

## CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Department of Asian and North African Studies is opening a call for expressions of interest for a post-doctoral fellowship or a one-year scholarship for research regarding the concept of water in pre-modern Chinese literature with a particular focus on the “water worlds” of Suzhou.

### Project: Cultural Heritage along the Silk Roads – Venice and Suzhou

In 1979, Hua Guofeng 华国锋 visited Venice. During his visit, he and the mayor of Venice decided to twin Venice and Suzhou because of their commonalities. Both are historic cities shaped by a system of canals as well as cradles of ancient civilizations along the silk roads. Founded in 514 BCE, Suzhou is a splendid city characterized by canals, beautiful stone bridges and marvellous gardens – in fact, in 1997 the Classical Gardens of Suzhou (Soochow) were added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. Suzhou has also long been known as the “Venice of the East” or the “Venice of China”. Marco Polo described it as a large and valuable city under the government of the Great Khan 可汗, noting its large population, most of whom were merchants, philosophers, astrologers, magicians and physicians who “know the secrets of nature very well” – if they had been soldiers, they would have conquered the world. He also remarked that Suzhou had more than 6,000 bridges. The twinning of Venice and Suzhou in 1980 was the first formal step asserting the fundamental role of Venice as a bridge linking Europe to Asia, and specifically to China.

The control and management of water flows are some of the most significant human activities aimed at interpreting and shaping the natural environment. According to Chinese mythology, Yu the Great, Da Yu 大禹, the founder of the Xia Dynasty, the first in Chinese history, managed to control the floods that had plagued the land and hindered economic and social development. In addition to being agents capable of transforming the physical landscape, canals and rivers also frequently give rise to rich and unique cultural landscapes.

The project proposed by this call for expressions of interest aims to interpret our inherited and multiple “water worlds” and reflect upon their sustainable use in the future. An exhibition on relations between Suzhou and Venice is being planned, and the opening ceremony will take place in Venice on 1 September 2019.

**Project coordinators:** Tiziana Lippiello (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Wang Yao 王尧 (Soochow University)

**Field of research/activities:** languages and cultures; philosophy, religion and arts in Venice and Suzhou; Suzhou through Italian eyes: Memories, tales and

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representations of Suzhou; waterscapes as cultural heritage for sustainable tourism.

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must speak fluent Chinese and English (minimum C1 level) and hold a PhD or master's degree in East Asian Studies.

#### **APPLICATION**

The position is planned to start on **20 July 2018** (negotiable). Applicants must send a motivation letter and their CV (European format) to the Department of Asian and North African Studies ([ricerca.dsaam@unive.it](mailto:ricerca.dsaam@unive.it)).

Deadline to apply: **5 July 2018**.

**Please note that this is a call for expressions of interest, not a job announcement.**