

Tenth-Century Painting before Song Taizong's Reign: A Macrohistorical View

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Modern scholarship has characterized the first half of the tenth century as a radical turning point in the history of Chinese painting—the moment when painting turned from the visualization of aristocratic privilege and religious teachings to an engagement with the world of empirical experience. The world of nature took over from human sociality in providing the dominant metaphoric space of painting, with landscape the new primary genre. Viewing the painting of the period through the lens of style, art historians have treated the early tenth century as the embryonic stage of Song painting, retrospectively absorbing the entire Five Dynasties period into the overall Song story as a proto-Song moment.¹ The accumulating archeological discoveries of recent decades, together with a review of the early sources and a more personal reconsideration of existing attributions, point toward a different view. As this essay will describe, many of the changes that are usually ascribed to the tenth century started much earlier, probably beginning to make themselves felt as early as the second half of the eighth century. Taking the measure of such long-term change makes the starkness of the before-and-after contrast that twentieth-century scholarship created between two distinct historical periods, roughly pre- and post-Five Dynasties, seem less convincing.

I begin this essay by reviewing our current knowledge of the relation of tenth-century painting formats to late eighth- and ninth-century practice, following this with a parallel review that bears on pictorial genre. These two initial surveys of the empirical evidence, albeit limited by the space available, will allow me to propose that the two-century period from about 765 to about 970 had its own special character and should be seen as a distinct stage in the history of Chinese painting. In the

third part of the essay, I give this hypothesis more substance and depth by sketching out for this two-century period (a) an emerging set of new epistemological assumptions, and (b) a counterbalancing series of re-engagements with the earlier Tang pictorial heritage. This argument in favor of the evolving coherence of the 765–970 period has a corresponding implication. Simply stated, it is that the tipping point of radical change occurred not around the fall of the Tang but instead in the 970s, continuing through the reign of Song Taizong 太宗 (976–997).² The Taizong-era cultural shift itself is a subject for another study; here I restrict myself to the task of resituating the Five Dynasties period within its own, evolving *longue durée* context.

It is not a coincidence that the 765–970 period is bookended by dramatic political events. The An Lushan Rebellion (755–763) started the long decline of the Tang dynasty, while the complete reunification of China by Song Taizong brought the post-Tang period of division to an end. Whereas the An Lushan Rebellion led to the geographic dispersal of artists and paintings, the final Song reunification, following the capitulation of the Southern Tang dynasty in 975 and the Wu-Yue Kingdom in 978, initiated a contrasting centralization. Under Taizong, a painting connoisseur in his own right, painters from the far north, west, and southeast were privileged at court over the painter dynasties of Kaifeng, and old paintings flowed into Kaifeng to be part of the Song imperial collection. In its duration, meanwhile, the 765–970 period corresponds to a long-studied pattern of socio-economic change that made the establishment of the Song dynasty possible on an entirely different basis from the Tang before it, drawing as the Song did on the support of a new scholar-official and mercantile elite. Twentieth-century art history struggled to integrate what historians have established about this gradual societal transformation with its own view of the Five Dynasties as a moment of relatively sudden *artistic* change. Deeply invested in a modernist ideology of an evolutionary history of style structured by radical breaks, twentieth-century art history made the facts fit a preexisting argument. Now, though, it is possible to take some historiographic distance and identify the broad lines of painting's integration into the larger historical processes of the time.³

Formats

Modern reproductive technology makes it all too easy to write a history of disembodied images. But such a history may depart quite radically from a history of painting as a social practice producing physical artifacts situated in time and space, and runs the risk of being historically misleading. To avoid this pitfall, we can do no better than start by paying particular attention to the materiality of painting formats.

By the estimation of Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄, author of the *Tangchao minghua lu* 唐朝名畫錄 (Record of famous paintings of the Tang dynasty), the leading painter of his time (ca. 820s–840s) was Cheng Xiuji 程修己, an artist about whom we are particularly well informed, who was at once court painter and literatus.⁴ All indications are that Cheng worked exclusively on silk in the screen and scroll formats, leaving wall painting to others. This, for a court painter of any range, would have been unthinkable even as late as the time of Zhou Fang 周昉 (third quarter of the eighth century). Although literati painters by contrast had specialized in working on silk since the time of Zhang Zao 張瓘 (mid- to late eighth century), Cheng Xiuji's introduction of portable formats into palace decoration on a large scale was new.⁵ It was no doubt with a sense not only of social difference but also of the modernity of his court production on silk that Cheng issued a sharp-tongued attack on the reputations of four leading artists active in the early to mid-eighth century:

Wu [Daozi's] weirdness falls into the error of abstruseness;
Chen [Hong's] portraits seem to harbor secret resentments. Yang
[Tingguang] is like a paralyzed man trying to get up; Xu [Kun] is
like someone selling food in the market.⁶

For Cheng, the masters to be reckoned with were instead those of the following generation, still active after the An Lushan Rebellion in the third quarter of the eighth century: Zhou Fang, Zhang Xuan, and above all Han Gan 韓幹. These were the artists who, though active as muralists, began to popularize the use of portable formats and painting on silk.

Alongside wall paintings, therefore, there was a vast production of painting on silk by both muralists and literati during the late Tang period, and this status quo was inherited and reproduced under the Five Dynasties. Accompanying the increasing production of paintings on silk was a proliferation of new screen formats to add to the well-established modular folding screen with vertical panels, as well as the popularization of the hanging scroll as a format for painting. One other development belonged to the world of temples, where pictorial wall hangings emerged as a major format alongside murals. Portability, therefore, was a major factor in the evolution of decorative formats during the late Tang period. We do not yet know enough about architectural interiors to know whether new attitudes to domestic space influenced the proliferation of portable decorative formats. More certain is that the uncertain political circumstances of the latter half of the Tang led to a concern, evident in the surviving writings of late Tang connoisseurs, that paintings were disappearing

as the result of anti-Buddhist purges and civil war. Wall paintings were vulnerable by their immobility. In contrast, Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 records that when “the rebellion of Zhu Ce broke out [in 783] and the capital was thrown into turmoil and disorder,” his family “hurriedly took down” from their stretchers the screen painting panels that Zhang Zao had been in the middle of painting for them.⁷ Scroll paintings and wall hangings would have been even easier to conceal and preserve. We cannot forget that one of the major bodies of painting from the period under study, comprising solely works in portable formats, was found at Dunhuang at the beginning of the twentieth century, sealed up in a concealed library chamber (Cave 17) where it had remained since the early eleventh century.

The Handscroll

Scrolls have played a central—and outsized—role in the modern view of the first half of the tenth century as a turning point for painting. Of the two scroll formats—handscroll and hanging scroll—the handscroll was the more ancient of the two by far. It initially came into being around the third century in order to fulfill archival and book-like functions of various sorts. In some cases a handscroll served as a preparatory sketch for, or a small-scale record of, a wall painting. Other handscrolls documented a political, social, or cultural event. And in yet other cases, the handscroll illustrated a preexisting text in a manner akin to the illustrated manuscripts of medieval Europe and the Middle East. These various well-established uses of the handscroll format continued to be important throughout the 765–970 period and beyond.

Post-765, however, the handscroll also came to function commonly in a less instrumental fashion as a format for paintings intended principally for aesthetic enjoyment. Several surviving handscrolls, often of notably large height, fall into this category, preserving, in the original or in facsimile, compositions of the 765–970 period. These works include the late eighth-century composition *Lady Guoguo on a Spring Outing* (height 52.1 cm), known through a Song copy in the Liaoning Provincial Museum; *Ladies Preparing Newly Woven Silk* (37 cm), known through a copy attributed to the Song emperor Huizong 徽宗 in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Wei Yan’s 衛偃 *Pasturing Horses* (46.2 cm), known through a copy by Li Gonglin 李公麟 in the Palace Museum, Beijing; the fragmentary *Palace Banquet* (48.7 cm) of ninth–tenth century date, in the National Palace Museum, Taipei; the early tenth-century *Lofty Scholars* (45.2 cm), attributed to Sun Wei 孫位, in the Shanghai Museum; Ruan Gao’s 阮郛 *Female Transcendents in the Lang Gar-*

den (42.7 cm), circa 950, in the Palace Museum, Beijing; and the British Museum *Nymph of the Luo River* (53.6 cm).⁸ This last painting, whatever its date of execution, preserves a recension of the theme dating to the late Tang or Five Dynasties.⁹

Contemporaneously, the handscroll format took a different, self-expressive form in the hands of Tang men of letters who in addition to their literary and calligraphic production also turned their hand to painting, not favoring any particular subject or style. A handscroll of this kind, integrated into a more intimate mode of social exchange for which poetry provided the model, is mentioned in Zhu Jingxuan's biography of the mid-to late eighth-century literati artist, Zhang Zhihe 張志和.¹⁰ Today, only a few candidates for surviving literati handscroll compositions are known to me. One is the handscroll *Oxen* (height 20.8 cm), again on paper, attributed to a late eighth-century artist, Han Huang 韓滉. Paper is a surface that Han, a high official, is known to have used.¹¹ A later example is a Southern Tang attribution, Wang Qihan's 王齊翰 *Examining Books* (height 28.4 cm), painted on silk.¹² Little discussed by modern art historians as a general phenomenon, such early self-expressive handscrolls (and hanging scrolls; see below) were an important antecedent of Song literati painting.¹³ A case can also be made for their broader and more immediate influence on Southern Tang court art in the handscroll format. Zhao Gan's 趙幹 *Along the River at First Snow* (height 25.9 cm), treating a literary theme, has an intimacy and personal viewpoint that suggest a debt to painting by Tang men of letters.¹⁴ The Southern Tang court encouraged painting in many different styles, creating a context for the absorption of elements of literati ink painting into court art. One document of these interactions is a poem by a literati painter active at the Southern Tang court, Tang Xiya 唐希雅, about his own "broken ink" landscape handscroll.¹⁵ Another is Dong Yuan's 源 遠 tall landscape handscroll, *Waiting for the Ferry* (height 50 cm), which uses relatively small brushes to create layered textures that confound the viewer's desire for legibility.¹⁶

The Hanging Scroll

The hanging scroll format had more recent origins than the handscroll. Having been introduced earlier in the eighth century, it first came into its own after the An Lushan Rebellion.¹⁷ From the late eighth century on, the hanging scroll format was used by professional muralists for private commissions from individuals, including religious icons, portraits, and auspicious images.¹⁸ Han Gan (ca. 715–after 781) and Zhou Fang (ca. 730–ca. 800) are the earliest muralists for whom such commissions are recorded.¹⁹ Hanging scrolls were also produced by muralists for use as diplo-

matic gifts. In the early tenth century, Huang Quan 黄筌 and his son Huang Jucai 黄居采 produced several hanging scrolls for diplomatic use by the Shu ruler, partly following old models, on the themes *Sparrows and Flowers of the Four Seasons*, *Spring Mountains*, and *Autumn Mountains*, as well as famous mountains of the Shu region.²⁰ Some educated artists who specialized in painting in ink and color on silk produced related hanging scrolls. An example is a depiction of *The Feng and Shan Sacrifices at Mount Tai* commissioned from the late eighth-century artist Cheng Yi 程 (a follower of Zhou Fang) for presentation to the emperor.²¹ The man who commissioned the painting, Han Huang 韓滉, was himself a leading scholar-official artist. Zhu Jingxuan notes that “one occasionally runs across hanging scrolls *tuzhou* by [Han Huang] in people’s homes.”²² For specialists of monochrome ink painting, meanwhile, the hanging scroll had a somewhat different status. It fell halfway between the decorative formats of screens that the man of letters turned professional artist could not avoid, and the handscroll painting or calligraphy that was a part of literati social exchange.²³ Several poems about hanging scrolls by literati ink painters have survived, some by Du Fu 杜甫.²⁴

Today, our best visual guides to the artifactual appearance of late Tang hanging scrolls are two paintings recovered from a Liao tomb in Yemaotai 葉茂台, Liaoning Province, datable to around 980.²⁵ These have been thought, largely on the basis of the subject matter, to be works produced for a mortuary purpose, and thus to be examples of painting by local Liao artists. They have also usually been considered, on stylistic grounds, to date close to 980. Yang Renkai, however, in an early study of the paintings, noted that the silk of the landscape painting was already darkened when it entered the tomb, and that its mounting has been repaired with needle and thread.²⁶ These features strongly suggest that the landscape, at least, had been part of the possessions of the deceased prior to entering his tomb. Following a detailed review of every aspect of the two paintings, Yang concluded that they had been brought to Shandong from the Liao southern capital (near present-day Beijing), were probably the work of artists based there, and had been mounted there around the time of purchase.²⁷ Yang hypothesized that the landscape was significantly older than the garden scene (whose silk had only yellowed), and dated from much earlier in the tenth century.²⁸

However, the landscape representations discovered in eighth-century Chang’an tombs subsequent to Yang’s article open up the possibility that even a Five Dynasties date might be slightly too late for the landscape. Similarly, the ninth- and early tenth-century tomb murals depicting high-quality garden scenes since discovered in the Beijing area suggest that the garden scene, even if not an “antique”

like the landscape, was nonetheless a work of some age when it entered the tomb.²⁹ These quibbles apart, Yang's hypothesis remains the most convincing explanation of the historical status of the two paintings. Although their subjects are well suited to mortuary use, they are certainly not specific to such a function; moreover, the two paintings have significantly different dimensions (106.5 x 65 cm; 113.4 x 56.2 cm), suggesting that they were paired after the fact rather than commissioned together.

As artifacts, meanwhile, the Yemaotai hanging scrolls have no separate border, and the roller is very thin in each case, akin to the unused Tang-dynasty sutra rollers preserved in the Shōsōin repository.³⁰ They lack any roller-ends, much less those of white jade, rock crystal, or amber that Zhang Yanyuan recommended (in descending order) for small hanging scrolls.³¹ The two paintings are vivid evidence of an early moment in the history of the hanging scroll format, preceding the incorporation into the mounting of a protective vertical border on either side of the painting. With the roller and mounting so inconspicuous, the hanging scroll's appearance comes very close to that of an individual panel from a modular folding screen—a fact that may be historically significant.³²

Aside from the two Yemaotai paintings, it is difficult to identify other surviving works from the 765–970 period that may always have been mounted as hanging scrolls. Part of the problem is that one of the Yemaotai paintings, the garden scene, falls within the same width range (52.5 to 57.5 cm) as other paintings that are certain to have been mounted as screen panels (see below). Since most other candidates for an original hanging-scroll format fall within this range as well, in those cases we can sometimes rule out the possibility of an original hanging-scroll mounting (when the composition is obviously part of a larger whole) but never confirm that such a mounting was always intended, because the other part of the problem is that folding screens were usually made up of independent compositions. (Indeed, the Yemaotai garden painting itself could conceivably have started life as one panel from a modular folding screen.) That said, one painting by an artist active late in the period that, to judge by the beautifully balanced composition, was always a hanging scroll is Huang Jucai's *Blue Magpie and Thorny Shrubs* (97 x 53.6 cm). A more tentative possibility—like the Yemaotai landscape scroll, it is wider than the screen panel norm and is a complete composition—is Juran's 巨然 *Xiaoyi Stealing the Lanting Scroll* (144.1 x 59.6 cm).

In secular contexts, the hanging scroll was similar to the handscroll in being brought out on specific occasions. Zhang Yanyuan recommends the use of a specially constructed frame from which to hang the scroll, but we must assume that most hanging scrolls did not receive such special treatment.³³ More likely, a

hanging scroll was either hung on a wall very temporarily or suspended on a pole with a fork-like attachment held by a servant, as seen in later paintings evoking Tang gatherings.³⁴ The contemporary evidence for the display of scrolls is limited. During the later 830s, Emperor Wenzong 文宗 on one occasion had a painting by Cheng Xiuji's father hung up to show the son.³⁵ However, there is no evidence at all for the use of high-quality hanging scrolls as longer-term wall decoration. When hanging scrolls were used in this way, they were considered simply decorative, as in the case of the paintings on rough silk by Xu Xi 徐熙 and his school that, according to Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (ca. 1040–ca. 1090), hung in the Southern Tang palace of Li Houzhu 李後主 around the mid-tenth century.³⁶ Pre-970, the hanging scroll format would still have been associated in people's minds principally with the intimacy of occasional viewings.

Screens

The modern attention to scrolls, which I have perpetuated to this point, is in fact historically misleading. If we could travel back to the first half of the tenth century, we would encounter a world of residential decoration that continued the late Tang emphasis on screens. The decorative use of murals in residential contexts, important during the earlier part of the Tang dynasty, seems to have declined subsequently without entirely disappearing.³⁷ The afterlife residence of Wang Chuzhi 王處直 (dated 924) makes the importance of screens clear, for there we see depicted the following, in addition to murals and relief-carved pictorial panels: tall modular folding screens of an old type that had first come into use in the seventh century; a tripartite screen; a large, almost-square screen of a more recent kind; and also horizontal screens that could be placed behind a table, equally of a more modern type.³⁸ The range of screen formats prior to about 750 was much smaller than from the late eighth century on, and the Wang Chuzhi tomb shows the fruits of the late Tang expansion of the range of screen types.

Most of the compositions of the 765–970 period preserved in paintings that today are mounted as hanging scrolls were originally produced for one or another screen format, of which they sometimes represent just a fragment. Several are single panels from folding screens of the modular folding type, including Wei Xian's 衛賢 *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* (134.5 x 52.5 cm), known to have come from a set of six paintings;³⁹ Guan Tong's 關仝 *Autumn Mountains at Dusk* (140.5 x 57.3 cm), which has an obvious relation to one panel of the six-panel landscape screen depicted in the mid-eighth-century (before 756) Zhujiadaocun 朱家道村 tomb in

Fuping, near the Tang capital;⁴⁰ and possibly Juran's *Layered Mountains and Dense Forests* (144.1 x 55.4 cm).⁴¹ *Reading the Stele by Pitted Rocks* (125.9 x 104.9 cm), usually taken to be a later copy of an original Li Cheng 李成 painting, probably preserves the composition of two panels from a larger modular screen composition of which the remaining panels were already lost by the early twelfth century.⁴² It has also been shown that the handscroll *Court Ladies Pinning Flowers in Their Hair* (Five Dynasties or earlier) is composed from three severely cut-down fragments of vertical screen panels from an originally larger set.⁴³ As early as the pre-An Lushan period, there existed small-scale folding screens: one notable eight-panel example excavated from Tomb 188 at Astana in Xinjiang has panels measuring 53.5 x 22.3 cm.⁴⁴ Miniature modular screens are depicted along the side walls of a number of late Tang Dunhuang cave-temples. The format of a miniature four-panel screen would explain the proportions of *The Emperor Minghuang's Journey to Shu* (55.9 x 81 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei), a much later copy of a late Tang composition. *River Boats and a Riverside Mansion* (101.9 x 54.7 cm), traditionally attributed to Li Sixun 李思訓, presents a more complex case. As Wu Hung has argued, it probably comes from a modular screen. But at 101.9 centimeters high, it resembles neither a full-scale nor a miniature screen panel. Most likely it has been cut down at the top and comes from a full-scale modular screen.⁴⁵

Other paintings, of more square proportions, may originally have been mounted on a more modern fixed-frame single-panel screen. The innovative tomb chamber decoration of the Zhujiadaocun tomb includes depictions of such screens.⁴⁶ On the north wall are two examples, one depicting two cranes in a garden (180 x 160 cm), and another depicting a bull being led by a black foreigner (approx. 160 x 160 cm).⁴⁷ The "picture screen" *tuzhang* 圖障 depicting "two trees by a river, one a pine and the other a cedar," that Zhu Jingxuan saw in the office of a Grand Secretary may thus have been of the single-panel type.⁴⁸ Michael Sullivan long ago suggested that Dong Yuan's *Villagers Celebrating the Dragonboat Festival* (156 x 160 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei) may have begun its life as such a screen, a suggestion now confirmed by the similarly almost-square landscape screen depicted in the 924 Wang Chuzhi tomb.⁴⁹ Another candidate for a remounted single-panel screen painting is *Travelers in Snow-Covered Mountains* (135.9 x 75 cm, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art) bearing an interpolated signature of Jing Hao 荆浩 and datable to the first half of the tenth century.⁵⁰ In its present fragmentary state, that painting appears to be the right-hand half of a larger composition, which in its original form would have been of similar proportions to the Wang Chuzhi landscape screen and of similar size to Dong Yuan's *Villagers Celebrating the Dragon-*

boat Festival (150 cm as against 160 cm wide). A third candidate is the remarkable *Portrait of Song Taizu* (191 x 169.7 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei), whose architectonic framing of the figure seems to demand the echoing architectonics of a framing screen mounting.

Judging by their proportions and scale, a very few surviving paintings may originally have belonged to tripartite screens. Such screens comprised a wide central panel and two narrower side panels about the width of two *fu* panels from a multi-panel folding screen. The 784 tomb of Princess Tang'an gives a clue as to the origin of the form.⁵¹ On the west wall of the tomb chamber behind the funerary couch is depicted a horizontal screen composition showing a garden scene; the painting is of equivalent size to the usual six-panel screen. Although no screen panel divisions are marked, the likelihood at such an early date is that the artist was trying to represent a modular screen with a single continuous composition.⁵² The tripartite screen, then, would have represented a further expansion of the composition size to the equivalent of an eight- or ten-panel folding screen, but now using three fixed-frame panels. Early evidence for such tripartite screens comes from the 829 tomb of Zhao Yigong 趙逸公 in Anyang, Henan Province. Located on the west wall of the coffin chamber behind the funerary couch is a mural depiction of such a screen representing a continuous garden scene with birds and objects.⁵³ The central panel (156 x 290 cm) of another tripartite screen is depicted in the Beijing tomb of Wang Gongshu 王公淑 and his wife (846); the screen would have stood on the funerary couch.⁵⁴ A third such screen is depicted in the coffin chamber of the Wang Chuzhi tomb already mentioned (924). There we see three framed horizontal paintings just above the level of the funerary platform, at its back and at the two sides; we can infer an intent to represent a tripartite screen framing a box couch.

In two well-known handscroll compositions associated with the Southern Tang dynasty, *Playing Chess in Front of the Double Screen* and *Examining Books*, we see screens very similar to these last two types, with the difference that in the Southern Tang compositions the paintings extend below the line of the furniture and are consequently taller than their excavated northern counterparts. Wen Fong has proposed that a surviving, possibly Southern Tang painting, *Riverbank* (221 x 109 cm), would have constituted the left-side wing of a tripartite screen (it could, however, alternatively be seen as the left-hand half of the central composition).⁵⁵ A second candidate for a side panel is yet another Southern Tang composition, Dong Yuan's *Wintry Forests* (181.5 x 116.5 cm, known through a facsimile copy), which compositionally is not unlike the right-hand side panel of the screen depicted in *Examining Books*.⁵⁶

In contrast to these various popular and long-standing screen-types, the wide horizontal screen on legs depicted twice over in the tomb of Wang Chuzhi (924) has seemingly left little trace in the material archive of transmitted ninth-century compositions, and may at that point have been a recent innovation.

Wall Hangings

Contemporary and slightly later texts contain mentions of icons (single figures or the complex sutra illustrations known as *bianxiang* 變相 compositions) that were created to be hung on a wall—both individual icons that could be hung in a residence and large sets suitable only for temples or chapels. While some of the individual icons are explicitly described as hanging scrolls, others are described as *fan* (temple banners) or are qualified by the counter *zheng* 幀 (literally, “a sheet of cloth”), which was a counter used for icons that were in sets. In Huang Xiufu’s 黃休復 *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄 (Record of famous painters of Yizhou, preface by Li Tian 李旼 dated 1006), for example, *zheng* is used in relation to a set of sixteen luohans (arhats) by Guanxiu 貫休, and another set of 120 paintings for the Water and Land ritual by Zhang Nanben 張南本.⁵⁷ Although it is possible that *zheng* was used interchangeably with the usual counter for hanging scrolls and screen panels, *fu* 幅, I believe that, like *fan*, it is more likely to indicate a different kind of mounting from that of a standard hanging scroll. It may refer specifically to pictorial wall hangings without rollers, many of which survive today among the portable paintings that were preserved at Dunhuang until about a hundred years ago, now dispersed among museums in New Delhi, London, and Paris. In the words of Roderick Whitfield and Anne Farrer:

We cannot be sure exactly how these paintings were intended to be hung, but for the most part they must have been given by individuals for use in the monasteries, perhaps to be displayed when the masses were said for a particular deceased relative or on the occasion of other Buddhist ceremonies. Such paintings come in different sizes according to the subject and the means of the donors. Since they were assembled by sewing together pieces of silk, with the edges protected by a sewn-on border of silk or hemp cloth, the width to which the silk was originally woven tends to govern the eventual size of the painting; these range from a single width (about 60 cm) for a painting of a single Bodhisattva up to

three widths for a larger group of Buddha and heavenly assembly in the Pure Land or paradise paintings. The height of the painting is generally somewhat greater than the width so that a similar proportion is kept between them.⁵⁸

These paintings are sometimes described collectively as banners, and although only some of the paintings were mounted in a way that would have allowed them to be carried in procession outside the chapels, almost any painting could if necessary have been suspended away from any wall. Indeed, a corridor wall in Cave 220 bears a mural dating to 925 that depicts an icon hanging as a banner in this way.⁵⁹ However, the evidence of Dunhuang murals is that within a chapel most of these paintings would usually have functioned as pictorial wall hangings (see below). A striking example is a pair of paintings depicting Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra that have mirroring curved upper borders and were probably created for a barrel-vaulted space, either temporary or permanent.⁶⁰ Buddhist wall hangings in general only rarely reproduce the proportions of the *fu* screen panel on which the hanging scroll was originally modeled.⁶¹

Temple Murals

Although very little free-standing temple architecture survives from the 750–960/970 period, the early texts on painting confirm that, in the temple context, wall painting continued to be the major format. Developments in mural format are hard to infer from textual evidence alone. Fortunately, the cave-chapels of Dunhuang allow us to see one of the important trends of the time. From the late eighth century onward (Cave 159), there was a convergence of mural painting with painting in portable formats.⁶² Wall paintings, in other words, came to emulate the effect of, and sometimes faithfully reproduce, the use of screens and wall hangings. Inevitably, the result was a new approach to the division of the wall surfaces, which came to be highly compartmentalized. This compartmentalization, which saw the multiplication of *bianxiang* compositions on each wall, was associated with the popularity of Huayan 華嚴 Buddhism from the end of the eighth century onward.⁶³ The *bianxiang* compositions emulated wall hangings, and below them can be seen small-scale modular screens. The central niche, meanwhile, came to accommodate a full-size modular folding screen that, as Wu Hung has pointed out, “imitates a free-standing screen set behind a master in real life.”⁶⁴ The convergence with portable formats may have extended to scrolls as well. In Cave 156 (mid-ninth century), for example,

two long, handscroll-like compositions depicting processions extend from each side of the entrance door in the east wall, stopping only where the side walls meet the west wall.⁶⁵ Despite their low placement and alignment with the verticality of the wall, these two murals are strongly reminiscent of such handscroll compositions as *Lady Guoguo on a Spring Outing*.⁶⁶

Genres

Writing around the 1050s, Liu Daochun 劉道醇 in complementary books classified by genre first Northern Song painters down to his time, and then Five Dynasties painters. In the latter book Liu omitted artists from Sichuan, possibly because Huang Xiufu 黃休復 had already treated them in detail in the *Yizhou minghua lu* (preface 1006). Given the twentieth-century focus on the importance of landscape in the tenth century, I cannot but be struck by the fact that in both texts Liu places figure painting at the head of the hierarchy of genres. No less striking is how his list of figure painters is dominated by artists who worked primarily as muralists and specialized in religious themes. The preeminence of figure painting is reaffirmed in Guo Ruoxu's *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞誌 (Experiences in painting, ca. 1074) and in the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 imperial catalogue (Painting catalogue of the Xuanhe era, preface dated 1120), where landscape appears as the sixth of ten categories. If religious painting was so privileged as late as the early twelfth century, it should be no surprise, then, that Huang Xiufu's earlier biographical history of painting in Sichuan from 758 to 966 tells the same story. Although the *Yizhou minghua lu* classifies artists by quality rather than genre, the result is essentially a history of the achievements of wall painters, with a heavy emphasis on religious figure painting.

The hierarchical precedence of figure painting in general is, of course, part of the modern view of Tang dynasty art. It has not, however, played so prominent a role in the modern view of the tenth century, in large part because few free-standing temples of the period can be seen today, and still fewer surviving murals can be seen in situ. The modern privileging of landscape over all other tenth-century genres is not wholly without basis. It corresponds to a Kaifeng, and more broadly northern, preference for landscape painting among the most highly educated men, and thus reproduces a social bias. It remains anachronistic, however, with respect to the period with which we are concerned, since this preference only became fully clear from the late tenth century onward.

In fact, tenth-century genres in general before Taizong's reign are better understood by approaching them from the other direction, from the Tang. A close read-

ing of Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (Record of famous painters of all the dynasties) and Zhu Jingxuan's *Tangchao minghua lu* shows that the late Tang period was characterized by four features. The first was the preeminence of religious figure painting. The second, which made itself felt in secular figure painting, was the gradual historicization of a certain ideal of palace life associated with the pre-An Lushan period. The third was the ever-increasing importance of nature themes, including landscape. The fourth feature was not specific to any one type of theme. There was a proliferation of subgenres as the practice of painting attracted more and more practitioners of widely varying social status. It is likely that the dispersal of the court collection in the later 750s, and then again in 783–784, contributed to this process.⁶⁷ In all these respects we can see a continuity between the late Tang and the Five Dynasties.

For religious figure painting, the murals and wall hangings of Dunhuang demonstrate, overall, that much of what gives Five Dynasties Buddhist painting its stylistic and thematic character had its roots in the late eighth century. Zhu Jingxuan, ranking Tang artists by quality, placed only one artist each in his “Divine Category: Upper” (Wu Daozi 吳道子) and “Divine Category: Middle” (Zhou Fang). While it was the pre-An Lushan artist Wu Daozi who was the single most cited model in biographies of wall painters of the ninth and tenth centuries, Wu represented a conservative stylistic norm. It was the late eighth-century artist Zhou Fang, noted for his attention to the tangibility of individual bodies and things, who was more often presented as the precursor of modern approaches. Among the major tenth-century themes, at least two—the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, and the Water-and-Moon Guanyin Bodhisattva—can be traced back to Zhou Fang's time. Some of the Dunhuang wall hangings, notably a late eighth- to early ninth-century depiction of *Samantabhadra*, show a direct stylistic connection to secular figure compositions attributed to Zhou Fang.⁶⁸ And Zhou himself was credited with the most influential formulation of the Water-and-Moon Guanyin.⁶⁹ Whether through his direct influence, or simply in line with a general stylistic trend that came to be associated with him, over the course of the ninth and early tenth centuries we see an increasing attention in Dunhuang paintings to sensual and immediate bodily presence, and to the tangibility of surface. These concerns found their thematic match above all in the various types of bodhisattva. But since Zhou was also, as we have seen, a noted portraitist, it may be assumed that he left his mark as well on portraits of donor figures, increasingly important from the late eighth century on.⁷⁰

Sensual immediacy is even more a characteristic of the famous group of Five Dynasties wall paintings dispersed among Western museum collections by C. T.

Loo. The research of Meng Sihui has confirmed that the murals, which she relates to the Zhang Xuan–Zhou Fang tradition, date no later than 951–953, and come from a temple within striking distance of Kaifeng on the Henan-Shanxi border.⁷¹ Their theme of repeated groups of bodhisattvas and apsaras (celestial maidens) may be seen from one point of view as a highly exoticized displacement of the theme of palace life into a Buddhist context. Elsewhere, the attention to bodily physicality was accompanied by an equally strong attention to landscape settings, as in the theme of the Water-and-Moon Guanyin (that is, Avalokiteśvara on his island mountain, Mount Potalaka).⁷² The same landscape interest infuses a Japanese work, the Hokketo Kampon Mandala (late eighth to early ninth century), that reflects contemporary Chinese painting. Equally relevant is the sixteen luohans theme as reinterpreted by the Sichuanese painter Guanxiu between 880 and 896, whose compositions give the luohans themselves the character of mountainscapes.⁷³

For secular figure painting, there is strong evidence both in texts and in the material record that the early Tang pictorial subgenres associated with palace life, together with their technique of sumptuous color and clear ink outline, entered a new stage of development after the An Lushan Rebellion. The most influential practitioners of the palace lady theme, for example, were late eighth-century artists: Zhang Xuan and, again, Zhou Fang, who were the major points of reference for later artists. In Sichuan, Zhou's early tenth-century followers included Ruan Zhihui 阮知誨 (active ca. 919–937) and his son Ruan Weide 阮惟德, who gave his palace ladies an identifiable Sichuanese aspect.⁷⁴ Two often-reproduced Dunhuang wall hangings, *Bodhisattva as Guide of Souls* (late ninth century) and *Avalokiteśvara as Guide of Souls* (early tenth century), include distinctively dressed female donor-figures that may reflect the Ruan family interpretation of the Zhou Fang style. In the southeast under the Southern Tang, Zhu Mengsong 竹夢松 and Zhou Wenju 周文矩 both took their cue from Zhou Fang as well.⁷⁵ In the Beijing area, meanwhile, we can point to the two stone reliefs depicting female attendants and musicians in the tomb of Wang Chuzhi, which derive from the same tradition. Like the Wang Chuzhi tomb reliefs, surviving paintings on silk such as *Ladies Pinning Flowers in Their Hair* or *Palace Ladies at a Banquet* seem to evoke nostalgically an ideal of palace life associated with the pre–An Lushan era, and we may wonder whether this nostalgia was not a spur to the entire subgenre from Zhang Xuan and Zhou Fang onward. The conceptual distance between the artists and their theme would no doubt have been encouraged by the broad audience such paintings received. Huang Xiufu's *Yizhou minghua lu* mentions, for example, the demand for Ruan Weide's paintings among visiting merchants from the Hubei-Hunan area.⁷⁶

A similar interpretation of nostalgia might be extended to horse painting, which evoked another aspect of imperial Tang life. Although Han Gan made his reputation at court before the An Lushan Rebellion, he continued to be active until 781, whereas Zhang Yanyuan reports that the great Ferghana horses for which Han was known (see the Song copy, *Two Horses*, in the National Palace Museum) disappeared from the imperial stables in the 750s.⁷⁷ Wei Yan's late eighth-century handscroll composition *Pasturing Horses*, known through Li Gonglin's copy (Palace Museum, Beijing), is an even clearer case, evoking as it does the smaller horses of the early Tang period.

Collectively, the ninth-century texts inform us that close-up nature themes attracted a growing number of specialists from the second half of the eighth century on. The recurrent mention of lifelikeness is backed up by numerous anecdotes testifying to artists' observation from life. Although this had previously been fundamental to portraiture, in this period it was extended to animals, birds, plants, and flowers as well. One of the earliest such anecdotes concerns Han Gan (ca. 715–after 781), and is used to illustrate the artist's innovative attitude relative to artists of earlier generations. Commanded in the 740s or early 750s to paint horses in the style of his older and more established contemporary, Chen Hong 陳閔, the young Han Gan produced his own style, claiming that the horses in the imperial stables were themselves his teachers.⁷⁸ During the Zhenyuan period (785–804), Bian Luan 邊鸞 was commanded to depict peacocks that had been sent as gifts from Korea. Cheng Xiuji 程修己, a court painter under Wenzong (r. 827–840) painted a memorial portrait of one of the emperor's favorite dogs, and for another patron a portrait of a fighting cock.⁷⁹ Teng Changyou 滕昌祐, who followed Emperor Xizong 僖宗 in his flight to Sichuan in 881, grew plants and flowers at his residence to aid in his painting.⁸⁰ Under the Southern Tang, the Shandong artist Guo Quanhui 郭權輝 built an aviary to help him in his painting of birds.⁸¹ And Huang Quan was credited with renewing the genre of crane painting through his direct observation of cranes that had been sent to Shu as diplomatic gifts in 944; his surviving handscroll *Sketches of Birds, Insects, and Turtles* (ca. 960, Palace Museum, Beijing) gives the story credence.⁸²

Portrait studies aside, the representation of close-up nature themes in general aimed at the creation of auspicious images that could be used in any number of different contexts (residences, tombs, government buildings, palaces, diplomatic exchanges of gifts). An expanding body of archeological evidence confirms the increasing autonomy and ambition of such themes from the late eighth century through the Five Dynasties period. In one subgenre for which the evidence is relatively plentiful, that of garden scenes in ink outline and color, we can trace a straightforward

lineage of relatively naturalistic painting through the previously mentioned mural depictions of screens in the tombs of Princess Tang'an (784), Zhao Yigong (829), Wang Gongshu and his wife (846), and Wang Chuzhi (924). The Yemaotai hanging-scroll garden scene also fits within this development, which culminates in Huang Jucai's *Blue Magpie and Thorny Shrubs*.

According to Zhu Jingxuan and Zhang Yanyuan, landscape, too, came into its own in the second half of the eighth century, following its emergence in the first half of the century or slightly earlier.⁸³ Already the sophistication of the landscape elements in the tombs of Heir Apparent Yide 懿德 and Heir Apparent Jiemin 節愍, painted in 706 and 710, respectively, confirms accounts of Li Sixun's landscape painting.⁸⁴ The mural depiction of a modular screen with six independent landscapes in the Zhujiadaocun tomb, where it occupies the usual position behind the funerary couch, shows that landscape was fully established as a distinct genre by mid-century.⁸⁵ More recently, a second, roughly contemporary mural depiction of a landscape screen has been found in a much more elaborate tomb belonging to Emperor Minghuang's 明皇 concubine, Mei Fei 梅妃.⁸⁶ Slightly later, a landscape screen can be seen in use at a banquet in a genre scene within a late eighth-century Buddhist mural in Yulinku Cave 25; although the banquet takes place in a tent, the tent here functions as a substitute reception hall.⁸⁷ The type of landscape painting involved here, it should be noted, is symbolic and codified rather than self-expressive. It is the same type of landscape painting—mountainscape as auspicious image—that would later appear in the single-composition landscape screens of the Wang Chuzhi tomb, and among the recorded mountainscape hanging scrolls used for diplomatic purposes by the rulers of the Shu kingdom. The Yemaotai landscape hanging scroll belongs to this general genre, which, like the garden scene, was adaptable to multiple purposes.

In a separate development, the interpretation of certain nature themes was associated with the technique of painting in ink alone as a vehicle for self-expression. Seen above all in screens and hanging scrolls, the two themes of pines and landscape were at the heart of a recognized cluster of related themes considered suitable for ink painting, including bamboo and rocks, as early as the late eighth century. To take just one contemporary mention among many, Zhu Jingxuan notes that a great many landscape screens by the influential late eighth-century ink painter Zhang Zao were still extant in Zhu's own day.⁸⁸ The subject of much scholarship already by Kiyohiko Munakata, Michael Sullivan, and others, ink painting has attracted interest for its apparent anticipation of Song landscape painting.⁸⁹ In its own time, however, late Tang ink painting had more to do with a burgeoning sense of separate social

identity on the part of Tang men of letters from nonaristocratic backgrounds. By the time Jing Hao wrote his *Bifa ji* 筆法記 (Notes on methods of the brush), he could claim kinship with several generations of such ink painters extending back through Wang Xia 王洽 to Xiang Rong 項容, and then to the great Zhang Zao, and finally to the pre-An Lushan artists Bi Hong 宏 and Zheng Qian 鄭虔.⁹⁰

Ink painting defined itself against painting in pigments, and against figure painting, yet was part of the same cultural world. In drawing its symbolic vocabulary from wild nature, with which it identified performatively, ink painting turned the explicit subjects of mainstream painting into implicit metaphors. The pine, for example, was metaphorized as a dragon, which in turn functioned as a metaphor for the “superior man.” Landscape, meanwhile, visualized the larger coordinates of the superior man’s possibilities of action in a still strongly hierarchical world. Unfortunately, if the textual evidence for ink painting during the period 765–970 is very rich, surviving paintings are very few. One relatively late example (first half of the tenth century) is *Travelers in Snow-Covered Mountains*, bearing an interpolated “attribution signature” to Jing Hao.⁹¹

Taken together, the evidence on the history of formats and genres suggests that Five Dynasties painting had a double relation to the Tang. On the one hand, the innovative stylistic aspects of Five Dynasties painting that have been privileged in modern scholarship were the fruit of a long development that began in the second half of the eighth century, following the An Lushan Rebellion. But on the other hand, models of art-making from the period before 750 retained a lingering authority even into the tenth century itself (here Wu Daozi’s influence is emblematic). Wherever we look, the modern presumption of a sharp break with the past during the decades on either side of 900 seems to be at odds with the material and textual evidence. It would be more accurate to speak of a gradual and respectful *disentanglement* from the Tang that continued into the first years of the Song under Taizu, accompanying the gradually growing awareness of a separate historical identity that finally crystallized during the reign of the second Song ruler Taizong (976–997), in part due to Taizong’s policy of creating a new national culture of painting.

In this light, Huang Xiufu’s *Yizhou minghua lu*, often overlooked due to its regional character (there has never been an English translation), takes on the significance of a memorial to the period 765–970. Although Huang was writing in the wake of the Sichuanese dominance of religious painting under Taizong’s imperial patronage, he chose not to take the story into the period of Taizong’s reign.⁹² His reported purpose—to memorialize the artists and paintings of Chengdu of the period from 758 to 966, in the wake of the destruction of so many temples

during an uprising in 993—seems straightforward enough.⁹³ But it does not prevent us from also seeing in his project a broader awareness of the end of a particular kind of painting world and production of painting in China, for during Huang's lifetime, under the reigns of Taizong and Zhenzong (997–1022), the art world became centralized to a degree that China had not seen since the early eighth century.

Among later Northern Song art historians, Liu Daochun seems to have internalized the new situation so well that the Five Dynasties period interests him mostly as a prelude to the Song.⁹⁴ Liu's approach thus anticipates the modern view of the tenth century. Guo Ruoxu's attitude is more measured. On the one hand, he shares Liu Daochun's pride in the achievements of the Song art world, famously defending the unmatched achievements of Song landscapists; on the other, he also registers a cultural break around the time of the founding of the dynasty, and acknowledges the equally unmatched achievements of earlier figure painters.⁹⁵ But this overdrawn contrast between two genres, reflecting Guo's social position as a northern man of letters, distracts from the more nuanced view that underpins the structure of his *Tuhua jianwen zhi*. Guo splits the biographical history component of his text into two stages. The second covers the period from 960–1074, but the first takes up the story where Zhang Yanyuan left off in 841 and continues through to 960, thus grouping the Five Dynasties period with the Tang. The anecdotal section of the text is similarly split into two parts, with the establishment of the Song again providing the basic cut-off point.⁹⁶ Significantly, whereas the second part is entitled “Anecdotes of Recent Times,” the first part is entitled “Gleanings from History.”

Disentanglement and Re-engagement

Beyond differences of genre, modern art historians have generally explained the difference between Tang painting at its height in the early eighth century and Song painting at its beginnings around 1000 in stylistic terms. They have seen the stylistic difference as the result of a movement toward a more differentiated visual account of living structures (human, animal, botanical) and their environments that more closely approximated empirical experience. Stylistic change, however, was underpinned by a more fundamental shift in thinking at the level of painting's basic epistemology. Between 765 and 970, painters gradually shifted their attention from a hierarchical cataloguing of experience to an articulation of the interconnections that make experience of the world continuous. In depicting the “ten thousand things” that made up the phenomenal world, painters gradually learned how to create space-

time continua by structuring compositions around the relations between categories of “thing” rather than the categories themselves.

The pre-765 system, which continued to make itself felt in religious images, had been spatially and temporally discontinuous. It achieved compositional unity through hierarchical structures of montage that mapped out the place of each category of thing within clearly distinguished levels of a fixed structure. This unity came at a price, because the different levels were either simply juxtaposed in the representation or isolated in separate compositions; it was the beholder who had to provide the relations between levels from his or her own prior knowledge. But once painters became dissatisfied with such representational disjunctiveness and turned their attention to the points of discontinuity, they discovered a multiplicity of possible transitions and linkages. Figure painters used the play of gazes, gestures, and touch, together with the creation of new complex forms from overlapping and interacting simple forms. Landscapists harmonized the relative proportions between scenes (*jing* 景), introduced linking narrative motifs such as paths and bridges, and abandoned contrasting hues for the tonal relations made possible by ink and color washes.

The exploration of transitions and linkages allowed painters to deemphasize fixed hierarchical structure and bring representation closer to viewers’ empirical optical experience of spatial relationships, surfaces, atmospheres, and temporalities. In every genre the shift toward empirical experience created a corresponding need for represented forms and surfaces that could engage the eye at length; forms became more difficult to exhaust in a single act of recognition, surfaces took on a complexity of texturing (the fall of light on rocks) or layering (transparent textiles). This is the context in which, as noted earlier, the sense of the body intensified. The shift toward making connection explicit also operated on the iconographic level. The aforementioned horizontal screen depicted in an 846 tomb has as its subject geese in combination with a peony bush and butterflies. The screen conflates at least two genres—geese and flowering plants—that had previously been kept separate.⁹⁷ Since this and another painting in the same tomb also show noticeable innovations in naturalistic depiction, we may speculate that the 846 composition (and later ones that echo it) in fact belong to a distinctly different epistemic horizon from earlier Tang material. Also from this transformed world of the ninth/early tenth century, in which Tang elements interrelate in a new way, is the screen fragment, now remounted as a handscroll, entitled *Court Ladies Pinning Flowers in Their Hair*, which conflates several different themes: female beauties, flowering plants, cranes, and dogs.⁹⁸ Here, again, the confluences of theme speak to the emergence of

a new understanding of the order of the world, in which the basic unit is no longer an atomized element belonging to a distinct category but instead a *relation* between elements that is at the same time a relation between categories.

Two paintings of the period, both of them extensively studied by Wu Hung, offer self-conscious reflections on what this epistemic shift meant for representation itself. *Playing Chess in Front of a Double Screen* treats representations as themselves iconographic elements, as a means to explore the subtle relation between ontological levels of representation, and between representation and optical experience. The composition makes these relations explicit, creating a tension between the impulse to rationalize them didactically and the ludic desire to turn them into a play of options.⁹⁹ No less ambitious is a mural painting in Dunhuang Cave 72 depicting *The Miraculous Image at Fanhe* (late Tang or Five Dynasties period, mid-ninth to tenth century). In this painting, the artist depicted not just a famous statue near Dunhuang but the entire ontological system of relations within which it operated. To quote Wu Hung:

Fourteen Buddha Images in this work have the standard posture of the Fanhe statue. Although identical in iconography, these images differ in religious significance: there is the “real” Buddha as the master of his celestial kingdom; there is “The Image of His Holy Appearance” as a member of this celestial kingdom; there is the Fanhe statue as the earthly manifestation of this heavenly image; and there are the paintings and sculptures duplicated from the miraculous Fanhe statue.¹⁰⁰

The mural stages the relations among these ontological levels within a *bianxiang* iconic composition centered on the axial relation between two identical central buddhas placed one above the other, the “real” buddha above and the Fanhe statue below.

The epistemic shift I have been sketching out can be seen at work in other areas of visual and material culture as well. Take the late Tang architectural innovation of the double *ang*.¹⁰¹ The *ang* was the slanting beam-lever that from the early Tang dynasty onward had made possible the more complex bracketing necessary for larger roofs and taller multi-story structures within a post and beam system of architecture. The *ang* was not a true lever in its Tang form because, in the words of Alexander Soper, “its top end had been simply immobilized, by butting against the underside of a heavy girder.”¹⁰² When used in superimposed pairs, however,

as can be seen in the mid-ninth-century Foguang Monastery 佛光寺, the two *ang* beam-levers draw and disperse a far wider range of downward forces into different parts of a now more elaborate bracketing system.¹⁰³ In the process, new relations between forces are created. The potential of the *ang* to create a fully integrated continuum of forces in equilibrium, leading to more dynamically differentiated and organic morphologies, would not be exploited until the Song, when it was transformed into a true lever by having the top end, too, take a downward force. But the earlier innovation of the double *ang* already moved Chinese architecture away from the relatively static and geometric structures of the eighth century and before, just as contemporary innovations in painting were dissolving the atomized structures of earlier painting. The difference, however, is that what in architecture appeared in abstract structural formulation, in painting was made more explicitly visible. In the hands of the painter, a general epistemic transformation was rendered phenomenologically *real*.

Further examples of explicitly articulated connection are not difficult to find, though I do not have the space here to discuss them in detail. In the realm of urbanism, Yang Ke has noted the later Tang modification of Tang Changan's structure of closed wards by the introduction of alleys and lanes that bypassed the official gates in order to allow informal passage between wards. A new, more continuous flow of urban space resulted.¹⁰⁴ In sculpture, a major development of the period is the growing interest in complex pictorial relief carving, seen, for example, in the eight *jātaka* panels of the Southern Tang pagoda at Qixia 棲霞 Temple outside Nanjing, or the aforementioned panels of palace ladies in Wang Chuzhi's tomb. In epistemic terms, the salient aspect of relief is that it explores the territory between the pictorial and the fully plastic, interconnecting the two within a larger continuum of representational modes. And in ceramics, there was a shift from sectioned, architectonic forms that were often based on metalwork to organic, botanically inspired forms that more fully exploited the possibilities of the potter's wheel, with modulated contours providing flowing transitions. All these developments moved in the same direction as painting, away from the static unity of fixed structure toward unification through movement.

Returning to painting, the epistemic shift also had a second dimension, even less discussed in the literature, that concerns the role of the beholder. More often than we would like to admit, the practice of art history presumes a transhistorical beholder. We might be prepared to accept in theory that, between 700 and 1000, as compositional disjunction slowly gave way to the syntactical integration of compositions, beholders themselves must have been simultaneously changing in equally

drastic ways. But it is not easy for us to say what this would actually entail, and it is at that point that we fall back on an abstract, transhistorical beholder. Yet without suggesting that it is in any way a sufficient approach in itself, we can generate a hypothesis about the basic character of the change from the paintings themselves. We need only remind ourselves that the atomized and paratactic nature of pre-An Lushan Tang representation possessed operative coherence—in other words, that it was meaningful for its audience. It would have lacked this coherence if it had not produced—and simultaneously been produced by—a beholder who operated outside a framework of ontological fixity.

The paintings required, in other words, a beholder who took for granted that ontological distance could be suddenly collapsed; the mechanism of this collapse, I propose, was transit or movement in a fully physical sense as displacement. The displacement could be in either direction. The beholder could be transported toward a paradise, say, or toward a past event in history or a distant geographic location. Alternatively, the paradise or event or geographic location could be transported toward the beholder, who inhabited a world of such miracles. From this point of view, the pre-An Lushan painting might be better described as a portal, or a fold in time and space, than as an object of encounter. A painting existed in order to provide a potential place of displacement, of transit, of movement, in a world where beholders did not think of themselves as fixed in one place, either before or after death. Without a historically specific beholder of this kind, the paintings would not have worked.

Post-An Lushan explorations of connection and continuity, I propose, unraveled the earlier system, because they were at the same time explorations of the potential ontological fixity of the beholder. By making transitions and linkages explicit, painting gave the beholder a way of settling in place and connecting with elsewhere in a nonmiraculous fashion. Whether an ontological, historical, cultural, or simply geographic elsewhere was depicted, the beholder was given the means to relate to that elsewhere without leaving where s/he was, and without the beholder's present location being ontologically transformed by an arrival *from* elsewhere. This is not to say that displacement disappeared from the equation—far from it—but it came to operate differently. Having previously operated within reception, displacement now passed into the pictorial representation itself, where it was thematized as journey.¹⁰⁵ The journey, be it geographic (*Along the River at First Snow*), in the form of a pilgrimage (the mural depicting Wutaishan in Dunhuang Cave 61), or even imaginary (*Playing Chess in Front of a Double Screen*), is a pervasive thematic concern in the paintings of this period. Indeed, the displacement involved in Buddhist miracles is

thematized, too. An outstanding example is *The Miraculous Image at Fanhe*, where a heavenly “proto-image” of the Fanhe Buddha is shown several times as it travels around the human and heavenly worlds.¹⁰⁶ Whereas in earlier Buddhist painting the instant displacement of miraculous manifestation would have been stressed, here what we are shown is the displacement itself. A more common depiction of miraculous displacement is the theme of *Bodhisattva as Guide of Souls*, in which the soul is shown being led to the halls of paradise.

This hypothesis about the beholder’s changing role provides a further way to understand the attention to corporeality and surfaces in the 765–970 period. Paintings, we might say, gradually exchanged their status as portals for a new double status. In some cases they operated as mirrors in which the beholder could recognize himself or herself in an emergent ontological fixity.¹⁰⁷ The beholder identified with what was depicted. In other cases, paintings operated instead more like doorways across the threshold of which the beholder could see a clearly different level of reality—social, historical, religious, or representational. Whether through resonance or contrast, the tangibility of corporeal forms and surfaces helped to fix the beholder in place ontologically, the better to journey in the imagination.

Yet, as the epistemology of painting slowly changed after 750, there were counterbalancing re-engagements with the culture of the prior period across the epistemic divide that was opening up. Modern scholarship, fixated on innovation, has given these re-engagements less attention, perhaps because it has not fully recognized their self-conscious character. In fact, when examined more closely, they can be seen to define a historically distinctive relation to the past, in which the past was recognized as separate, yet was also expected to inhabit the present. We have already encountered two modes of re-engagement—the nostalgic evocation of pre-An Lushan palace life, initially by former participants, and the Dunhuang preoccupation with the Fanhe image, a still-existing Northern Zhou statue.¹⁰⁸ At least three other modes existed, including the updating of old compositions, the visualization of historical figures, and the translation of ancient iconic images into new hidden form.

A famous example of a copy whose purpose was to update an earlier painting, honoring it by bringing it into the present, is Cheng Xiuji’s set of twenty handscrolls illustrating the *Book of Odes*:

During the Taihe reign (827–835), Wenzong loved the past and venerated the Way. Because he considered that the vegetation, wildlife, and portraits of ancient worthies in the *Mao shi tu* by Wei

Xie of the time of Jin Mingdi were not convincing, he commanded Cheng Xiuji to depict them [afresh].¹⁰⁹

Although Cheng Xiuji's *Odes* illustrations are no longer extant, we can still see one related example of an updated recension of an old composition. The recension preserved in the British Museum version of the *Nymph of the Luo River* possesses a stunning archeological complexity. Dating from the late Tang or its immediate aftermath (in other words, the ninth or early tenth century), it reworks and modernizes a now-lost early Tang recension, which had in turn updated the well-known sixth-century recension, itself probably indebted to an earlier, third-century one by Jin Mingdi 晉明帝.¹¹⁰

From the *Yizhou minghua lu* it is clear that depictions of historical figures made up an established genre in Sichuan during the late Tang and Five Dynasties, known as “old-style figures” *guti renwu* 古體人物.¹¹¹ The name refers not just to the subjects but also to how they were represented, in archaizing dress. Among the artists who worked in this genre were Zhang Nanben, Chang Can 常粲, Zhou Xingtong 周行通, and Shi Ke 石恪. Today, two works survive from which we can see aspects of the genre: the handscroll *Lofty Scholars* attributed to Sun Wei (the attribution perhaps to be taken as an attribution to Sichuan), and *The Lofty Scholar Liang Boluan* by the Sichuanese artist Wei Xian. Huang Xiufu notes that Shi Ke's works in this genre always had a satiric intent, in itself a mark of self-conscious distance.

Finally, the translation of established categories of iconic image into new forms can be seen in Li Cheng's *Reading the Stele*. The artist treats the tree branches as writhing dragons, and the projecting rocks beneath as animated turtle-like forms, extending the iconicity of the stele form into the landscape itself. Left blank, the central stele surface is associated with the human realm through the scholar who is shown studying a text that only he can see. In this way, the cosmic positioning of the human between Heaven and Earth that had structured the stele form for centuries passed into landscape painting, where it would later be taken up by Fan Kuan 范寬.¹¹²

Conclusion

In this essay I have largely uncoupled periodization from style. We might conclude, then, that there are two equally valid ways of understanding Five Dynasties painting macrohistorically: the one that views it in stylistic terms as the embryo stage of

Song painting; and the more broad-based approach presented here, which views it as the final stage of the 765–970 period. But if we opt to consider these as “competing truths,” should we not ask ourselves whose truths these are? In the end, the evolutionary stylistic narrative belongs more to the modern world than to tenth-century China; its selection of monuments and formal features insistently privileges innovation, which was only one Five Dynasties concern among others. Fundamentally, such a narrative is teleological, looking everywhere for the evidence of progress. What I hope to have presented, in contrast, is a macrohistorical contextualization that would not have been alien to people living during the Five Dynasties period, who had a better sense of where they were coming from than of where they were going. This contextualization escapes teleology, I believe, by remaining compatible with the moment-to-moment contingency of historical development within the period. Many would agree that the challenge that historians of Chinese painting face today is to write a history of painting’s formal development that is more fully adequate to the complexity of painting’s embeddedness in its own time. Writing differently about the Five Dynasties period, I could have addressed this challenge by starting from the narrative of style in order to see what could be salvaged from it. Sometimes, though, it is more efficient to take a detour and find a fresh vantage point. The salvage operation can wait.

Endnotes

1. A characteristic and in itself harmless example of this view at work is the important recent multi-volume publication, Zhejiang daxue Zhongguo gudai shuhua yanjiu zhongxinbian 浙江大學中國古代書畫研究中心編, *Song hua quanji* 宋畫全集 (Complete paintings of the Song dynasty), (Hangzhou Shi: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2010), which despite its title includes works from the Five Dynasties as well. Similarly, the now standard survey of Chinese painting, Richard M. Barnhart, Yang Xin, et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), has one chapter devoted to “The Five Dynasties and the Song Period (907–1279).” Barnhart is well aware of the problem, however, writing near the beginning of his section on the Five Dynasties that “the regional courts each sought to achieve something that might be regarded as continuing the Tang traditions in art and culture” (p. 88).
2. The significance of Taizong’s reign has been evident since Alexander Soper’s article, “Hsiang-kuo-ssu: An Imperial Temple of Northern Sung,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 68.1 (Jan–Mar 1948): 19–45. Soper presents copious evidence for the arrival in Kaifeng during Taizong’s reign of Buddhist spolia and monks from the southeast, and for Taizong’s architectural and pictorial commissions celebrating their arrival. Chen Pao-chen 陳葆真, “Cong Nan Tang dao Bei Song—qijian Jiangnan he Sichuan diqu huihua shili de fazhan” 從南唐到北宋—期間江南和四川地區繪畫勢力的發展, *Meishushi yanjiu jikan* 美術史研究集刊 18 (March 2005): 155–208, has investigated the influx of artists from the southeast and from Sichuan into the painting academy of that period.

3. I had hoped to address the related question of Five Dynasties painting's dialogue with contemporary painting in territories under the control of neighboring powers. But that important and understudied issue really needs its own separate discussion, so I restrict my attention here to the Five Dynasties' relation to Tang culture.
4. See Zhu's biographical entry on the artist in Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄, *Tangchao minghua lu* 唐朝名畫錄 (c. 840). See also Jin Weinuo 金維諾, "Wan Tang huajia Cheng Xiuji muzhi" 晚唐畫家程修己墓誌, *Wenwu* 文物 4 (1963), reprinted in idem, vol. 1 of *Zhongguo meishushi lunji* 中國美術史論集 (Taipei: Nantian shuju, 1995), 148–153.
5. Literati artists of an earlier generation than Zhang Zao were apt to produce wall paintings as well. Wang Wei is one example. For bibliography, see Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1985), 343.
6. “吳怪逸玄通，陳象似幽雉，楊若癡人強起（庭光），許若市中鬻食（琨）。” From Cheng Xiuji's tomb epitaph, discussed by Jin Weinuo in “Wan Tang huajia Cheng Xiuji muzhi,” 148–153.
7. As reported by Zhang Yanyuan; see William Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 283–285.
8. Notably small, by contrast, is Zhou Fang's *Tuning the Lute* (Nelson-Atkins Museum, height 28 cm). See Laurence Sickman and K. S. Wong, “Palace Ladies Tuning the Lute,” in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, ed., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1980), 8–10. Assuming that this Song copy preserves the original dimensions of the scroll, these dimensions are perhaps to be explained by the possibility that the work was a sketch (*fenben* 粉本). Among the compositions that Zhu Jingxuan gives to Zhou Fang is one on a related theme, *Lonely Lady Playing a Tune*, specified as a *fenben*.
9. A closely related version datable to the twelfth century is in the Palace Museum, Beijing. In comparison, the British Museum version is archaic. It contains not a single object, decorative pattern, or decorative motif that postdates the tenth century. While this is, of course, no guarantee of the painting's date of execution, it does provide a terminus ante quem for the recension it preserves.
10. See Kong Shoushan 孔壽山, ed., *Tangchao tihuashi zhu* 唐朝題畫詩 (Chengdu: Sichuan meishu chubanshe: Xinhua shudian jingxiao, 1988), for relevant poems by Zhang Zhihe. For more on Zhang Zhihe, see Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, 297–298.
11. Another handscroll on paper, *Night-shining White* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), traditionally attributed to Han Gan, may also fall into this category. Since the style of the painting is closer to late sixth- than to mid-eighth-century horse painting, the work in my view either preserves an early horse composition or is an archaistic work from the world of late Tang literati.
12. On the handscroll attributed to Wang Qihan, see Peter Sturman, “In the Realm of Naturalness: Problems of Self-Imaging by the Northern Sung Literati,” in Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith, eds., *Arts of the Sung and Yüan: Papers Prepared for an International Symposium Organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Conjunction with the Exhibition “Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei”* (New York: Dept. of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 165–185.
13. For the interest that Wang Qihan's painting attracted in Su Shi's 蘇軾 circle, see Sturman, “In

the Realm of Naturalness.”

14. For the literary theme, see John Hay, “‘Along the River during Winter’s First Snow’: A Tenth-Century Handscroll and Early Chinese Narrative,” *Burlington Magazine* 114 (May 1972): 294–303.

15. See Kong Shoushan, ed., *Tangchao tihuashi zhu*, 411–412.

16. As shown by Richard Barnhart, *Marriage of the Lord of the River: A Lost Landscape by Tung Yüan* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1970), this work preserves half of the original composition; the other half survives in a version in the Palace Museum, Beijing. Barnhart was writing before the two handscrolls became accessible. The opportunity to compare the two scrolls at length, during the 2002 exhibition at the Shanghai Museum, convinced me that the Liaoning painting is plausible as a work by Dong Yuan, while the Beijing handscroll is a close copy.

17. Although an apocryphal story reported by Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 in *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞誌 (Experiences in painting, ca. 1074) attributes a hanging scroll to Wu Daozi, another version of the same story in Huang Xiufu’s 黃休復 *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄 (Record of famous painters of Yizhou, preface by Li Tian 李旼 dated 1006) has the painter of the hanging scroll as a late Tang artist. See Soper, “Hsiang-kuo-ssu,” 100.

18. For auspicious images, see Du Fu’s poem about a hanging scroll depicting an eagle, in Kong Shoushan, ed., *Tangchao tihuashi zhu*, 109–111.

19. See the biographical entry on Zhou Fang in Zhu Jingxuan, *Tangchao minghua lu*. For a hanging scroll icon of two lions, with healing powers, by Pu Yanchang, see the entry on the artist in Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*.

20. See the entry on Huang Jucai in Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*, which makes it clear that such paintings predated Huang Quan’s time.

21. As related in Dong You, *Guangchuan shuba*, in Lu Fusheng 盧輔聖, ed., *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* 中國書畫全書, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1993), 814–815. The painting was commissioned by Han Huang. At a later date, in 844, the painting was hung for *jinshi* examination candidates to use as a subject for examination poems. One of the poems from that occasion, by Ma Dai 馬戴, survives. See Kong Shoushan, ed., *Tangchao tihuashi zhu*, 333–334.

22. Acker, *Some T’ang and Pre-T’ang Texts*, vol. 2, 294–295. Mi Fu 米芾 once owned a small hanging scroll of oxen by Han Huang’s follower Dai Song 戴嵩, as recorded in Mi Fu 米芾, *Huashi* 畫史 (History of painting, completed around 1103).

23. The great ink landscape specialist of the late eighth century, Zhang Zao, worked above all in the screen format. See Zhu Jingxuan, *Tangchao minghua lu*.

24. Du Fu, “Song Inscription in Jest on Wang Zai’s Painted Depiction of Landscape” and “Three Poems on Viewing a Landscape Picture Requested by Li Gu from His Brother the Adjutant” (764); and Fang Gan (?–888), “On Viewing an Ink [Painting] by Xiang Xin,” in Kong Shoushan, ed., *Tangchao tihuashi zhu*, 124–127, 148–150, and 358, respectively. For hanging scrolls by Zhu Shen, see Zhu Jingxuan’s biographical entry on the artist in *Tangchao minghua lu*.

25. For the dating of the tomb, see Yang Renkai 楊仁愷, “Yemaotai diqihao Liao mu chutu guhua zonghe yanjiu” 葉茂台第七號遼墓出土古畫綜合研究, reprinted in idem, *Yang Renkai shuhua jian ding ji* 楊仁愷書畫鑒定集 (Zhengzhou: Henan meishu chubanshe, 1999), 40–58.

26. Ibid., 42 and 56.

27. Ibid., 53. Yang describes the mounting in detail on pages 54–55.

28. Ibid., 52.

29. The garden scene corresponds precisely to subject matter associated with the prolific and

long-lived artist Diao Guangyin 刁光胤, teacher of Huang Quan, active first in Chang'an and later in Sichuan (as of the first years of the tenth century).

30. For the sutra rollers, see Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 1, 250–251.

31. Ibid.

32. Scroll terminology is also relevant here. The term *fu* 幅 (literally, “a sheet of cloth”) denoted an unrolled piece of silk. It could refer to the length of silk used for a handscroll, or for a single screen panel in any screen format, or for a hanging scroll. For the first, see Guo Ruoxu's discussion of *The Picture of the Stone Bridge*, in Alexander Soper, *Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua chien-wên chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting, Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951), 82. *Fu* was a standard counter for painted screen panels, but was also used as a counter for hanging scrolls well into the tenth century. For this latter usage, see Zhang Yanyuan's ninth-century discussion of the proper way to view paintings (Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 1, 211). See also Liu Li's 劉釐 late tenth-century poem on Li Cheng's 李成 set of six hanging scrolls (possibly remounted from a screen?) in the home of the general Cao Bin 曹彬 (931–999), cited by Liu Daochun 劉道醇 (Charles Lachman, *Evaluations of Sung Dynasty Painters of Renown—Liu Tao-ch'un's “Sung-ch'ao ming-hua p'ing”* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989], 57). It is thus probably in the screen panel that the hanging scroll's origins lie, and not, as Robert Hans Van Gulik argued, in the temple banner (wall hanging), which has a special mounting unrelated to that of the hanging scroll. For Van Gulik's influential argument, see his *Chinese Pictorial Art as Viewed by the Connoisseur: Notes on the Means and Methods of Traditional Chinese Connoisseurship of Pictorial Art, based upon a Study of the Art of Mounting Scrolls in China and Japan* (Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), 163–176. The shared use of *fu* for hanging scrolls and screen panels also sheds light on an important technical feature of the *Xuanhe huapu*; see Yu Jianding, ed., *Xuanhe huapu* (preface dated 1120; Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1964). Following each title in the list of works attached to each artist's biography is a number. These numbers refer to the number of separately mounted scrolls *zhou* 周, as stated in the preface), and by implication in the cases of vertical works to individual *fu*. Many of those vertical works would have started life as screens or parts of screens.

33. Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 1, 211.

34. See, for example, four hanging scrolls attributed to Liu Songnian 劉松年 depicting *The Eighteen Academicians* (National Palace Museum, Taipei). However, the earliest mention of the use of a pole to hold up scrolls for viewing is by Guo Ruoxu (Soper, *Experiences in Painting*, 96).

35. As reported by Du Xunheng (846–907); see Chen Gaohua 陳高華, ed., *Sui Tang huajia shiliao* 隋唐画家史料 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe: Xinhua shudian Beijing fa xing suo faxing, 1987), 386–387.

36. Soper, *Experiences in Painting*, 102. For a discussion, see Van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art*, 179.

37. Among the Tang poems about paintings collected by Kong Shoushan in *Tangchao tihuashi zhu*, those that concern wall paintings are proportionally fewer for the late Tang period.

38. For more on Wang Chuzhi's tomb, see Hsueh-man Shen's chapter elsewhere in this volume.

39. In the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing.

40. National Palace Museum, Taipei. For the Zhujiadaocun tomb, see Jing Zengli 井增利 and Wang Xiaomeng 王小蒙, “Fuping xian xin faxian Tang mu bihua” 富平县新發現壁畫, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 4 (1997): 8–11.

41. In the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. This is more certainly the case for the same artist's Northern Song *Buddhist Retreat by Stream and Mountain* (the fifth panel from a screen by one interpretation of an inventory number written on the upper right corner of the scroll) in the Cleveland Museum of Art. See Wai-kam Ho, "Buddhist Retreat by Stream and Mountain," in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, ed., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, 15–19.
42. The composition is recorded in the *Xuanhe huapu* imperial catalogue (ed. Yu Jianding), followed by the number 2, referring to individual *fu* mounted as scrolls. See note 32 above.
43. Xu Shucheng 徐書城, "Cong Wanhan shinu tu, Zanhua shinu tu luetan Tang ren shinu hua" 從《紈扇仕女圖》,《簪花仕女圖》略談唐人仕女圖, *Wenwu* 文物 7 (1980): 71–75.
44. Astana Tomb 188. Illustrated in *Zhongguo gudai shuhua jiating zu* 中國古代書畫鑑定組, ed., vol. 1 of *Zhongguo huihua quanji* 中國繪畫全集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe; Hangzhou: Zhejiang Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997), 88–91.
45. In the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Fu Xinian has argued that *River Boats and a Riverside Mansion* preserves its original height and would have constituted the left-side wing of a tripartite screen, based on the similarity of the composition to the left-hand section of what he believes to be an original late Tang painting, *Traveling in Spring* (Palace Museum, Beijing). See Fu Xinian 傅熹年, "Guanyu Zhan Zhiqian Youchun tu niandai di tantao" 關於展子虔《游春圖》年代的探討, *Wenwu* 文物 11 (1978): 40–52, esp. 50–52. Wu Hung, in contrast, basing himself on the same comparison (though he believes *Traveling in Spring* to be a Song copy of an early Tang work), thinks that *River Boats and a Riverside Mansion* is the left-hand panel of a four-panel screen; see Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 139–140. Fu's hypothesis encounters the obstacle that there is no evidence for small-scale tripartite screens, and Wu's hypothesis the obstacle that small-scale four-panel screens had much narrower panels than this.
46. Jing Zengli and Wang Xiaomeng, "Fuping xian xin faxian Tang mu bihua," 8–11.
47. Although the published report gives a height for the smaller screen as 180 cm, the photograph shows that is significantly shorter than the screen showing cranes. On the south wall, a depiction of a recumbent lion may be a remnant of a third such screen. It is so identified by Li Xingming 李星明, *Tangdai bihua mushi yanjiu* 唐代壁畫墓室研究 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin meishu chubanshe, 2005), 84, though it is not noted by the authors of the survey report. The subject matter probably requires that the painting be interpreted as a screen depiction.
48. See Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, p. 278. The use of *zhang* 障 to denote a fixed-frame single-painting screen parallels that found in *yanzhang* 掩障 ("concealing screen"), referring to a screen-wall that was sometimes located just inside the main door of large formal buildings. This permanent structure presumably got its name from the fact that it concealed the interior from the view of those at the door (and the door from those within).
49. Michael Sullivan, "Notes on Early Chinese Screen Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 27 (1965): 239–254.
50. On the dating and attribution of this painting, see Jonathan Hay, "Travelers in Snow-Covered Mountains: A Reassessment," *Orientations* 39.7 (October 2008): 84–91.
51. Chen Anli 陳安利 and Ma Yongzhong 馬永鍾, "Xi'an Wangjiadun Tangdai Tang'an gongzhu mu" 西安王家墩唐代唐安公主墓, *Wenwu* 文物 9 (1991): 16–27.
52. For an example of a continuous screen inspired by a Tang model, we have to look to Japan, and the six-fold screen *Landscape with Figures* in the Kyoto National Museum, illustrated in Wen C. Fong, "Riverbank," in Maxwell K. Hearn and Wen Fong, *Along the Riverbank: Chinese*

Painting from the C. C. Wang Family Collection (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 14, fig. 9.

53. See Li, *Tangdai mushi bihua yanjiu*, 384–385.

54. The funerary couch originally had a “screen-shaped separating wall” at each end, which presumably would have carried paintings corresponding to the side panels of a tripartite screen. See Beijingshi Haidian qu wenwu guanlisuo 北京市海淀区文物管理所, “Beijingshi Haidian qu Balizhuang Tang mu” 北京市海淀区八里莊唐墓, *Wenwu* 文物 11 (1995): 45–53.

55. In the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. As argued by Wen Fong in “*Riverbank*,” 2–57, esp. 12–19.

56. Another secular painting format of the period was the round fan *tuanshan* 團扇), which functioned as a miniature screen for the body. An example depicting flower and birds has been excavated from an eighth-century tomb at Astana, illustrated in Zhuang Shen 莊申, *Shanzi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 扇子與中國文化 (Taipei: Dongdai tushu, 1991), pl. 33. Another such fan, painted with a flower composition, is depicted in *Ladies Pinning Flowers to their Hair*. One Sichuanese artist of the Five Dynasties period is recorded in Huang Xiufu's *Yizhou minghua lu* and Guo Ruoxi's *Tuhua jianwen zhi* as having painted such fans—a monk-painter of highly colored landscapes with figures, Chu'an 楚安. Conversely, one painting format that is often thought to have been a Five Dynasties innovation may actually have postdated the tenth century. The sole evidence for the use of paintings as furniture insets at such an early date is the handscroll *The Night Revels of Han Xizai*. Although the composition depicts a Southern Tang subject and is attributed to a Southern Tang artist, Gu Hongzhong 顧閔中, who is known to have painted the subject, the surviving painting that we can see today clearly dates from the late eleventh or twelfth century. Moreover, both the paintings depicted within the handscroll and the furniture are in Song style. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it seems likely that the very format of the painted furniture inset was part of Song decorative style.

57. See the respective biographical entries on the two artists in Zhu Jingxuan, *Tangchao minghua lu*. At an earlier date, Zhu notes a set of twelve *fan* depicting the *Sutra of the Basic Actions* *Benxing jing* 本行經), painted by Chen Hong 陳閔 (active early to mid-eighth century). Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, 264.

58. Roderick Whitfield and Anne Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese Art from the Silk Route* (New York: G. Braziller, 1990), 19.

59. Tonkō bunbutsu kenkyūjo 敦煌文物研究所, vol. 5 of *Tonkō Bakukōkutsu* 敦煌莫高窟 Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1980–1982), pl. 20.

60. Whitfield and Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*, cat. 17, 18.

61. See note 32 above.

62. Tonkō bunbutsu kenkyūjo, vol. 4 of *Tonkō Bakukōkutsu* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1980–1982), pls. 75–93.

63. See Dorothy Wong, “The Huayan/Kegon/Hwaôm Paintings in East Asia,” in Imre Harrar, ed., *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 337–384, esp. 342–343. On the definition and history of *bianxiang*, see Wu Hung, “What is *Bianxiang*?—On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 52.1 (June 1992): 111–192. Wu demonstrates that at Dunhuang, such compositions proliferated from the late eighth century onward.

64. Wu Hung, *The Double Screen*, 140–141. Wu's example is Cave 361.

65. *Ibid.*, pls. 133–138.

66. A second trend, contrary to the compartmentalization just noted, was toward very large-scale continuous compositions organized around the repetition of a particular iconic figure-type. These compositions were probably not necessarily restricted to a single wall and would have created the effect of an immersive environment. The group of mid-tenth-century murals associated with the name of C. T. Loo originally formed such a composition of repeated bodhisattvas. See Meng Shihui, *Les peintures murales des Cinq Dynasties du grand antiquaire C. T. Loo* (Pékin: école française d'Extrême-Orient, Centre de Pékin, 2008). The theme of five hundred luohans, well attested in the literature, would have lent itself to similar treatment.

67. See Zhang Yanyuan's testimony in Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 1, p. 129. The An Lushan Rebellion led, among other things, to the scattering of works in the imperial collection, a process that continued under Emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762), who “did not care much about preserving and owning them, but distributed them among members of the Imperial Clan.”

68. See *Cave of the Thousand Buddhas*, cat. no. 3. In *Samantabhadra* we find the same use of a langorous iron-wire line—long and slow, devoid of angular shifts of direction—as in the composition *Tuning the Lute*. In *Pure Land of Bhaisajyaguru* (see vol. 1 of *Zhongguo huihua quanji* [1997], 105–107) we can find the same formulation of a female figure, with one shoulder higher than the other, as in *Tuning the Lute*.

69. Zhang Yanyuan associates the Water-and-Moon Guanyin with Zhou Fang in his biographical entry on the artist (Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, 290). This Huayan theme is closely associated with the *Gandavyuha* section of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, of which a translation was made between 795 and 810. See Yu Chün-fang, “Guanyin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara,” in Marsha Weidner, ed., *Latter Days of the Buddhist Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850–1850* (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 150–181, esp. 152–153.

70. The point of the famous competition between Han Gan and Zhou Fang as portraitists, reported by Zhu Jingxuan (Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, 291), seems to have been that Zhou introduced a new standard of naturalism.

71. Meng Shihui, *Les peintures murales des Cinq Dynasties*.

72. On this theme, see Harrie Vanderstappen, “Harry A. Vanderstappen, ‘Water-Moon Avalokitesvara and Its Appearance in Chinese Song Sculpture,’ Kannon-Sonzō to hensō—The Art of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara—Its Cult-Images and Narrative Portrayals,” *International Symposium on Art Historical Studies* 5 (1986): 77–102.

73. On the sixteen luohans theme, see Wen Fong, “Five Hundred Lohans at the Daitokuji,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1956. Closely related is the tableau created by the mural depicting trees and attendants and the portrait statue of Hongbian (died ca. 862) in the library Cave 17 at Dunhuang.

74. Although Huang Xiufu, in his *Yizhou minghua lu*, mentions Zhou Fang only in relation to the son, he states that the son worked in the father's style.

75. See Liu Daochun's 劉道醇 (ca. 1028–ca. 1094) entry on Zhu Mengsong in his *Wudai minghua buyi* 五代名畫補遺; and Guo Ruoxu, *Tuhua jianwenzhi*, entry on Zhou Wenju.

76. See also the discussion of Sichuanese painting of the tenth century and earlier in Mi Fu, *Huashi*.

77. Zhang Yanyuan in fact seems to explicitly associate Han Gan's post-rebellion production with the disappearance of these horses: “During the rebellion of [An] Lushan this breed of

magnificently beautiful horses was wiped out. So once when Milord Han was sitting alone with nothing to do, someone came to his gate saying that he was a Demon Messenger, and asking for a horse. Milord Han made him a painting of a horse and then burned it. Days later the demon Messenger was seen riding on a horse coming to thank him.” Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, 262.

78. See Zhang Yanyuan's biography of Han Gan, in Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, 262. As a portraitist, though, Han would himself be surpassed by Zhou Fang. See note 70 above.

79. The commissions are recorded in his epitaph. See Jin Weinuo, *Zhongguo meishushi lunji*, vol. 1, 148–153.

80. Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*, biographical entry on the artist.

81. See Liu Daochun, *Wudai minghua buyi*. Guo Quanhui was a student of Zhong Yin, who was similarly admired for the lifelikeness of his bird paintings.

82. As recorded in the biographical entry on Huang Quan in Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*.

83. A still earlier landscape of some complexity appears on a funerary jar datable to 687, in the Yanshi Municipal Museum (Henan Province). See Tōkyō kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館, Yomiuri Shinbunsha 読売新聞社, Kyūshū kokuritsu hakubutsukan 九州国立博物館, Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan 奈良国立博物館, *Tanjō! Chūgoku bunmei* 誕生！中國文明 (The birth of Chinese civilization), (Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbunsha; Daikō, 2010), 184.

84. Wu Hung has suggested that the paintings in Yide's tomb reflect Li Sixun's landscape style. See Wu, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, 64–66.

85. See Jing Zengli and Wang Xiaomeng, “Fuping xian xin faxian Tang mu bihua,” and inside and outside cover illustrations.

86. Wu Hung, oral communication. The mural is as yet unpublished.

87. Shanxi sheng bowuguan 陝西省博物館, ed., *Sui Tang wenhua* 隋唐文化 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe; Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju), 183. No doubt landscape screens were fairly common in reception hall settings. There are several references in Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji* and Zhu Jingxuan's *Tangchao minghua lu* to privately owned landscapes in the folding screen format during the late eighth- to early ninth-century period.

88. Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, vol. 2, p. 284.

89. Kiyohiko Munakata, “The Rise of Ink-wash Landscape Painting in the T'ang Dynasty,” Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1965; idem, *Ching Hao's “Pi-fa-chi”: A Note on the Art of the Brush* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1974); Michael Sullivan, *Chinese Landscape Painting: The Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 65–79.

90. See Munakata, *Ching Hao's “Pi-fa-chi.”*

91. Hay, “*Travelers in Snow-Covered Mountains.*”

92. See note 2 above.

93. See the preface by Li Tian (dated 1006) in Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*.

94. As stated by Li Tian at the end of the preface to Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*.

95. Guo Ruoxu, “On the Relative Superiority of Past and Present,” in Soper, *Experiences in Painting*, 21–22.

96. Although Song-period anecdotes are reserved for the second part of Guo Ruoxu's *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, Five Dynasties anecdotes are split between the two according to the regime involved. Also in the second part, together with Song-period anecdotes, are those concerning the Later Shu and Southern Tang dynasties, so many of whose painters were absorbed into the Song academy.

They seem to appear in the second part as a kind of extension of Song.

97. It has been suggested that this composition reflects innovations of the great flower-and-bird painter Bian Luan, active ca. 800.

98. Another example of ninth-century innovations is the commission that Emperor Wenzong gave to Zhou Fang's follower Cheng Xiuji in the late 820s or 830s to paint screens of bamboo for the Wensi Hall in the Taiji Palace, to the number of some tens—presumably some tens of panels. The completed screens became the catalyst for a poem by the emperor to which the elite scholars of the Institute of Academicians (Hanlinyuan) responded with matching poems. Alexander C. Soper, “*Tang Chao Ming Hua Lu*: Celebrated Painters of the T’ang Dynasty, by Chu Ching-hsüan,” *Artibus Asiae* 21 (1958): 223.

99. For an extended discussion of this painting in different but related terms, see Wu Hung, *The Double Screen*, 79–133.

100. Wu Hung, “Rethinking Liu Sahe: The Creation of a Buddhist Saint and the Invention of a ‘Miraculous Image,’” *Orientalism* 27.10 (November 1996): 32–43.

101. Here I follow the discussion by Alexander Soper in Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *Art and Architecture of China*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960), 419–431.

102. *Ibid.*, 430.

103. For more on Foguangsi and *ang*, see Nancy Steinhardt’s chapter elsewhere in this volume.

104. Keyang Tang, “The Ward Walls and Gates of Tang Chang’an as seen in ‘The tale of Li Wa,’” in Roger Des Forges, ed., *Chinese Walls in Time and Space: A Multidisciplinary Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2009).

105. For a related discussion of such ideas, see Hsueh-man Shen’s chapter elsewhere in this volume.

106. Wu Hung, “Rethinking Liu Sahe,” 42.

107. Another mirroring mechanism can be seen in Dunhuang murals, where the repetition of *bianxiang* compositions and the standardization of the representations creates a proliferation of human bodies and the effect of a crowd—in which the beholder could recognize his own status as part of an audience. This observation came out of a discussion with my colleague Hsueh-man Shen.

108. Wu Hung, “Rethinking Liu Sahe,” 38.

109. This early account, from the now-lost *Mingxian hualu* 名賢畫錄, is preserved in the *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞 of the much-admired thirteenth-century scholar Wang Yinglin 王應麟 1223–1296). Wang Yinglin also cites a record in the *Tang zhi* 唐志 to the effect that the completed paintings were not submitted until the Kaicheng reign (836–840)—understandable, given that they filled no less than twenty scrolls. See Chen Gaohua, ed., *Sui Tang huajia shiliao*, 387; see also Julia K. Murray, *Ma Hezhi and the Illustration of the Book of Odes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 9, 81.

110. I am preparing a separate study on this painting, which has so far escaped serious scholarly examination.

111. See the biographical entry on Shi Ke, a follower of Zhang Nanben, in Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*.

112. Fan Kuan’s *Travelers in Autumn Mountains* would turn an entire landscape into a monumentalized stone stele, with its division into trees/dragons at the top, rocks/turtle at the bottom, and sheer vertical stone or rock in between.