Lecture Notes, by James Cahill

Note: The image numbers in these lecture notes do not exactly coincide with the images onscreen but are meant to be reference points in the lectures’ progression.

Addendum 2A: Notes on Judging Authenticity and Dating

Add2A.1: Attributed to Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之/顧恺之 (ca. 345–406), Nymph of the Luo River 洛神賦圖/洛神赋图.

Detail of the mid-air goddesses:
Add2A.1.1 (left): Liaoning: the earlier version, 26 x 646 cm. Figures are drawn so that their volume and the space between them can be read.
Detail of the boat:
Add2A.1.1a (left): Liaoning version; ribbons blow in the wind; the details of the boat “make sense” as representations of some real thing.

(Misguided argument: artists of early period, or "cultivated" Chinese artists generally, weren't concerned with effects of space and "realistic" depiction, so your criteria are mis-chosen. Wrong, I reply: even when they are using most individual, eccentric, "anti-realist" styles, they are still painting good pictures in these senses. This is, with me, an article of faith, proven correct by many years of looking at good and bad Chinese paintings.)

Add2A.1.2a (right): Beijing version: ribbons hang lifelessly; artist has misunderstood what they are.
Add2A.1.3 (right): Freer version, F1914.53: a copy of the Beijing version

See also Lecture 3, images 3.9.

Add2A.2: Zhou Wenju 周文矩 (act. mid–10th c.), The Double Screen: The Emperor Li Ji 觀音圖/觀音图

Watching his Brothers Play Weiqi 重屏圖/重屏图

Add2A.2.1: (left) earliest surviving version, Freer, F1911.195. 14th c., ink and color on silk, 37 x 400.2 cm.

The Freer’s Song and Yuan Painting website¹ credits the Beijing version as being the older one, but Lawton and I disagree. The “tremulous brush” (zhānbi) technique is more

believable in the Freer version. The Freer version also convincingly "tricks" the viewer into thinking the flat screen is a continuation of the space occupied by the figures in front.

Add2A.2.2: (right) Beijing version
See also Lecture 5, images 5.2.
Add2A.3: Flower paintings attributed to Muqi 牧溪 (active 1220s–1280s)
Add2A.3.1: (left) Hibiscus/ Rose Mallow (furong 芙蓉): original in Daitokuji sub-temple, Soken’in
Add2A.3.2: (right) similar Peony (mudan 牡丹) detail from copy scroll Drawings from Life: Birds, Vegetables and Flowers, c. 1265, handscroll, ink on paper, 44.5 x 1017 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.
(I mistakenly discussed these in Lecture 12C as though they were same flower.)
Brushwork, ink values, etc. convincing in the real Muqi, but considered unacceptable to the literati of the time, who thought it was "bad brushwork." But their "bad" is our "good." Copy accommodates to literati taste in "disciplined" brushwork, un-evocative image, etc.
Add2A.4: Shrike, from Anonymous (possibly Li Anzhong 李安忠 of the Song)
Bird rendered as integrated, round body. Painted volumetrically, appears fluffy.
Add2A.4.2: Attributed to Li Anzhong, "Shrike 竹鳩圖/竹鸠图, fan painting, ink and color on silk, 25.4 x 269 cm. Reproduced in Chinese Art Treasures (CAT), no. 34.
The copy: the bird appears flat.
Add2A.4.3: Emperor Huizong 徽宗, Five-colored Parakeet 五色鸚鵡圖/五色鹦鹉图, handscroll, ink and color on silk, 53 x 125 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 33.364.
Bird also flattened. Does this mean it is a later copy? No. Our judgments must be conditioned by different factors. Huizong might very well have painted it this way for ornithological correctness and he wasn’t a professional. What invalidates purported work by Academy master may validate work ascribed to an imperial amateur.
Add2A.5: Xia Gui 夏圭, Winter Landscape
Add2A.5.1: Attributed to Xia Gui 夏圭, Winter Landscape, National Palace Museum, Taipei.
In original: readable, textured surfaces, volumetric masses, sense of space, scale of human-presence details, etc.

Add2A.5.3: "Xiao Zhao 蕭照/萧照" copy. Central mass diminished and flattened, human habitation made more prominent, all subtlety lost.


Zhang claims to have found it in Dunhuang. Panel of experts confirmed the work as authentic prior to the museum’s purchase; often, the original work is more impressive in person, and its flaws do not become apparent until looking at it as a photographic reproduction. Horses appear repetitive and flat. The groom in the back does not occupy any space. Elaborate faked aging of the silk.

Add2A.6.1: photo of Zhang Daqian and his daughter

Add2A.6.2a: Han van Meegeren (Dutch forger, 1889–1947), Supper at Emmaus

van Meegeren constructed a speculative period in Vermeer’s career, fooling many experts. Supper at Emmaus is not bad, but rendering of space worse in his other forgeries:

Add2A.6.2b and c: van Meegeren, The Washing of the Feet and Christ Teaching

No rendering of space, and faces are sickly sentimental. Zhang exhibits the same problem of space in his forgeries.

Add2A.7: Zhang Daqian, "Dunhuang" Bodhisattva Guanyin

See Wen Fong, “The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting,” in Artibus Asiae XXV, 1962. He argues convincingly that it was a copy taken from Dunhuang. The hands are also not Tang hands. In a footnote, he also shows the fallibility of scientific analysis. Scientific/technical analysis can go badly wrong; often can prove work is inauthentic, but never can prove conclusively that it’s authentic.

(Let me just say—since I am avoiding talking about the best-known, most discussed case of highly problematic dating and attribution in recent times—a painting bought for a major museum which purports to be by a great early master, but which I firmly believe to be a modern fabrication by Zhang Daqian—if my colleagues recognized and respected the methods I have been outlining here, the controversy would immediately be ended; the painting in question would immediately be recognized as the recent forgery that it is, impossible as an early landscape painting by a major master.)

Add2A.8: “Fan Kuan” landscapes
Add2A.8.1: Fan Kuan 范寬, *Traveling among Streams and Mountains* 溪山行旅圖

Add2A.8.1a: detail of rock outlines: realistic depiction

Add2A.8.2: follower of Fan Kuan, *Sitting Alone by the Stream* 旅行溪山行旅

Add2A.8.2a: detail of rock outlines: conventionalized jerky zigzags

How features of style that begin as representationally effective within a visually descriptive system turn into non-descriptive conventions, elements of a school manner, in the hands of followers.

Add2A.9: Comparing two river landscapes

Add2A.9.1: Zhao Lingrang 趙令穰, *section of River Landscape with Willows and Cottages*, 1100


Special case that upsets the above pattern: later artist who is professional master adopting imagery and style from aristocrat-amateur, but doing a much more convincing job.

Add2A.10: Ma Yuan 馬遠, *Banquet by Lamplight* 華燈侍宴圖


Add2A.10.1a: detail of foreground with dancers between the branches of blossoming plum trees.

Add2A.10.1b: detail of the pipa players

Add2A.10.2: Less good, signed as "Ma Yuan" version, *Banquet by Lantern Light* (Ming copy), hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 125.6 x 46.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Reproduced in Loehr 97, *Possessing the Past*, Fig. 69.

Copyist lacks the same conviction as Ma Yuan; moves the foreground plum trees further down, so as not to obstruct the dancing figures on the terrace; fills in the background with trees and ridges.


Cf. Ming copy after Ma Yuan, "Landscape with Dancing Peasants," hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 192.5 x 111 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. Reproduced in *Lyric Journey* 1.31.
Both Ming paintings have background filled with mountains and ridges, not content to leave empty, like Song artists.

See also Lecture 11A, images 11.1 and 11.2.

But, what about:

Add2A.11: landscapes of Li Tang and his followers


Early stage in development of diagonally divided landscape, at beginning of Southern Song, so still relatively heavy element in "empty" area.

Add2A.11.1a: detail shows markers of Li Tang-style: two types of pine trees, stepped contour lines.

Then: small paintings by Li Tang followers: Items of school manner harden, turn into conventions, lose naturalistic function. "Classic" example of devolution within stylistic series.


Add2A.11.3: Yan Ciyu 阎次于 (brother of Yan Ciping), *Hostel in the Mountains*, album leaf, signed, ink and color on silk, 25.5 x 25.9 cm., Freer Gallery, F1935.10. Published in Siren, Chinese Painting, Pl. 265; Possessing, Fig. 68.

Add2A.11.4: Jia Shigu 贾师古 (act. ca. 1130–1160), *Temple by a Mountain Pass* 巖關古寺圖/岩关古寺图, signed, album leaf, National Palace Museum, Taipei. Published in Chinese Art Treasures, Pl. 38.

Then big break: Ma Yuan, Xia Gui. Only possible then:

Add2A.11.5: One of a pair of “Li Tang” landscapes, Kōtoin, Daitokuji, Kyoto. Reproduced in Loehr 85, Siren 249–50.

The style of large axe-cut strokes, trees with massive foliage, and treatment of space is much closer to later Southern Song paintings, particularly post-Xia Gui.

See also Lecture 9A.


See also Lecture 11B, image 11.19.8.

Examples from later periods:
Add2A.12: two versions of Autumn Melon and Grasses

Add2A.12.1: Qian Xuan 錢選 (ca. 1235–before 1307), Autumn Melon and Grasses 秋瓜圖/秋瓜图, National Palace Museum, Taipei. Cahill, Hills beyond a River, fig.5.

The real one. Inscription and seals of Qian Xuan above painting, along with seals of others.

Add2A.12.1a: Detail of the melon. Look at the veins and the leaves; the leaves curl slightly and the veins follow the organic structure of the leaves.

Add2A.12.1b: Detail of flower and curling tendril.

Add2A.12.1c: Detail of grass stalk. Artist’s hand embodies the nature of the thing depicted.


Add2A.12.2a: Detail of the melon. Flat and schematic; no organic structure given. Curling tendrils less believable.

Add2A.12.2b: Detail of leaves, curling tendril and flowers.

Add2A.12.2c: Another detail of tendrils and leaf veins.

Cf. Qian Xuan, Squirrel on Peach Branch 桃樹松鼠圖卷/桃樹松鼠图卷, handscroll, ink and color on paper, 26.3 x 44.3 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. CAT 68.

In judging authenticity, a known work by the artist that can be used as a comparison.

I am not denying the value of studies of authenticity that concentrate on the calligraphy of inscriptions, seals, provenance and provenance of work, etc. These are also valuable, indeed necessary, and others can use them far better than I can. But they, too, can be misleading. C. C Wang always cautioned against comparing seals to determine “genuine” vs. “fake”—he saw this as misuse of the 1940 seal book (see bibliographic reference at end) that he compiled with Victoria Contag.

Add2A.13: Three versions of Huang Gongwang’s Rivers and Hills Before Rain


Add2A.13.1a: Detail of foliage in lower right corner. Although Huang Gongwang was not known during his time for “realistic” representation, he nonetheless imbues his trees with a real sense of growth and natural tangle.

Add2A.13.1b: Detail of mountains in fog.
Add2A.13.2: The “good” copy, formerly owned by a Hong Kong dealer.
Add2A.13.2a: Detail of foliage in lower right corner, but has become flat pattern.
In original, paper and ink "look right"; but this can only be learned by long years of looking—not yet reducible to technical analysis or quick rules. (Bob Mowry, curator at Sackler/Harvard, has studied and can approximate the date of old silks.)
Add2A.13.3: The “less good” copy.
Add2A.13.3a: Detail of foliage in lower right corner. Flat, not organic.
Add2A.13.3b: Detail of mountains in fog. Edges of fog conventionalized to repetitive scalloped forms.
Add2A.13.3c: Detail of last section, with inscription and seals
Add2A.14: two versions of Wen Zhengming’s Living Aloft
Retirement painting for a fellow official.
Add2A.14.1a: Detail of retired official inside his raised house.
Add2A.14.1b: Detail of foreground.
Add2A.14.1c: Closer detail of base of wall. Note the flat stones set into the base; this is how Chinese walls were strengthened.
Add2A.14.1d: Detail of house among the trees.
Add2A.14.2: Copy (forgery), previously owned by a Hong Kong dealer.
Rendering of space not very good, etc. Relatively easy case. (Notice wall). Wen Zhengming not especially noted for rendering of space; but in fact still manages to effectively bring out spaces in his painting. This is true of good artists of all time. In short, good artists produce good pictures.
Add2A.14.2a: Detail of foreground. Wall lacks the stone base; the foreground trees are not clearly set off in space, and do not push the rest back in a convincing repoussoir effect.
Add2A.14.2b: Detail of main composition. Space flattened; trees do not go around the house.
Add2A.14.2c: Detail of house. Trees do not go around the house; trees repetitive, with no distinction in ink tone and foliage.
Add2A.14.2d: Closer detail of house. Table has no legs; roof’s ink wash is puddled; the
serving boy has disappeared.

Add2A.15: Composite forgery

Add2A.15.1: Forgery attributed to Sheng Mou 盛懋 (Yuan, ca. 1310–1360), River Landscape, hanging scroll, ink and light colors on silk. From old auction catalog.

Upper section copied from:

Add2A.15.2: Qiu Ying 仇英 (Ming, early 16th c.), Waiting for the Ferry in Autumn 秋江待渡圖, hanging scroll, ink and light colors on silk, 155.4 x 133.4 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. CAT 102.

A broad painting: see the line down the center, where two pieces of silk were joined together. Copyist has copied the upper part of the right half of the original painting. Forgery/imitation can be recognized if one knows the original work it's copied from.

Add2A.16: “Liu Guandao” handscroll, in two parts

Add2A.16.1: Attributed to Liu Guandao, Zhuangzi’s Butterfly Dream. Formerly in C.C.Wang’s collection; Wang traded it to the dealer Walter Hochstadter. Hochstadter believed the painting was not as old as Wang claimed, and sued Wang over it.


Formerly attributed to Liu Songnian 劉松年 (ca. 1150–after 1225) until the famous collector-connoisseur Wu Hufan, the teacher of C.C. Wang, found a tiny "Guandao" signature on it. This painting is now recognized as a genuine Guandao. In comparison, the Zhuangzi painting is a later copy.

Summer example used in testimony by Sherman Lee on behalf of Walter Hochstadter in court case, as preserved in transcript (Waiter Hochstadter v. Chi Chuan Wang, Superior Court of the State of New York, October 7956, Index No. 3205/1956) as quoted in my article, see below. Lee claims his example offers "incontrovertible proof" that the painting is a copy or forgery.

This strategy relates to my idea of "pictorial integrity," which the copyist violates by misunderstanding some representational feature where the original artist "gets it right."

Examples from 1962 "post-mortem symposium" of the Chinese Art Treasures exhibition. (A general rule: painting cannot be earlier than latest datable image or feature in it.)

Firm resistance of most later specialists to this idea of pictorial integrity and my practice of it. I quoted, as analogy, what Carlo Ginsberg (Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method, 96–7)
writes about the method of Giovanni Morrelli (1816–1891) how, although "Morellian method" of identifying individual hands led to "sensational" re-attributions of important Italian paintings, it was "heavily criticized" by specialists of the time, "in part, perhaps, because of the almost arrogant certainty with which he applied it." And I asked, with mock horror, "Can it be that Sherman Lee and I have been seen as— but no, perish the thought!" I am arguing for the importance of the younger generation accepting, for the benefit of future studies, the more-or-less self-evident effectiveness of this method.

Add2A.17: Shen Zhou’s The White Cloud Spring and later copies

Add2A.17.1: Shen Zhou 沈周(1427–1509), The White Cloud Spring, handscroll, ink and some color on silk, 38 x 676 cm., surviving section of longer scroll representing scenes of Wu in the Suzhou area. Former George Schlenker Collection (Cahill’s stepfather), now Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, 1997.29.7. Cahill, Parting, Fig. 41.

Add2A.17.1a: Section with Mt. Tianping and Ancestral Hall of Fan Zhongyan.
Add2A.17.1b: Detail of wall, and flat stones set into its base (cf. photo of real wall; detail of album leaf attrib. to Li Song. Also wall in Wen Zhengming Living Aloft, seen earlier).

Add2A.17.2: Later copy of complete scroll, ink and color on paper, 36 x 1798 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, 70-25. Eight Dynasties, no. 152.

Add2A.17.2a: Detail of wall. Artist has misunderstood the stones set into the base, and has drawn them as large rocks set against the wall.

Add2A.17.2b: Detail of another section of the wall. Architecture also flat and schematic.

Marc Wilson, p. 184 of Eight Dynasties, writes of Schlenker/Oberlin version as "painted on reddish-brown dyed silk" in "inarticulate and unschooled brushwork" that "suggests an inexperienced painter."

Add2A.17.2c: But detail of trees on hillside of Nelson scroll show it to be the copy.

Add2A.17.3: Third version, even later than this, based on it, in National Palace Museum, Taipei; promoted by Chiang Chao-shen as the original.

Add2A.17.3a: Detail of hillside with trees. Again, idea of "pictorial integrity." Probably copied from the Kansas City scroll. A clear case of a copy, and a copy of a copy.

Add2A.18: Du Jin’s Enjoying Antiquities

Add2A.18.1: Du Jin 杜堇 (act. ca. 1465–1509), Enjoying Antiquities 玩古圖/玩古圖, large hanging scroll, probably originally mounted as a screen, 126 x 187 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. Possessing the Past, Pl. 183, p. 367; there accepted by Richard Barnhart as genuine work by
Du Jin. Also, earlier, Cahill, *Parting at the Shore*, fig. 73, there presented as probably a copy by some Suzhou artist close to Qiu Ying, perhaps Qiu himself.

Add2A.18.1a: Detail of two main figures enjoying antiques.
Add2A.18.1b: Detail of left one-third.
Add2A.18.1c: Detail of right one-third. Figures not as believably drawn. Cf. with a known Du Jin in Shanghai Museum, *Palace Ladies*, where the drapery and figure is believable.
Add2A.18.1d: Detail of the tripod. A two-legged tripod! I want to say QED: I’ve proven my case; others don’t agree.

Add2A.18.2: Another version of left 1/3 of this, hanging in *toko-no-ma* (alcove) in large gallery within Kongobu-ji, great esoteric Buddhist temple on Mt. Koya, Japan, ca. 1970, photographed there by me. Ownership and present whereabouts unknown, not in temple collection.
Add2A.18.2a: Banana palms in this version more convincing.
Add2A.18.2b: Detail of calligraphy. Looks more convincing.
Add2A.18.3: Another version of right 1/3, from NY auction, 1990s. Discussed in Du Jin correspondence (see below), acquired by Yale University Art Museum.
Add2A.18.3a: Detail of women figures. Convincing as bodies in space.
Add2A.18.3b: Detail of upper part with bamboo and rock.
Add2A.18.3c: Detail of hair ornaments.
Add2A.18.3d: Detail of tripod. Its three legs fit perfectly into the lacquer dish.

Add2A.19: *Fenben* sketches, the paintings from which they were taken, and how they were used


You can match Gu’s sketches to the original paintings from which they were taken.
Add2A.19.1b: The album leaf *Figure Studies of Five Women and One Man*, 59–24/45.

Reproduced in *Pictures for Use and Pleasure*, fig. 1.3. Copied from figure paintings by Zhou Fang 周昉 (Tang, ca. 730–800) and others. Particular focus on hairdresses and ornaments for use in his
own work.

Add2A.19.2: Attributed to Hu Huai (or Hu Gui 胡瑰), Liao/Khitan契丹 artist, Scenes of Nomadic Life. National Palace Museum, Taipei. See also Lecture 5, image 5.10.

Add2A.19.3: Attributed to Gu Jianlong, Emperor Xuanzong (Minghuang) Spies on Yang Guifei Bathing, hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 151.5 x 87.9 cm. Fujii Yurinkan Museum, Kyoto. Pictures for Use and Pleasure, fig. 1.4 and 5.25.

Add2A.20: Shitao taking up Gong Xian’s innovation

Add2A.20.1: Famous leaf from everybody’s-favorite Shitao石濤石涛 (1642–1718) album, Album for Daoist Yu, 1690s. Originally owned and published by Victoria Contag in Germany; then my Fantastics & Eccentrics (1967); cover of Silbergeld’s Chinese Painting Style and my Compelling Image, etc. Owned by the late C. C. Wang; present whereabouts unknown (!).

See Compelling Image, pp. 196–207 + illustrations there, on Shitao’s various adoptions from Anhui school, Nanjing school, Orthodox school artists.

Add2A.20.2: Compare with album leaf (with color!) by Gong Xian龔賢 (Nanjing artist, d. 1689), Palace Museum, Beijing.

Drawing productively on past doesn’t erode originality; usually, to the contrary, strengthens the work.

Readings:


"The Tu Chin Correspondence, 1994-95." Published by Howard Rogers in Kaikodo Journals, Autumn 1997, pp. 8-62. Correspondence between Richard Barnhart, Stephen Little, Maxwell Hearn, and James Cahill, after publication of Possessing the Past catalog, 1996.


Legal document: Waiter Hochstadter v. Chi Chuan Wang, Superior Court of the State of New York, October 1956, Index No. 3205/1956. (Copies in personal collections.)

Abbreviated transcript of proceedings of two-day symposium held at Asia House Gallery, New York, October 4-5, 1963: "Post-mortem" symposium following on Chinese Art Treasures exhibition, organized by myself and involving nearly all the major authorities on Chinese painting of that time, some forty of them, along with around thirty graduate students, many of whom went on to become major authorities. This followed on:

Combined List of opinions on paintings in CAT exhibition, compiled by myself after correspondence with eighteen authorities to get their opinions on especially controversial paintings in the exhibition, September, 1962. This was lead-up to the October 1963 symposium.

Transcripts of these two documents, 34 and 27 pages of typescript respectively, make up my CLP 2: http://jamescahill.info/File/CLP2A_1963-1.pdf