenth century (customarily coinciding with the end of Emperor Qianlong's reign, 1711–1799), when “Italy” would have been at the forefront—initially playing the leading role, and later one of the leading roles—of the relationship between Europe and China. The names of two famous Italians *ante litteram*, who are also renowned historical pivots of cross-cultural intermediation, have traditionally emerged as epitomes of the rhetoric trope of a long-standing friendship between Italy and China: Venetian traveller Marco Polo (1254–1324) and the Jesuit missionary and polymath Father Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). Their experiences have become recurrent legends and their names are often used not only in the academic arena but also in the realms of diplomatic relations and commercial negotiations between representatives of the two countries as evidence of the time-tested, amicable, and positive relationship.

This somewhat “mythical” first phase in the relationship between “Italy” and China would seem to have been followed by a second one, from the beginning of the nineteenth century onward, which witnessed a drastic enfeeblement of Italy's capacity to engage East Asia compared with other European countries. Focusing on the latter period, the contributors to this volume specifically cover the chronological span from the end of the Qing dynasty to the present day, and shed light on the relationship between the newly unified Italian state (1861) and a fast-transforming China, which—over the past century and a half—morphed from a dynastic Empire into a Republic (1911) and, soon thereafter, a People's Republic (1949). This historical arc embracing China's troubled—and unfinished¹³—quest for modernity has never been systematically investigated from the perspective of Italy's interaction with Chinese institutions and society, and yet it remains consequential for a credible bilateral engagement today. In the shade of larger-than-life precursors such as Polo and Ricci, several

other stories—of greater or lesser amity—document the encounters that took place at the cusp of Imperial China's fatal intersection with the modern age and beyond.

The newly unified Kingdom of Italy established diplomatic relations with an uneasily modernizing Chinese empire in the second half of the nineteenth century, and became a colonizing power on its soil at the turn of the twentieth century. Political conflict and military abrasions marred the relations between Italy and the Qing court, culminating in Rome's diplomatic debacle over an ill-conceived attempt to wrestle a concession in the Chinese bay of Sanmen (Zhejiang province), which forced the resignation of the entire Italian cabinet in 1899 on account of the manifest failure of its China policy. With the Final Protocol of September 7, 1901, following the Eight-Power Allied Expeditionary Force's repression of the Boxers' uprising, Italy received an allotment of 5.91 percent of the Boxers' indemnity and extraterritoriality privileges in the Legation Quarter in Beijing, as well as the concession in perpetuity of a small zone (approximately half a square kilometer) on the left bank of the Haihe, in the strategic coastal city of Tianjin, on which to develop an Italian concession. This was the only colony east of Suez ever under Rome's control. This colonial encounter is explored in the first chapter of the book by Maurizio Marinelli. Despite a slow and uncertain start, Tianjin's Italian concession became the testing ground for a full-scale pedagogical project, aimed at asserting the long-awaited equal treatment of Italy vis-à-vis the other colonial powers in China and beyond. After the devastating 1896 defeat during the first Italo-Ethiopian war, near Adwa, the dream of the newly created Italian nation to position itself on the world stage was projected on the Chinese space. Marinelli reconstructs the socio-spatial transformation of the concession, investigating the multiple facets of what was in fact a political project: a "laboratory of modernity," in terms of Italy's identity formation. The history of the Italian settlement in Tianjin contributes to shedding light on Rome's politics of colonialism, as well as on the Kingdom of Italy's economic and political agenda at the turn of the twentieth century.

In the second chapter of the book, Aglaia De Angeli offers a new perspective on Sino-Italian relations in the late nineteenth century, concentrating on the life and work of one of the most influential Italian observers of the time: Ludovico Nacentini. A diplomat and a scholar, who was in a unique position to provide firsthand accounts of Italy's engagement with China, Nacentini served at the Italian Legation in the 1880s and later became director of the *Istituto Orientale* in Naples, Europe's oldest school of sinology. Nacentini's writings contain

perceptive analysis of Italy's position at a critical juncture, when the perceived menace of the "yellow peril" was mounting, and French and Russian expansionism in China risked destabilizing relations with Great Britain. By tracing the evolution of Nocentini's attitudes toward Italian colonial policies against the background of key dynamics in the Sino-Italian relationship—particularly the development of the silk trade and the issue of the protection of Catholic missionaries in China, as well as the Sanmen Bay affair and the Boxers' uprising—the chapter offers insights into the possible explanations for Italy's ultimate failure to emerge as a significant colonial power in the Far East.

The third chapter, by Guido Samarani, explores the nature and trends of the Italian presence in late Qing and Republican China (1902–1945) in its military, diplomatic, and business components. Offering some preliminary results of a wider, ongoing investigation, the Italian presence in China—largely concentrated in the most important treaty ports (in particular Tianjin) and in Beijing—is charted through a cross-examination of the statistical data provided by Italian, international, and Chinese sources. While serious gaps in statistical documentation remain a formidable obstacle in assessing the exact shape and impact of the Italian communities on Chinese soil at this historical juncture, data from the commissioner general of emigration of the Kingdom of Italy and the first ever census of Italians living abroad (*Censimento degli italiani all'estero*) indicate that the Italian presence in Asia—while continuing to represent a minute proportion of overall Italian emigration—tripled between 1871 and 1911. An analysis of these data against those provided by the royal Italian consuls and officials in China outlines the gradual growth in the number of Italians living in China from less than two hundred at the end of the nineteenth century to about one thousand in the latter part of the 1920s.

The fourth chapter, by Laura De Giorgi, explores the multiple images and perceptions associated with the city of Shanghai by the Italian public from the early twentieth century to the Maoist era. Through the analysis of select writings by Italian journalists and intellectuals, the essay reconstructs the complex physiognomy of this Chinese metropolis according to the Italian narratives of Chinese modernization and revolution before and after 1949. As a dual symbol of exotic allure and industrial modernity, Shanghai represented a disturbing entity for most Italian observers. While the writers' accounts reflect their different ideological and political orientations and the evolution of Sino-Italian relations, the contradictory image of Shanghai unveils many of the ambiguities in Italian attitudes toward

Western colonialism, as well as toward urbanization and industrialization at large.

In the fifth chapter, Michele Fatica offers a detailed account of the special relationship between the governments in Rome and Nanjing, beginning with the tenure of Galeazzo Ciano (1903–1944)—Mussolini's son-in-law—as consul general in Shanghai at the end of May 1930. Not yet 30 but gifted with solid entrepreneurial spirit and connections, Ciano established the foundations for proficient cultural, economic, and military relations between fascist Italy and nationalist China. This friendship was favored by the ideological affinity of the Italian Fascist Party and Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang, premised upon a shared catalogue of values that included nationalism, militarism, capitalism, orderliness, and hierarchy. The chapter explores the manifestations of this special relationship, analyzing trade dynamics, cultural and educational projects, and military cooperation. The decline and fall of the idyllic relations between Mussolini's Italy and Chiang Kai-shek's China began with Italy's attack against Ethiopia in October 1935, which paved the way for China's realignment with the United States in the face of Japan's own expansionist policies on Chinese territory and Italy's acquiescence and later alliance with Tokyo.

The “New China,” officially known as the People's Republic of China, was proclaimed by Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong on October 1, 1949. As for most Western European nations, Italy's relations with Mao's China were held hostage by ideological and geopolitical constraints during the first two decades of the Cold War, and were further exacerbated by the strong connection between the Italian Communist Party and the Soviet Union. The sixth chapter, by Enrico Fardella, presents a fresh historical reconstruction of the diplomatic negotiations that led to the normalization of relations between Italy and the PRC on November 6, 1970. This was a turning point in the evolution of both Italian and Chinese foreign policies, and a decisive step in the process of China's return within the “family of nations,” a development with lasting consequences on the transformation of the international system. The chapter looks at the different phases of the negotiations between Rome and Beijing through the development of their respective domestic political agendas and the evolution of the Cold War dynamics. The analysis is based on a critical examination of newly declassified documents of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the private papers of the Italian protagonists of the negotiations (foreign ministers Pietro Nenni and Aldo Moro), and the direct account of some of the Chinese diplomats who worked in Italy at the time. Completion of the negotiations was made possible

by the dramatic changes that occurred in the space of a few months in China's posturing toward the West, seized upon by Italian diplomats to craft a favorable compromise, which constituted a test case for the forthcoming normalization of relations between Beijing and Washington.

With the seventh chapter, by Giovanni Andornino, the volume moves past the rationales of the Maoist phase to address the current state of the Sino-Italian partnership, here seen as premised upon a long-running iteration of exchanges of private, public, and symbolic goods. Andornino frames the dynamics of asymmetrical competition and asynchronous opportunities characterizing bilateral trade—the cornerstone of reciprocal interest in sustained engagement—in the context of the current global economic and political landscape, in which China not only represents one of the most powerfully transformative forces, but indeed a manifestly indispensable player in any attempt to tackle systemic challenges through multilateral action. In exposing the contradictions underlying the “strategic” ambitions ostensibly attached to the partnership by both Rome and Beijing, the chapter discusses the structural limitations imposed on this pursuit, on Italy's side, by unsteady political resolve, entrenched social distrust, constrained institutional resources, and depleting epistemic communities of interest.

Sino-Italian economic relations over the past decade are explored in greater depth in chapter eight by Giorgio Prodi, who traces the evolution of trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and supply chain relations from 2000 to 2010. Building on the analysis of the key strengths and weaknesses exhibited by Italy and China in their economic engagement, Prodi assesses how Sino-Italian economic relations might develop over the next decade to express their hitherto untapped potential: the structural transformations occurring in China's society and economy are projected to play to Italy's advantage, provided the country and its business community revise their anemic engagement strategies.

Rosario Centola's contribution, in chapter nine, focuses on the far less-known dynamics of bilateral exchange in public goods, whose main avenue is represented by the action of the Italian Development Cooperation (IDC). Active in China for over 30 years, the IDC has been contributing to the strengthening of the bilateral and multilateral policy dialogue in key areas such as environmental protection, health, and cultural heritage preservation. Through the IDC, Italy generates and employs a thorough knowledge of the Chinese context to focus its development assistance on areas where the priorities of the

Chinese government and the points of excellence of the Italian socioeconomic model overlap, leading to deepening synergies. Through a series of case studies, this chapter illustrates the rationale and actions undertaken by the IDC in China to reinforce the broader bilateral partnership, but also as a means through which to chart a common strategy aimed at providing models for inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development.

On the basis of their positive relationship, Rome and Beijing have also moved to broaden the political scope of the bilateral dialogue in order to position the Sino-Italian partnership as an increasingly proactive force in the complex framework of EU-China relations. In Brussels, while the global financial crisis and the subsequent destabilization of the euro may yet activate dynamics of further integration within the EU, member states are already reacting to the innovations introduced in the EU institutional landscape by the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. The European External Action Service (EEAS) is steadily being shaped, in terms of both policy and practices, granting the Union tools capable of generating a progressively more unified EU voice in international affairs. The last chapter, by Pietro Sfera Carini, examines the evolving—if still somewhat blurred—EU-China policy as the first decade of EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership draws to a close, and illustrates key areas of convergence and divergence with Italian national interests.

General elections in Italy—conveying the urge for profound changes in the institutional, social, and economic fabric of the nation—together with the conclusion of a comprehensive leadership transition in the Chinese Party-State, have rendered 2013 a critical year for both countries. While it is far too soon to speculate how these events will play out in the bilateral relations, one can hope that the exhortation contained in the inaugural message for the “Year of Italy in China,” delivered on January 18, 2006 by then president of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, may continue to resonate, and be heeded:

Friendship with China is rooted in Italian tradition and history. Our peoples, heirs of prestigious traditions and ancient cultures, share a common language which resonates across the centuries and creates affinities handed down from one generation to the next. Today, this age-old link is nourished by lively economic and commercial relations, scientific collaboration, cultural exchanges, and a growing tide of tourists. [...] An appreciation of the memories of the past while celebrating of our own roots is key to engaging the future with success.¹⁴

NOTES

1. Michael Yahuda, "The Sino-European Encounter: Historical Influences on Contemporary Relations," in *China-Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies, and Prospects*, ed. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Zhou Hong (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 13–32.
2. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance; How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1966).
3. Several chapters in this book discuss historical circumstances in which Italy's foreign policy toward China was constrained by European (and then global) geopolitical dynamics. Prime examples would be France's and the Vatican's involvement in the issue of the protection of Italian Catholic missionaries in China, and British resistance to the establishment of an Italian foothold in Zhejiang province in the second half of the nineteenth century; the formation of the Axis with Germany and Japan in the first half of the twentieth century; and the active discouragement of Italian engagement with Communist China on the part of the United States in the second half of the twentieth century.
4. On Deng Xiaoping's "Southern tour talks" (*nanxun tanhua*) and their relevance in relaunching the policies of economic reform and opening up (*gaige kaifang*) in post-Tian'an men China, see Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 341 and following; Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 675 and following.
5. On the transition from what has been termed the "Golden age" of Italy's foreign policy during the Cold War and the post-bipolar context, see, among others, Roberto Aliboni, "Neo-nationalism and Neo-Atlanticism in Italian Foreign Policy," *The International Spectator* 38, no. 1 (2003): 81–90; Filippo Andreatta, "Italy at a Crossroads: The Foreign Policy of a Medium Power after the End of Bipolarity," *Daedalus* 130, no. 2 (2001): 45–65; Osvaldo Croci, "Italian Foreign Policy after the End of the Cold War: The Issue of Continuity and Change in Italian-US Relations," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 9, no. 2 (2007): 117–131; Elisabetta Brighi, "Europe, the USA and the 'Policy of the Pendulum': The Importance of Foreign Policy Paradigms in the Foreign Policy of Italy (1989–2005)," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 9, no. 2 (2007): 99–115; Antonio Missiroli, "Italy," in *The Foreign Policies of European Union member states*, ed. Ian Manners and Richard Whitman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 87–104; Sergio Romano, "Italian Foreign Policy After the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 14, no. 1 (2009): 8–14.
6. Antonio Missiroli, "Italy's Security and Defence Policy: Between EU and US, or Just Prodi and Berlusconi?," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 9, no. 2 (2007): 149–168.

7. Alessandro Colombo and Ettore Greco, eds., *La politica estera dell'Italia. Edizione 2012* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), p. 9.
8. Act of Parliament no. 131, 2003: "Disposizioni per l'adeguamento dell'ordinamento della Repubblica alla legge costituzionale 18 ottobre 2001, n. 3."
9. Francesco Palermo, "The Foreign Policy of Italian Regions: Not Much Ado About Something?" *The International Spectator* 42, no. 2 (2007): 197–207. See also Alessandro Alfieri, *La politica estera delle regioni* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004).
10. The "MAE-Regioni-Cina" (MFA-Regions-China) scheme has been operating since 2007, with a special focus on the promotion of development in the southern regions of Italy through engagement with China. Its informative website is <http://www.programmaregionicina.it>, last accessed March 4, 2013. In 2010, following the implementation of the second wholesale reform of Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a decade, an ad hoc directorate (*Promozione del sistema Paese*) was further instituted to mitigate the cacophony of promotional initiatives abroad.
11. Unità di Analisi e Programmazione del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e Gruppo di Riflessione Strategica, *Rapporto 2020. Le scelte di politica estera* (Rome: 2008), http://www.esteri.it/mae/doc/Rapporto2020_SceltePoliticaEsteri_090408.pdf, accessed January 27, 2013.
12. Ennio Di Nolfo, *La normalizzazione delle relazioni diplomatiche tra la Repubblica italiana e la Repubblica popolare cinese* (*The Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between the Italian Republic and the People's Republic of China*) (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2010); Laura De Giorgi and Guido Samarani, *Lontane, vicine: Le relazioni fra Cina e Italia nel Novecento* (*Far Away, Nearby: Relations between China and Italy in the Twentieth Century*) (Roma: Carocci, 2011); Mario Filippo Pini, *Italia e Cina, 60 anni tra passato e futuro* (*Italy and China, 60 Years between Past and Future*) (Roma: L'Asino d'oro edizioni, 2011). See also Maurizio Marinelli, ed., "Italy and China: Two Countries, Multiple Stories," Special Issues of the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 15, no. 4 (2010).
13. Rana Mitter, *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
14. Archives of the Presidency of the Italian Republic, <http://www.quirinale.it/qnrw/statico/ex-presidenti/Ciampi/dinamico/comunicato.asp?id=28439>, accessed March 1, 2013, transl. the authors.

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ABBREVIATIONS

a.	<i>Appunto</i> (note)
ACMOFA	Archives of the Chinese Ministry Of Foreign Affairs
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASMAE	<i>Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri</i> (Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—Italy)
BEC	broad economic categories
BIC	<i>Banca Italiana per la Cina</i> (Sino-Italian Bank)
bn	billion
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CACH	Chinese Academy for Cultural Heritage
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCPIT	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIDEO	<i>Compagnia Italiana d'Estremo Oriente</i> (Italian Company in the Far East)
CIF	cost, insurance, and freight
CO ²	carbon dioxide
COD	chemical oxygen demand
COFER	Currency composition of Foreign Exchange Reverses
COR	Commercial Office in Rome
DC	<i>Democrazia Cristiana</i> (Christian Democracy party)
DGAP	<i>Direzione Generale Affari Politici</i> (General Directorate for Political Affairs—Italy)
DRG	diagnosis related groups
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
EUR	euro
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office—United Kingdom
FDI	foreign direct investment
FEC	Forfeited Estates Commission—United Kingdom

FIAT	<i>Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino</i> (Italian Automobile Factory of Turin)
FOB	free on board
GDP	gross domestic product
HED	High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue
ICCU	<i>Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico</i> (Italian National Libraries Catalogues)
ICE	<i>Istituto per il Commercio Estero</i> (Italian Trade Commission)
ICOMOS	Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites
IDC	<i>Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo</i> (Italian Development Cooperation)
IMELS	<i>Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare</i> (Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPR	intellectual property rights
ISIAO	<i>Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente</i> (Italian Institute for Africa and Orient)
IVECO	Industrial Vehicles Corporation
JVs	joint ventures
KMT	Koumintang
M&A	mergers and acquisitions
MAE	<i>Ministero degli Affari Esteri</i> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs—Italy)
MNCs	multinational corporations
MOFA	Ministry Of Foreign Affairs—China
NA	National Archives—United Kingdom
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NOx	nitrogen oxides
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFDI	outward foreign direct investment
PCI	<i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i> (Italian Communist Party)
PL	personal letter
PM10	particulate matter
PPP	purchasing power parity
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSI	<i>Partito Socialista Italiano</i> (Italian Socialist Party)
PSU	<i>Partito Socialista Unitario</i> (Unitary Socialist Party—Italy)
RMB	renminbi
ROC	Republic of China
S&ED	Strategic and Economic Dialogue
SACH	State Administration for Cultural Heritage—China

SEPA	State Environmental Protection Administration—China
SINAW	Sino-Italian National Aircraft Works
SMEs	small and medium enterprises
SO ²	sulfur dioxide
SOE	state-owned enterprise
TPG	Tianjin Provisional Government
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USD	United States dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WFOE	wholly foreign-owned enterprises
WHC	World Heritage Centre
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
XCCRCP	Xi'an Center for Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ZTE	Zhongxing Telecommunication Equipment Corporation