Unearthing Wu Daozi (c. 686 to c. 760): The Concept of Authorship in Tang Painting

Wu Hung

Introduction

A major art-historical event took place in 847, when Zhang Yanyuan completed *A Record of Famous Paintings of Successive Dynasties* (*Lidai minghua ji*, hereafter *Famous Paintings*) in the Tang capital Chang'an.[1] In this foundational text, which the twentieth-century historiographer Yu Shaosong (1883–1949) deemed 'the progenitor of the history of [Chinese] painting as well as painting history par excellence',[2] Zhang conceives the history of Chinese painting as a three-stage evolution leading up to the period from the late sixth to mid-eighth century, in which painting finally reached the level of 'a blaze of splendour, with completeness as its goal'.[3] Encompassing mainly the first 150 years of the Tang dynasty (618–907), this triumphant epoch was abruptly brought to an end by the An Lushan Rebellion, which lasted from 755 to 763; Emperor Wuzong's persecution of Buddhism (842–845) further destroyed the numerous temples and their magnificent murals in this then the most populous city on earth.[4] An eyewitness of the persecution, Zhang identified the Kaiyuan and Tianbao eras (713–759) during Emperor Xuanzong's reign as the zenith of Chinese painting, when 'numerous artists of amazing ability' from different places gathered in Chang'an and Luoyang, the auxiliary capital of the dynasty, to make public art.[5] For today's art historians, Zhang's assessment challenges them to uncover direct visual and archaeological evidence, including recently unearthed murals in contemporary aristocratic tombs, for those artists and their practices.

Among the artists working in Chang'an in the early eighth century, the muralist Wu Daozi (*c.* 686–*c.* 760) stood out as a personal embodiment of painting's triumph at this moment. Zhang Yanyuan describes and comments on Wu's art in multiple places in *Famous Paintings*, always in superlative terms. One of these passages reads,

> Wu Daozi of the present dynasty stands alone for all time. No one before him, not even Gu Kaizhi (*c.* 344–406) and Lu Tanwei (active *c.* 450–490), could match him; and no one after him can be considered his [true] successors. He learnt his brush methods from [calligrapher] Zhang Xu (*c.* 675–*c.* 750), and thus demonstrated that the use of the brush in calligraphy and painting is identical. Zhang is called the Madman of Calligraphy, so Wu should be the Sage of Painting. He derived his spirit from the creative powers of Heaven, and his noble genius was inexhaustible.[6]

Detail of interior decoration of the burial chamber of Empress Zhenshun, 737 CE (*plate* 2).

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Or again,

> Only in Wu Daozi's paintings do we see all Six Principles[7] and all phenomena in the Universe. The gods must have lent a hand to him; so his work plumbed Creation to the utmost.[8]

As thrilling as they are, these statements remain unverifiable opinions from a historical writer. One reason is that not a single authentic work by Wu exists; another reason is that few Tang records about him beyond those from Zhang Yanyuan and his contemporary Zhu Jingxuan are available,[9] while many later reports are based on hearsay or fabrication. Wu Daozi has thus been steadily de-historicized - his fame as the Sage of Painting has felt increasingly hollow, as his *actual* relationship with the history of Chinese painting has grown increasingly insubstantial.

Two parallel processes have jointly brought about this result. The first is the irreversible disappearance of his artwork, mostly architectural murals, as well as the proliferation of forgeries due to his unparalleled fame. Even in the ninth century, Zhang Yanyuan and Zhu Jingxuan already lamented the severe destructions of Wu's murals during Emperor Wuzong's persecution of Buddhism. In the late eleventh century, leading painting connoisseurs such as Su Shi (1037–1101) and Mi Fu (1051–1107) noted the scarcity of Wu's genuine works in spite of a considerable number of

1 Painted marble sarcophagus of Empress Zhenshun in the Jingling Mausoleum of Empress Zhenshun, 737 CE. Pangliucun, Dazhaoxiang, Xi'an, Shaanxi. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

2 Landscape and architectural murals, interior decoration of the burial chamber of Empress Zhenshun in the Jingling Mausoleum of Empress Zhenshun, 737 CE. Pangliucun, Dazhaoxiang, Xi'an, Shaanxi. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

so-called Wu Daozi paintings in official and private collections.[10] All the way into the twentieth century, although John C. Ferguson recorded more than a hundred paintings reputedly by Wu Daozi in his *Catalogue of Recorded Paintings Through Various Dynasties*,[11] few art historians of Chinese painting took this information seriously. James Cahill summarized this consensus in the 'Wu Daozi' entry in *An Index of Early Chinese Paintings and Painters*: 'No authentic works by the painter are extant, but some features of his style may be preserved in stone engravings, all executed much later.'[12]

At the same time, Wu Daozi has been refashioned after the Tang dynasty along two different paths. Starting from the late eleventh century, elite intellectuals such as Su Shi recast him as a representative of a bygone era of Chinese painting characterized by technical excellence and theatrical effect, and in so doing contrasted him with Wang Wei (699–759), a poetic painter contemporary to Wu, in whom Su Shi saw the beginning of a more metaphysical literati art. Su compared Wu Daozi and Wang Wei most explicitly while visiting the East Pagoda of the Kaiyuan Temple near Chang'an. Beholding images left by the two Tang masters there, he was first struck by Wu's powerful brushwork, which he described as 'bold and free, like the rolling waves of the sea'. Turning to Wang's image he fell silent, realizing that 'although Wu's art is exceedingly marvellous, he must still be regarded as a painter-artisan (*huagong*); but Mojie (Wang Wei's style name) had reached beyond worldly phenomena, soaring beyond the cage with a pair of immortal wings'.[13]

As literati painting (*wenren hua*) became the mainstream of Chinese painting after the fourteenth century, Su Shi's perception of Wu Daozi was internalized by historiography and criticism affiliated with literati art. As a result, although Wu's reputation as the Sage of Painting remained, he also became conspicuously absent in reconstructed histories of Chinese painting, most obviously in Dong Qichang's (1555–1636) influential genealogies of the Southern and Northern Schools, which simply omitted this most celebrated Tang painter. Meanwhile, a counter movement took place in the realm of non-elite art, where Wu Daozi was elevated to the patron deity of professional painter-artisans, who worshipped him next to Lu Ban, the god of carpentry.[14] Legends about him circulated, but all residing outside the canons of art history.[15]

Utilizing these two kinds of information, modern art historians have generally portrayed Wu Daozi as a mural painter of predominantly religious subjects, whose spontaneous ink drawing, delivered with nearly supernatural skill, evoked wonder and piety from the masses.[16] This portrayal is not wrong, but it implicitly juxtaposes this Tang painter with later literati artists; the hodgepodge of evidence also prevents serious historical probing. Finding it difficult to escape such ahistorical reconstructions, art historian Werner Speiser lamented in 1959: 'If there were just one of his paintings left, the history of Far Eastern art would look different.'[17] He did not explain why this was the case because to him, the absence of Wu's work was an inevitable fact. But this statement, hyperbolic as it may be, also makes us think: What would we *do* if a Wu Daozi painting were rediscovered?

Unearthing Wu Daozi

In the novel *Xiaoao jianghu*, translated into English as *The Wandering Swordsman* or *Laughing in the Wind*, the celebrated contemporary Chinese novelist Jin Yong (1924–2018) invented a fictional *qin*-zither fanatic, whose lifelong passion was to recover the lost 'Melody of Guangling' (Guangling san) by the third-century musician Ji Kang (223–262). Since the piece had long vanished from the human world, he placed his hope in recovering it from underground. Didn't the ancient Chinese often store their most valuable possessions in their posthumous abodes? Writing in the late 1960s, Jin Yong was apparently inspired by the numerous archaeological discoveries since the early twentieth century, which not only verified many historical records but also revealed things that had never been written down. Seen in this light, Speiser's lamentation may lead us to hope, like Jin Yong's zither player, that if Wu Daozi's genuine brush traces no longer exist in this world, they may have survived in Tang tombs, possibly in the form of mortuary murals.

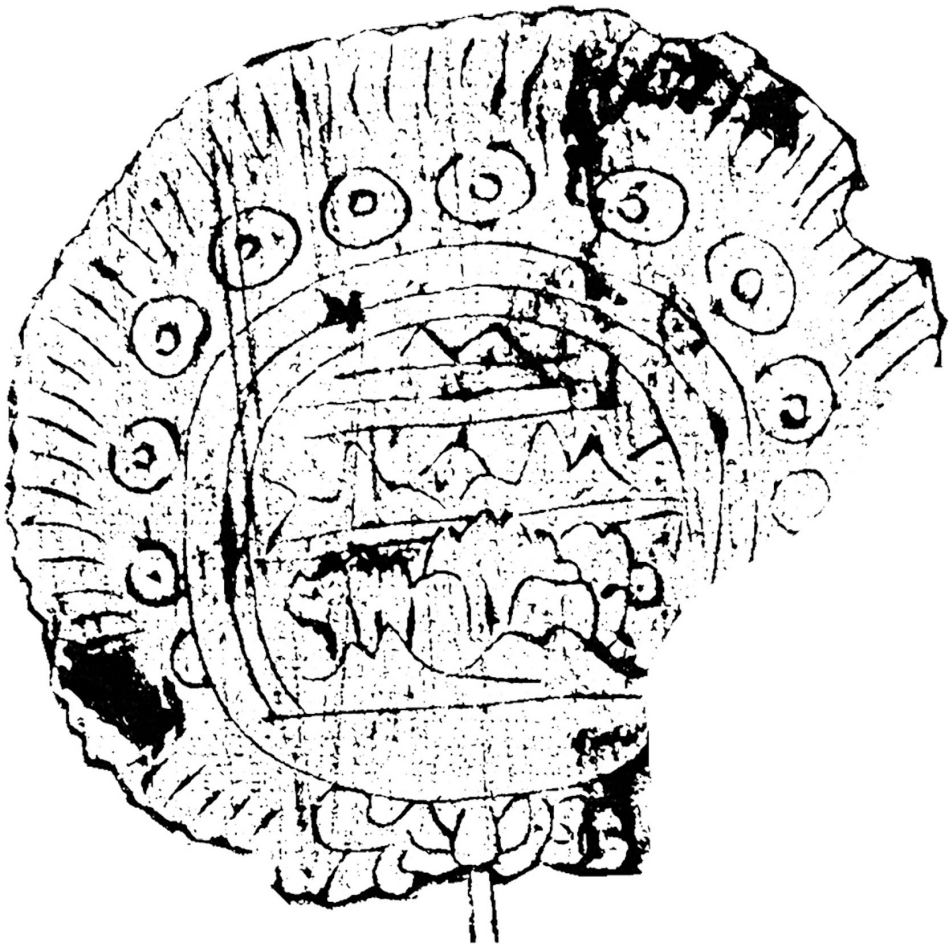
This essay intends to substantiate this possibility. We wouldn't expect to discover a painting with Wu Daozi's signature, because the practice of signing artworks had not yet appeared during his time. Rather, the possibility lies in establishing demonstrable connections between archaeological materials and Tang documentations of Wu's

3 Landscape mural in the tomb of Li Daojian, 738 CE. Fuping, Shaanxi. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

4 Landscape mural in the tomb of Han Xiu and Madam Liu, 740 CE. Guozhuangcun, Xi'an, Shaanxi. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

art. Before starting, we need to review two sets of textual evidence crucial for this endeavour. The first set is concerned with major events in Wu Daozi's life, especially his connection with the court. The second set concerns his painting subjects: it shows that although Wu was famous for his religious murals, he was also a major landscape painter and in fact revolutionized this painting genre. To avoid anachronistic pitfalls, I deliberately use only Tang records.[18] This means that the effort of 'unearthing Wu Daozi' entails not only searching for physical evidence, but also freeing him from later historiographical reframing.

Information about Wu Daozi's life is scarce. Several dated events, however, help establish a rough chronology of his career. According to Zhang Yanyuan, he served in the office of Wei Sili (654–719) in Shu (today's Sichuan province) when he was a young man, and invented a special landscape mode based on 'the mountains and rivers along the daunting route into the region of Shu'.[19] Wei Sili was a noted patron of literature and arts, and he held office in Shuangliu county near Chengdu, the capital of Shu, from 705 to 707.[20] We can thus use this date to anchor Wu Daozi's activities before he moved to the capital area and acquired artistic fame there. Zhang Yanyuan provided two clues for dating this second phase: one is his creation of a mural in the Respect and Love Temple



5 Fan decorated with landscape scene, detail of stone funerary couch, early-mid-sixth century CE. Bronze and Stone Art Museum, Shenzen. Photo: Zheng Yan.

(Jing'ai Si) in the eastern capital Luoyang in the year 722; the other is his appointment as Professor of Internal Instruction (Neijiao Boshi) by Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) in the Kaiyuan era (713–741), possibly in the early 720s.[21] In the ensuing years he also assumed a court post with no specific official obligations, as a 'Friend of Prince Ning' (Ningwang You), who was a brother of the emperor. This kind of position was usually assigned to gentlemen with outstanding literary and artistic accomplishments.[22] We further know that Wu spent years studying calligraphy and used this knowledge to create his unique brush style.[23] These records all prove that he was far from a 'painter-artisan' as Su Shi later characterized him. The last dated event in his life took place in the Tianbao era (742–755), when Xuanzong ordered him to paint a landscape mural in the Great Harmony Hall (Datong Dian) in the palace. This implies that he served at court at least into the 740s. We have no records about his life after this point.

These few references already demonstrate Wu's continuous engagement with landscape painting throughout his career. Indeed, although he has been routinely classified as a figure painter or religious painter since the Song,[24] Tang writers considered him a highly versatile painter and highlighted his landscape images.[25] To Zhu Jingxuan,

> whatever Wu painted, whether human figures, Buddhist icons, gods and ghosts, animals and birds, landscape, buildings, or vegetation, he surpassed everyone else in the country, and is ranked number one in the current dynasty.[26]

Since codified painting genres emerged only in the tenth and eleventh centuries,[27] the subjects mentioned in this ninth-century passage should be understood as categories of pictorial motifs that could be depicted either independently or in combinations. Thus when discussing Wu Daozi's landscape images, Zhang Yanyuan described them both as components of his Buddhist murals and as independent depictions of the Shu mountains and rivers.[28] Most significantly, he testified that Wu Daozi revolutionized landscape painting in two complementary aspects, which he termed *ti* and *bi*. *Ti* means literally the 'body' of a landscape painting. Zhang Yanyuan used the term for a painting's overall composition as well as the position, proportion, and interaction of individual pictorial elements.[29] He discussed these aspects mainly in the chapter titled 'On Painting Mountains and Water, Trees and Rocks' (Lun hua shanshui shushi). Here Wu Daozi is credited as 'inventing a landscape mode (*shanshui zhi ti*) and establishing a school of his own'.[30] The second aspect of a landscape painting, *bi* or brushwork, is discussed mainly in the chapter called 'On the Uses of the Brush by Gu Kaizhi, Lu Tanwei, Zhang Sengyou, and Wu Daozi' (Lun Gu Lu Zhang Wu yongbi). Here Wu's painting is described in this way: 'While others fix attention on coherent outlines, he split and scattered dots and strokes.'[31] Zhu Jingxuan similarly characterized Wu Daozi's brush strokes as 'profusely varied and full of untrammelled energy'.[32]

These two factors, that is, Wu Daozi's connections with the court from the 720s to the 740s, and his revolutionary impact on landscape painting, provide us with a basis to link him to three tomb murals discovered in recent years. Created for members of the highest echelons of the aristocracy from 737 to 740, these

6 Detail of man sitting in front of a landscape screen from carvings on the stone funerary couch of Kang Ye (d. 571 CE). Xi'an, Shaanxi. Photo: Zheng Yan.

pictures all embellished single-chamber graves near the Tang capital Chang'an (present-day Xi'an). The earliest of the three was found in 2007 in the tomb of Empress Zhenshun (699–737).[33] Known as Wu Huifei or Consort Hui from the Wu family during her lifetime, she came from an illustrious clan, and was Xuanzong's favourite consort and the de facto empress from 724 to 737, the year of her death. *The Old History of the Tang* (*Jiu Tang shu*) records:

> Empress Zhenshun, née Wu, consort of Emperor Xuanzong, was the daughter of Wu Youzhi, the Prince Heng'an, who was a maternal nephew of the late Empress Wu Zetian. She was still young when her father died, and entered the palace according to custom. After Xuanzong ascended the throne, she increasingly enjoyed his favour. Following the deposition of Empress Wang [in 724], she was bestowed with the title of Huifei [Consort of Kindness], equal to the empress in all palatial ritual affairs.[34]

As for why she was never promoted to empress, Xuanzong explained in an edict issued after her demise in 737 that he actually offered her this title because of her outstanding virtue, but she insistently refused it. He thus felt even more regret that she died in the rank of consort, 'enjoying the glory and honour [of empress] only posthumously'.[35] This explains her extraordinary sarcophagus, one of the largest and most elaborately decorated Tang sarcophagi discovered to date (*plate 1*), as well as the refined murals in the tomb chamber. One of these murals, painted at the focus of the chamber above the coffin bed, consists of six vertical compositions, all depicting precipitous cliffs and flowing streams (*plate 2*, and see *plate 11*, *plate 15* and *plate 16*).[36]

The second mural, discovered in 2017, is similar in subject, structure, and placement: it is also a six-panel painting above the coffin bed, and it also represents soaring crags and swirling water (*plate 3*).[37] This mural decorated the tomb of Li Daojian, Prince of Lu and a great-grandson of the founder of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Gaozu (r. 618–626). Li Daojian died in 738, a year after Empress Zhenshun. The third mural, found in the tomb of Han Xiu in 2017, dates to two years later (*plate 4*).[38] Han served in Xuanzong's court as Prime Minister, and held the positions

7 Man sitting in front of a landscape screen, mural in the tomb of Daogui (d. 571 CE). Majiazhuang, Ji'nan, Shandong. Photo: Zheng Yan.

8 Couple sitting in front of a landscape screen, mural in the tomb of Xu Minxing (d. 584 CE). Jiaxiang, Shandong. Photo: Zheng Yan.

of Minister of Public Works and Senior Adviser to the Heir Apparent before his death in 740. Differing from the other two murals in format and location, it is a single rectangular picture facing the entrance of the grave chamber.

All three murals have painted borders, which represent the timber or fabric frames of landscape paintings used in real life.[39] In a recent article I define this type of framed mortuary mural as 'simulated landscape paintings' in tombs, and associate these three examples with three different formats of Tang painting.[40] The mural in Han Xiu's tomb (see *plate* 4) simulates either a single-panel landscape screen or a soft *huazhang* painting draped on the wall. The Li Daojian mural (see *plate* 3) almost certainly imitates a free-standing multi-panel screen. Several details substantiate this identification, including the thin gaps between the panels, the three-dimensional edges of the frame, and the mural's direct placement above the coffin platform. As for the mural in Empress Zhenshun's tomb, its location has led me to disagree with the prevailing opinion that it also represents a painted screen. Instead of standing on the coffin bed, it is 'suspended' in the middle of a white wall and framed by painted beams and posts (see *plate* 2). Positioned as such, it simulates a set of *huazhang* hanging paintings described in a number of Tang poems. The earliest of them was by Du Fu (712–770), whose lifespan overlapped with Empress Zhenshun and Wu Daozi. Describing a landscape painting, he wrote: 'How magnificent is this image of the immortal peak Fanghu of the Kunlun mountains, / Now hanging on a white wall in the lofty hall!'[41] After Du Fu, Han Yu (768–827) described another landscape painting as consisting of 'several pieces of raw silk hanging down in the central hall', which depicted 'flowing water that turns round and round following the mountain's sinuous

9 Pictorial decoration on a *pipa* lute, eighth century CE. Shōsōin Depository, Nara, Japan. Photo/Drawing: Shōsōin Treasure House.

course'.[42] Two more poems, written by Fang Gan (809–888) and Du Xunhe (846–904) in the ninth century, tell us that such multi-panel paintings most frequently consisted of six compositions.[43]

While the three murals simulate different painting formats, their landscape images exhibit a homogenous compositional mode, characterized by continuous spatial recession from the foreground to the background and by dynamic interactions between rocky precipices, deep ravines, and turbulent water. Typically, hills or crags flank deep gorges, through which streams cut to generate shifting perspectives. The dramatic tension between mountains and water energizes each composition, bestowing a direct, literal significance on the term *shanshui hua* or 'mountain-and-water image', the standard Chinese term for landscape painting.

This dramatic scenery forms a sharp contrast with landscape representations of pre-Tang times, evinced by a group of framed landscape images discovered through recent archaeological excavations (*plate 5*, *plate 6*, *plate 7* and *plate 8*).[44] Sketchily rendered in funerary murals and carvings, these sixth-century examples all display hills, trees, and clouds on horizontal registers. No valleys or streams traverse these parallel layers. The pictures appear schematic and static, devoid of lively interactions between natural elements. The fundamental differences between

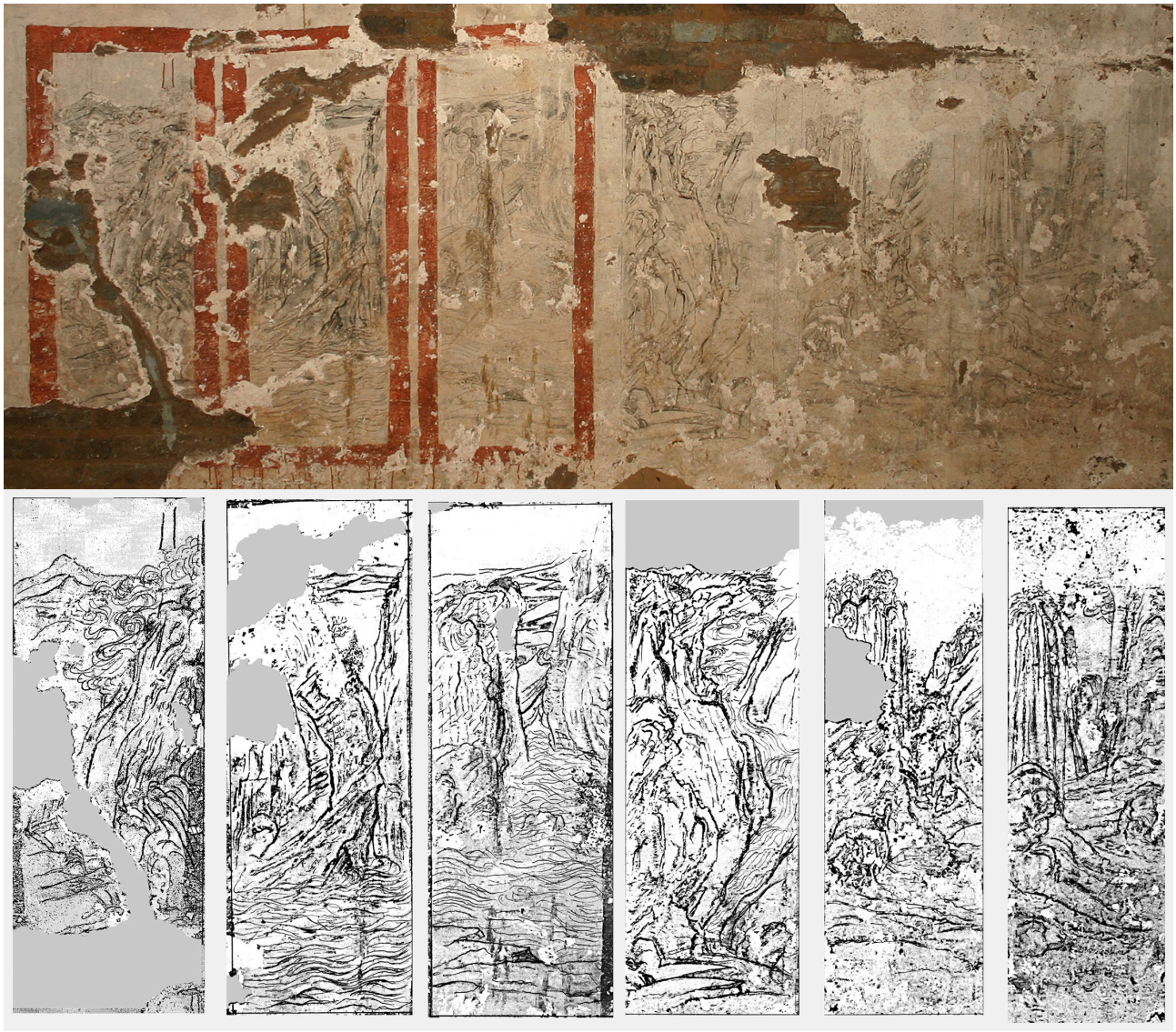
the pre-Tang and Tang modes indicate a radical stylistic revolution in landscape representation. In *Famous Paintings*, Zhang Yanyuan identifies this revolution as a '*shanshui zhi bian*' – a major transformation in landscape representation – initiated by Wu Daozi and completed by Li Sixun (651–716) and Li Zhaodao (675–758).[45] This record has puzzled some scholars because Li Sixun was older than Wu Daozi by twenty-five years. But if we read it in the book's context, what Zhang Yanyuan tells us is that this new landscape mode was first invented by Wu Daozi when he was in Sichuan around 705–707, and then developed into a dominant pictorial style under the two Lis, who, as members of the royal clan and court officials, wielded strong influence in the field of painting. This must be why after mentioning Li Sixun's and Li Zhaodao's names, Zhang Yanyuan added their titles 'General' and 'Member of the Secretariat' in a note so that readers would know their official status.

There is little doubt about the affinity between this landscape mode and the three newly discovered murals: not only do their dates fit the canonization of this mode, but their imagery also agrees with Zhang Yanyuan's description of the new type of landscape. In particular, he uses a striking phrase to characterize this new

10 Lady Vaidehi meditating on the setting sun, eighth century CE. Mural in Cave 172 at Dunhuang, Gansu. Photo: Dunhuang Research Academy.

mode, that 'it presents strange rocks collapsing over torrents' (*guaishi bengtan*).[46] This image appears in the three murals, as well as in several other authentic Tang landscape images which demonstrate the wide popularity of this landscape mode after the early eighth century.[47] These include the painted scenery on a *pipa* lute in the Shōsōin Depository in Nara, Japan (*plate 9*), and in Buddhist murals and banners from Dunhuang (*plate 10*). Without exception, they all exhibit strange rocks hanging above streams.

A shared feature of the three landscape murals is their high vantage point, which provides the viewer with a privileged perspective to behold a vast landscape and generates a feeling of awe. This is especially true of the mural in Empress Zhenshun's tomb (*plate 11*). Looking at each vertical panel in this work, the spectator feels that he or she is standing on a high peak or travelling on a plank path along a precipitous cliff. The viewer's gaze is directed to the raging water hundreds of metres below, and then, guided by the deep gorge, gradually travels to the remote horizon. During the Tang era, this particular visual experience was firmly related to the Three Gorges in Sichuan where Wu Daozi invented the new landscape mode, as demonstrated by Du Fu, the Sage of Poetry (Shi Sheng) and a contemporary of Wu. Here is his 'Meditation on the



11 Six panels of the landscape mural in the tomb of Empress Zhenshun's tomb, 737 CE. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology. Drawing: Wu Hung.

12 Detail of a large mural in the tomb of Crown Prince Yide, 706 CE. Qianxian, Shaanxi. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

Past at Qutang Gorge':

> From the southwest, myriad valleys pour forth;
> Formidable opponents, two cliffs open.
> The earth and the mountain's roots split;
> The river arrives from the moon cave.
> Sheared completely, it faces White Emperor City.
> And its empty folds hide the Sunlit Terrace Peak.
> While the deed of channelling and carving is lovely,
> How much greater was the force of the potter's wheel![48]

Du Fu wrote this poem in situ: he started a journey down the Yangzi from Chengdu in 765, lodging briefly in various places along the river. Early the next year he settled in Kuizhou at the head of the Wu Gorge, where he composed a suit of ten famous quatrains under the title of 'Songs of Kuizhou'. Again inspired by the place's dramatic scenery and historical memory, he connected the scenery with landscape painting he had seen in Chang'an:

> I recall long ago in Xianyang in the capital market a time when paintings of mountains and rivers were spread for sale.
>
> There once the Wu Gorges appeared on a precious screen,as for the Chu palace still I face the sapphire peaks and wonder.[49]

13 Detail of a large mural in the tomb of Prince Zhanghuai, 706 CE. Qianxian, Shaanxi. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

Since Du Fu left Chang'an (referred to by the ancient name Xianyang in the poem) shortly after the An Lushan Rebellion erupted in 755, he must have seen such paintings during the peaceful Kaiyuan and Tianbao eras, when Wu Daozi's new landscape mode prevailed.

By describing this mode of landscape imagery as invented by Wu Daozi and fully established by the two Lis, Zhang Yanyuan conceived of it as the result of a collective undertaking.[50] When discussing the *bi* or brushwork of landscape painting, however, he consistently refers to the style of individual artists, and he characterizes Wu Daozi's brushwork as having 'split and scattered dots and strokes' to generate a powerful imagery.[51] This and other accounts lead us to focus more specifically on the mural in Empress Zhenshun's tomb, whose brushwork best matches these descriptions (see *plate 11*).

Indeed, we have never seen such bold and varied use of the brush in earlier landscape representations. The most sophisticated landscape images pre-dating this mural are seen in the tombs of Princes Yide and Zhanghuai, both constructed in 706.[52] Although these images appear in large figurative compositions, they offer comparative examples on a stylistic level. Michael Sullivan defines the landscape images in the Yide tomb as belonging to a 'linear style': 'The line is firm, strongly articulated, like thick bent wire' (*plate 12*).[53] Hills and rocks in Prince Zhanghui's tomb are drawn with freer brush movements, but still fall into the linear style defined by Sullivan (*plate 13*), and as such they differ markedly from the broken brush strokes seen in the Empress Zhenshun mural.

Comparisons can also be made between this mural and contemporary landscape images in Li Daojian's and Han Xiu's tombs. It appears that although the three murals share the same compositional mode and were created within the space of four years, each exhibits a different brush style. The ink lines in the Han Xiu mural are unbroken and elastic. Speedily drawn, they delineate the contours of hills, slopes, plants, and architectural structures (see *plate 4*). In both representational purpose and calligraphic sensitivity, this brush style closely follows the linear tradition of Prince Zhanghuai's murals (see *plate 13*). Such spontaneous movement of the brush is absent in the Li Daojian mural, which shows instead a strong interest in representing volume (*plate 14*). The painter used thick ink lines to define mountain peaks and layered rocks, and merged these lines with heavy shading to accentuate concavity and convexity. This emphasis on mountains' solidity and three-dimensionality betrays a close kinship with the landscape in Prince Yide's tomb (see *plate 12*).

We see a markedly different application of *bi* or brushwork in Empress Zhenshun's mural (*plate 15* and *plate 16*). Replacing the continuous outlines in Prince Zhanghui's and Yide's murals (see *plate 12* and *plate 13*), segmented ink lines assume a very different quality and logic in representing the ragged rock surfaces. The painter used the brush not only to delineate shape, but also to create surface texture, allude to different material substances, and to generate tension and contrasts between these substances. Here and there, spirited brush strokes change rapidly in shape, width, and direction, often suddenly breaking into pieces or disappearing. Some thicker lines generate a three-dimensional effect

in accentuating the 'folds' on the cliff and representing recessed spaces behind rocky boulders. Some strokes are executed in close proximity to generate density, others are sporadic to create spatial rhythm (see *plate* 15). Rippling waves and meandering clouds are wilfully juxtaposed with angular, harsh cliff faces, engendering visual excitement on an abstract formal level (see *plate* 16). These observations seem to resonate with Zhang Yanyuan's and Zhu Jingxun's descriptions of Wu Daozi's brush style:

> Zhang Yanyuan: 'While others fix attention on coherent outlines, he split and scattered dots and strokes; while others rigidly imitate the likeness of things, he rid himself of such vulgarity.'[54]

> Zhu Jingxuan: 'What is incomparable is his brushwork, which is always profusely varied and full of untrammelled energy.'[55]

> Zhang Yanyuan: 'With just one or two strokes, the image comes to life. His dots and lines are disjoined, at times even missing. This shows that while the stroke may be incomplete, the mind (*yi*) is fully captured.'[56]

The Issue of Authorship

Two other factors also support Wu Daozi's possible connection to this extraordinary mural. First, we have established that the mural simulates a set of *huazhang* hanging paintings described in Tang poetry. From a reference in *Famous Paintings*, we know that Wu Daozi was a master of this type of artwork. This occurs in the chapter about the monetary value of pre-Tang and Tang painters, where Wu Daozi is placed in the top category together with six earlier masters, with a single 'piece' (*pian*) of a multi-panel screen or *huazhang* painting priced at 20,000 cash.[57] Second, the same book states that after Emperor Xuanzong recruited Wu Daozi and bestowed on him the title of Professor of Internal Instruction, 'he requested Wu to paint only on imperial command'.[58] We know that Wu worked for the court from at least the 720s to the 740s, while Empress Zhenshun was the most powerful woman in the court from 724 to 737, exactly during this period. Although there is no record of Wu's involvement in decorating her tomb, if we consider her paramount status and the extraordinary sarcophagus made for her (see *plate* 1), it would be expected that the court would have assigned its best painter to execute the murals in her mausoleum, especially the painting at the focus of the burial chamber. As the best muralist in the palace who painted 'only on imperial command', Wu Daozi would have been a natural candidate for this assignment. We know several other cases during the Tang era in which well-known painters with court connections designed and decorated funerary structures of members of the royal family: in the seventh century, Yan Lide and Yan Liben oversaw the construction of Emperor Taizong's mausoleum and designed its sculptures[59]; in the mid-eighth century Li Zhaodao painted a landscape mural for

14 Detail of the landscape mural in the tomb of Li Daojian, 738 CE. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

15 Detail of the landscape mural in the tomb of Empress Zhenshun, 737 CE. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

the mortuary shrine of Princess Wan'an[60]; a name in Prince Yide's tomb was likely left by a painter from the Li Sixuan school.[61]

All these pieces of textual and visual evidence invite us to identify Wu Daozi as the creator of this mural. Other documentation, however, cautions us from jumping to this conclusion without reflecting on the notion of *authorship* at this historical moment.[62] More specifically, we should ask what was signified when people in the eighth and ninth centuries connected the name Wu Daozi to a painting. Did it simply denote the painting's individual authorship as modern people tend to assume, or did it entail other factors and alternative views? Going through *Famous Paintings* with these questions in mind, we find that Zhang Yanyuan associated Wu Daozi with painting practices in three different capacities: as the head of a painting workshop, as the originator of the Wu School 'painting models', and as the most innovative painter of his day. These divergent yet overlapping capacities guide us to re-examine the three landscape murals from a new angle, and to contemplate their different relationships with the name Wu Daozi.

Previous writers have suggested that the 300-plus temple murals which Wu Daozi created in Chang'an and Luoyang must have resulted from collective undertakings under his leadership.[63] This is not just a hypothesis but can be taken as a documented fact because Zhang Yanyuan speaks explicitly about Wu Daozi's workshop practice in a number of sections in his book. In one place he writes: 'Whenever Mr Wu made paintings, he left immediately after completing the ink drawings. Most of the time he had Zhai Yan and Zhang Cang apply the colours, and they always accomplished this assignment marvellously.'[64] Both Zhai and Zhang learnt painting from Wu Daozi, whose other disciples included Yang Tingguang, Li Sheng, and Lu Lengjia.[65] Like many painting workshops in premodern China, this Wu workshop employed temporary helpers as well – Zhang Yanyuan noted no fewer than nine times how clumsy 'workmen' (*gongren*) damaged the master's work when they applied colours on his drawings.[66] Textual evidence suggests that such unsuccessful teamwork was fairly common at the time.[67] Indeed, a similar outcome can be detected in the landscape mural in Han Xiu's tomb (see *plate 4*). Earlier I noted that its smooth, calligraphic brushwork indicates an experienced hand. But whoever applied the colours did a hasty and careless job. Most seriously, this person painted rigid greenish strips on rock boulders, with little concern for the structures of the rocks and pre-existing ink drawing (*plate 17*). Compared with this 'damaged' painting, the mural in Empress Zhenshun's tomb showcases superbly synchronized brushwork and coloration. The painter used a similar greenish wash, but subtly applied it here and

16 Detail of the landscape mural in the tomb of Empress Zhenshun, 737 CE. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

there along broken ink strokes, enhancing the painting's visual interest and complexity (see *plate 15*).

The concept of a 'school', or *jia* in Chinese, is related to but differs from that of a workshop. During the eighth and ninth centuries, Wu Daozi's school coexisted with at least three others founded by Cao Zhongda and Zhang Sengyou in the sixth century, and by Zhou Fang in the eighth century.[68] These masters all invented special compositions and iconographies, which their students and followers then transmitted to later times and broader regions. Zhang Yanjun called such special images *yang* – 'models' or 'designs'. In *Famous Paintings*, the 'Wu School models', or Wu Jia Yang, are explicitly related to religious icons, but this term could also apply to landscape images because, as we learnt earlier, the same book records Wu Daozi's invention of a prevailing landscape mode and thus credits him with having 'established a school'. We have also seen that this mode became extremely popular in the eighth century, spreading to Dunhuang in the west and the Japanese archipelago in the east (see *plate 9* and *plate 10*). The three excavated landscape murals all follow this model, but this doesn't mean that they must have been made by Wu Daozi or his workshop. Once again, Zhang Yanyuan tells us that even during the eighth century, painters beyond Wu's circle had already adopted his models in both religious and landscape genres. As for landscape, he recorded that the central hall of the Censorate (Yushidai) had a mountain-and-water mural by Wu, which he judged after close scrutiny to be the work of an anonymous painter.[69]

Finally, to people living in the eighth and ninth centuries, the name Wu Daozi would instantly evoke a genius artist with unrivalled skills and power. Anecdotes that highlight this image inevitably describe him as an independent painter who single-handedly produced masterful works. Such accounts are especially rich in Zhu Jingxuan's *Famous Paintings of the Tang Dynasty*. One of them relates that in the 720s or 730s, Wu met General Pei Ming (active early eighth century) and calligrapher Zhang Xu in Luoyang. The general wanted to commission him to paint a mural in memory of his deceased parents in the Heavenly Palace Monastery (Tiangong Si). Wu agreed to make the mural for free, but only if the general would perform his famous sword dance to inspire him. After viewing the performance, according to Zhu Jingxuan, he 'took up the brush and finished the mural as rapidly as if assisted by a god', and 'personally coloured this most superior work'.[70] The same author also recorded the famous competition between Wu Daozi and Li Sixun (it should be Sixun's son Li Zhaodao): invited by Emperor Xuanzong to paint the scenery along the Jialing River in the Great Harmony Hall, Li laboured several months to finish his work, but Wu completed an amazing mural in a single day.[71]

Taking these three situations into consideration, we realize that a painting's association with Wu Daozi during the Tang dynasty could have multiple implications: it could mean that the work was a workshop product involving his participation, that it utilized and manifested a 'Wu School model' which he originated, or that he alone finished the entire work. Each situation entailed his participation, either directly or indirectly; the lines between these situations were by no means absolute.

17 Detail of the landscape mural in the tomb of Han Xiu and Madam Liu, 740 CE. Photo: Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Archaeology.

Earlier in this essay we asked a hypothetical question: What would we *do* if a Wu Daozi painting were rediscovered? Now we have realized that the idea of a 'Wu Daozi painting' is itself problematic and needs to be investigated. Returning to the three newly excavated Tang murals, this essay has demonstrated that they all utilize the landscape mode very possibly invented by Wu Daozi, that the Han Xiu mural betrays signs of workshop collaboration, and that the brushwork in the Empress Zhenshun mural reflects a high degree of originality and closely matches the Tang descriptions of Wu Daozi's brush style. If we thus conclude that this last work very possibly bears witness to Wu's personal involvement, this proposal would be significant in two senses: we are finally able to connect this fabled Tang master with a genuine image from his time; and methodologically, we have established this connection by integrating painting scholarship with archaeology.[72]

At the same time, this discussion cautions us against an unexamined notion of individual authorship. Indeed, even if Wu Daozi created this mural, was he responsible for both its ink drawing and coloration? We have learnt that he routinely had other people colour his murals, and his top students always did a superb job. Moreover, among the six panels of this mural, the third one from the left shows softer, more meticulous brushwork and differs noticeably from the other panels (see *plate 11*). Did Wu Daozi deliberately produce such a contrast to generate visual tension, or did one of his disciples step in on the master's orders to paint this particular panel?

While these uncertainties demand further examinations of the mural,[73] this essay also encourages broad reflections on the concept of authorship in pre-Song painting. Towards this end, the effort of unearthing Wu Daozi has transcended the simple goal of discovering a genuine work by him. The multiple significances of Wu Daozi in Tang art lead us to embark on two kinds of investigation with broader art-historical

implications. The first is to explore further general conditions and circumstances of early Chinese painting that have been obscured by later reframing; the second is to conduct comparative analyses with other painting practices in the medieval world. To bring these two enquiries into a transregional research project will pose the next challenge for today's Chinese art historians.

Notes

This research is related to a collaborative project I have been involved with since 2014, called 'Rethinking the origin and early development of Chinese landscape painting based on new archaeological finds' 從考古新發現重新思索中國山水畫的起源和早期發展. The five participating institutions are the Centre for the Art of East Asia at the University of Chicago, the School of the Humanities in the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the Institute of Advanced Humanistic Studies at Fudan University, the Shaanxi Archaeological Research Institute, and the Shaanxi History Museum. I want to thank the many scholars with whom I have discussed the related archaeological materials, especially Zheng Yan of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, and Zhang Jianlin and Wang Xiaomeng of the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology. I presented a version of this paper at the Harvard East Asian Seminar on 13 April 2021, and received many useful suggestions during the Q&A. I especially benefited from subsequent email exchanges with Professor Jonathan Hay of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, Professor Lothar Ledderose of Heidelberg University, and Professor Peter Sturman of the University of California at Santa Barbara. I also want to thank to the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive suggestions.

1 This date is provided by Zhang Yanyuan himself. See Lu Fusheng *et al.*, eds, *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* [A comprehensive collection of writings on Chinese painting and calligraphy; hereafter *ZGSHQS*], 13 vols, Shanghai, 1992–98, 1: 122; William R. B. Acker, trans., *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, 2 vols, Leiden, 1954 and 1974, 1: 146. But the text also records at least one event that happened six year later, in 853. It is possible, therefore, that Zhang continued to update the text after he had finished it.

2 Yu Shaosong, *Shuhua shulu jieti* [Compendium of calligraphy and painting catalogues], Hangzhou, 2012, 6.

3 This period is called 'Near Antiquity' (*Jin gu*, also translated as 'Low Antiquity') in Zhang's terminology. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 124; translation by Alexander C. Soper in 'The Relationship of Early Chinese Painting to Its Own Past', in *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture*, ed. Christian F. Murck, Princeton, 1976, 28–29. See also Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, 1: 149–150. For a discussion of Zhang Yanyuan's historiography, see Wu Hung, *Chinese Art and Dynastic Time*, Princeton, 2022, 155–174.

4 Historians estimate that around 750, Chang'an had around 800,000–1 million residents living within the city walls. Tertius Chandler, *Four Thousand Years of Urban Growth: An Historical Census*, New York, 1987. For a general introduction to Chang'an, including its decline during the eighth and ninth centuries, see Edward H. Schafer, 'The last Years of Ch'ang-an', *Oriens Extremus*, 10: 2, 1963, 133–179.

5 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 122; Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, 1: 145–146.

6 國朝吳道玄古今獨步, 前不見顧陸, 後無來者. 授筆法於張旭, 此又知書畫用筆同矣. 張既號書顛, 吳宜為畫聖. 神假天造, 英靈不窮. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 126; Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, 1: 179.

7 The Six Principles (*Liu fa*), or six basic criteria in evaluating a painting, were established by the painting connoisseur and critic Xie He in the sixth century, including the 'vitality of spirit resonance' (*qiyun shengdong*), 'bone method of using the brush' (*gufa yongbi*), 'depicting forms based on the object' (*yingwu xiangxing*), 'applying colours according to types' (*suilei fucai*); 'arranging positions' (*jingying weizhi*), and 'transmission by copying' (*chuanyi moxie*).

8 唯觀吳道玄之跡, 可謂六法俱全, 萬象必盡, 神人假手, 窮極造化也. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 124; Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, 1: 151.

9 Zhu Jingxuan (ninth century) wrote *Tangchao minghua lu* [Record of famous paintings of the Tang dynasty], in *ZGSHQS*, 1: 119–169.

10 In a 1085 colophon Su Shi wrote: 'nowadays there are very few genuine works by Wu Daozi, and I have only once or twice seen one like this during my life.' Su Shi, *Dongpo tiba* [Colophons by Su Shi], *ZGSHQS*, 1: 636–637. Mi Fu likewise confessed that he saw only four authentic paintings by Wu, although he was acquainted with a great number of works bearing the artist's name. *Hua shi* [Account of painting], *ZGSHQS*, 1: 979. *Xuanhe huapu* [Xuanhe catalogue of paintings], however, records as many as ninety-three works under Wu Daozi in the Song imperial collection. *ZGSHQS*, 2: 66–67.

11 Fu Kaisen (John C. Ferguson), *Lidai zhulu huamu* (*Catalogue of recorded paintings*), 2 vols, Shanghai, 1934, 1: 101–104.

12 James Cahill, *An Index of Early Chinese Paintings and Painters*, Berkeley, 1980, 21. The subjects of these engravings include the Guanyin Bodhisattva, Confucius, the Black Warrior of the North (Xuanwu), and a soaring celestial warrior. This last image, said to have been copied from a mural in the Eastern Marchmount Temple (Dongyue Miao) in Quyang, has often been used to illustrate Wu's energetic brushwork recorded in Tang texts; but the carving itself was made no earlier than the late sixteenth century. See Wang Bomin, *Wu Daozi*, Shanghai, 1981, 19.

13 吳生雖絕妙, 猶以畫工論. 摩詰得之於象外, 有如仙翮謝籠樊. Su Shi, 'Fengxiang ba guan. Wang Wei, Wu Daozi hua' [Eight views at Fengxiang: Paintings by Wang Wei and Wu Daozi], in Chen Gaohua, *Sui Tang huajia shiliao* [Historical writings on Sui and Tang painters], Beijing, 1987, 255.

14 See Wang Bomin, *Wu Daozi*, 33.

15 Many such legends are collected in Guo Shuilin, *Huasheng Wu Daozi de chuanshuo* [Legends of Wu Daozi, Sage of Painting], Zhengzhou, 1999.

16 See Wang Bomin, *Wu Daozi*; Huang Miaozi, *Wu Daozi shiji* [Deeds of Wu Daozi], Beijing, 1991; Yuan Yougen, *Wu Daozi yanjiu* [A study of Wu Daozi], Beijing, 2014; Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*, 7 vols, New York, 1956, 1: 109–125.

17 Werner Speiser, *China: Geist und Gesellschaft*, Baden-Baden, 1959, 153; cited in Max Loehr, *The Great Painters of China*, New York and London, 1980, 41.

18 Although most of these records come from the early ninth century, about a century after Wu Daozi, their providers, mainly Zhang Yanyuan and Zhu Jingxuan, were able to examine many genuine works by Wu Daozi, and could even interview eyewitnesses of Wu Daozi's painting practices.

19 曾事逍遙公韋嗣立為小吏. 因寫蜀道山水, 始創山水之體, 自為一家. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 152.

20 Here I follow the opinions of Wang Bomin and Huang Miaozi. See the former's *Wu Daozi*, 2, and the latter's *Wu Daozi shiji*, 7.

21 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 153. The 'Kaiyuan era' date is implied in the narrative sequence of Zhu Jingxuan's biographical account, which mentions Wu's court appointment right before stating that he followed Emperor Xuanzong to Luoyang during the Kaiyuan era. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 164. Guo Ruoxu further recorded that when Xuanzong travelled to Mount Tai (Tai Shan) in 725 to conduct the Fenshan sacrifice, Wu Daozi followed and co-created a painting to record this event. Guo Ruoxue, *Paintings Seen and Heard About* (*Tuhua jianwen zhi*), in *ZGSHQS*, 1: 487. If we accept the credibility of this Song source, then Wu Daozi should have entered the court before this year.

22 See Wang Bomin, *Wu Daozi*, 4.

23 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 126, 152–153.

24 *Xuanhe Huapu* [Xuanhe Catalogue of Painting] likely started this convention by placing Wu in the category of Buddhist and Daoist painters (Dao Shi). *ZGSHQS*, 2: 66–67.
25 In addition to the examples discussed here, the late Tang landscape painter Jing Hao (*c.* 855–915) characterized Wu's landscape images as especially excelled in brushwork in his *Notes on Brushwork* (*Bifa ji*). *ZGSHQS*, 1: 7.
26 凡畫人物、佛像、神鬼、禽獸、山水、台殿、草木, 皆冠絕於世, 國朝第一. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 164.
27 See Linghu Biao, 'Dui "Shanshuihua chengyin xintan" de zhiyi' [Questions for 'A new exploration of the formative reasons of *shanshui* painting'], *Meishu* [Fine Arts], 9, 1989, 30–32.
28 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 125; Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts*, 1: 156.
29 Ti has many meanings in ancient Chinese literary and art criticism. The explanation presented here is based on Zhang Yanyuan's discussion in *Famous Paintings*, mainly in the chapter titled 'On Painting Mountains and Water, Trees and Rocks'. See *ZGSHQS*, 1: 125.
30 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 125.
31 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 126.
32 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 164.
33 For general introductions to the tomb, see Qu Lijun, 'Xin faxian de Pangliu Tang mu bihua chutan' [A preliminary study of the newly discovered Tang dynasty tomb murals at Pangliu], *Wenbo* [Cultural Relics and Museology], 5, 2009, 25–29; Cheng Xu and Shi Xiaoqun, 'Tang Zhenshun Huanghou Jingling shiguo' [The stone sarcophagus from the Jingling Mausoleum of Empress Zhenshun of the Tang], *Wenwu* [Cultural Relics], 5, 2012, 74–96.
34 玄宗貞順皇后武氏, 則天從父兄子恆安王攸止女也. 攸止卒後, 后尚幼, 隨例入宮. 上即位, 漸承恩寵. 及王庶人廢后, 特賜號為惠妃, 宮中禮秩, 一同皇后. Zhang Zhao, Jia Wei, and Zhao Xi, *Jiu Tang shu* [The old history of the Tang], Beijing, 1975, 2177.
35 Zhao *et al*, *Jiu Tang shu*, 2178.
36 The three images on the left have red borders and are gently coloured; the other three panels on the right lack painted frames and coloration, and are seemingly incomplete. I have suggested elsewhere that the effect of 'incompleteness' may have been deliberate. The idea, as stated in ancient ritual canons, is that artefacts made for the dead should be distinguished from those used by the living. See Wu Hung, 'Simulated Landscape Paintings: Newly Unearthed Tomb Murals in Tang China', *Art Bulletin*, 103: 4, December 2021, 29–31.
37 The tomb which contained this mural was robbed in 1997. The robbers took away the portable objects but left the murals largely intact. Some archaeologists entered the tomb chamber afterwards and took photographs of the murals, which then circulated among scholars and aroused considerable interest. The excavation of the tomb took place in 2017 and ascertained the location of the landscape mural and the identity of the tomb occupant.
38 This is actually a joint burial of Han Xiu and his wife Madam Liu. But the latter lived till 748, eight years after Han Xiu's death. Before this date it was the tomb of the husband alone.
39 With such painted frames, each of these murals appears as 'a painting-within-a painting' inside the tomb's overall pictorial programme. For a discussion of this type of tomb mural in China and its relationship with portable painting, see Wu Hung, 'Zhongguo muzang he huihua zhong de "hua zhong hua"' ['Paintings-within-paintings' in Chinese tombs and paintings], in Shanghai Museum, *Bi shang guan – xidu Shanxi gudai bihua* [Looking at walls – close-reading ancient murals from Shanxi], Beijing, 2017, 304–333.
40 Wu Hung, 'Simulated Landscape Paintings', 6–35.
41 壯哉昆侖方壺圖, 掛君高堂之素壁. Du Fu, 'Xiti Wang Zai hua shanshui tu ge' [A playful song about Wang Zai painting a landscape], *Du Shi xiangzhu* (A thoroughly annotated version of Du Fu's poems), annotated by Qiu Zhaoao (1638–1717), 4 vols, Beijing, 1979, 2: 754.
42 流水盤回山百轉, 生綃數幅垂中堂. Han Yu, 'Taoyuan tu' [A painting of Peach Blossom Spring], *Quan Tang shi* [Complete Tang poems], Beijing, 1960, *juan* 338.
43 Fang mentioned a landscape painting consisting of six panels of 'light raw silk' (*qingxiao*); Du Xunhe wrote about 'six pieces of silk' bearing an image of the Nine Lotus Mountains. Fang Gan, 'Ti hua Jianxi tu' [On painting Jianxi Spring], *Quan Tang shi*, *juan* 653; Du Xunhe, 'Song Qingyang Li Mingfu' [To Official Li from Qingyang], 'Ti hua Jianxi tu', *juan* 692.
44 For information about these images, see Wu Hung, 'Simulated Landscape Paintings', 16–17.
45 由是山水之變, 始於吳、成於二李. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 125.
46 縱以怪石崩灘, 若可捫酌. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 125.
47 See Zheng Yan, 'Tang Han Xiu bihua shanshuitu chuyi' [A preliminary discussion of the landscape mural in the tomb of Han Xiu of the Tang dynasty], *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* [Journal of the Palace Museum], 5, 2015, 90–91.
48 Du Fu, 'Qutang huaigu' [Meditation on the past at the Qutang Gorge]. Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 6 vols, New York, 2016, 3: 21. The last two sentences refer to the legend about Yu, the founder of the Xia Dynasty who carved the mountain open to channel a terrible flood to the sea.
49 Du Fu, 'Kuizhou ge shi juejue' [Kuaizhou songs: ten quatrains], *The Poetry of Du Fu*, 4: 168. Translation slightly modified.
50 A new archaeological find allows us to trace this compositional mode to at least the second half of the seventh century: the painted landscape scene on a pottery jar from the tomb of Empress Ai (d. 675) shows a river flowing perpendicularly between two groups of mountain cliffs. It is possible that Wu Daozi 'invented' the new landscape mode based on this type of image. For the archaeological context of the jar, see Guo Hongtao, 'Tang Gongling Ai Huanghou mu bufen chutu wenwu' [Selected cultural relics from the Gongling Mausoleum, the tomb of Empress Ai of the Tang dynasty], *Kaogu yu wenwu* [Archaeology and Cultural Relics], 4, 2002, 9–18.
51 離披其點畫. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 126.
52 For a brief discussion of this tomb and its landscape murals, see Wu Hung, 'The Origins of Chinese Painting (Paleolithic Period to Tang Dynasty)', in Richard Barnhart *et al*., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, New Haven, 1997, 65–66.
53 Michael Sullivan, *Chinese Landscape Painting in the Sui and Tang Dynasties*, Berkeley, 1980, 120.
54 眾皆密於盼跡, 我則離披其點畫, 眾皆謹於象似, 我則脫落其凡俗. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 126.
55 但施筆絕蹤, 皆磊落逸勢. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 164.
56 筆才一二, 像已應焉. 離披點畫, 時見缺落. 此雖筆不周而意周也. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 126.
57 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 128. According to Cheng Zai, 20,000 cash (*jin*) could purchase 16–17 *dan* of rice in Zhang Yanyuan's time, equal to 600–638 kilos today. See Cheng Zai, *Lidai minghua ji quanyi* [A complete interpretation of the famous paintings through successive dynasties], Guiyang, 2009, 101.
58 玄宗召入禁中, 改名道玄. 因授內教博士, 非有詔不得畫. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 153.
59 Yan Lide's involvement in overseeing the construction of the Zhaoling Mausoleum is recorded in his biography in Ouyang Xiu *et al*., *Xin Tang shu* [New history of the Tang], Beijing, 1975, *juan* 100. Zhang Yanyuan recorded that Yan Liben's design of stone statues for the same mausoleum had passed down to his time. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 151. It is generally believed that these included the famous Six Steeds of Zhaoling.
60 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 132.
61 See Wu Hung, 'The Origins of Chinese Painting', 66.
62 About the notion of authorship, see Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New York, 1984, 101–120. Many questions that Foucault raises in this lecture are pertinent to the current discussion on Wu Daozi.
63 Huang Miaozi, *Wu Daozi shiji*, 33.
64 吳生每畫, 落筆便去, 多使琰與張藏布色, 濃淡無不得所. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 153.
65 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 153
66 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 131–134.
67 Zhang Yanyuan recorded that similar damage was inflicted on temple murals made by Yang Tingguang, Han Gan, and Wang Wei. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 132–134.
68 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 125, 143.
69 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 134.
70 奮筆俄頃而成, 有若神助, 尤為冠絕, 道子亦親為設色. *ZGSHQS*, 1: 164.
71 *ZGSHQS*, 1: 164.
72 For a discussion of this methodological initiative, see Wu Hung, 'Simulated Landscape Paintings'.
73 This mural is currently undergoing conservation in the Shaanxi History Museum in Xi'an.