

LS.LectNotes.2py

2. Han Painting and Pictorial Designs

Need to correct quickly a few mistakes I made in Lecture One. I'm talking from notes, but with lots of asides from memory, and it's inevitable that I slip a few times in each lecture—I'll try to correct these as I catch them. I gave the wrong date for the Guo Xi "Early Spring" landscape: it's 1072, not 1082. I showed two sections of the "Pure and Remote View" scroll for a long time without naming the artist: it's Xia Gui, a great master of the Southern Song academy. And I mentioned a book on early sets of bronze bells by Lothar von Falkenhausen but misidentified his institution: he teaches at UCLA, not USC.

This lecture will be shorter than the first, although it's about the art of a long period. There still isn't much real ptg from the Han dynasty to show—there are a lot of images of other kinds, stone engravings especially, that I'm not showing, or showing only briefly--and I won't talk as much on general matters, reminiscing etc.

A word on history. Just before the Han dynasty, the Qin dynasty, under its famous First Emperor, had unified China for first time with conquests of 221 B.C. But Qin was short-lived, succeeded by first great unified and long-lasting dynasty of China, the Han (207 B.C. to A.D. 220, with interregnum, A.D. 9-25.) Earlier part called Western Han, later Eastern, after location of capital.

- 2.1. Paintings at Mawangdui (back to this site in SE China, Hunan Province.)

- 2.1.0. Picture of Sherman Lee delegation, 1973, again. In upper left, Tom Chase, from Freer Gallery's Technical Laboratory. (etc., on photographing in restoration studios at Palace Museum.)

- 1.5.5 beside 1.5.9 Show ptg of shamaness again, last detail. At end of previous lecture, we had arrived at last at looking at real ptg in real slides made from the original. In some ways, this is ideal way to look at a ptg--nothing quite equals it in conveying certain qualities of work of art. But it's not necessarily "real look"—could be unlike real thing. Even if we stood in Changsha Museum, or Palace Museum in Beijing, gazing at original

... So, acknowledging that it's an artificial way of viewing the ptgs, still worth doing. . .

- 2.1.1. Back to Changsha: Mawandui, spirit robe, early 2nd cent. B.C. 3000 Fig. 16, p. 26. T&V 4-24, p. 146; Loehr Plate 1. Silbergeld Plate 1, opp. p. 28; Fig.10.

Tomb of Marquess of Tai, wife of prime minister of time. Lavish burial; tomb lined with layers of white clay and charcoal. Body amazingly well preserved.

- Spirit robe, *feiyl* or “flyng garment,” whole image, listed as that in tomb inventory, laid over her coffin. Much written about it, interpretations of imagery, trying to link with texts of that time. I won't attempt anything like that, will talk only about it as a painting. (Describe)

Keep whole image, 2.1.1, on at left while showing the details? At least down to 2.1.7, when we can close with that and 2.1.8 together. Or: we might have 2.1.3 and 2.1.4, portrait of woman + her body, together.

- 2.1.2. Central part, w. woman and attendants . . .

- 2.1.3. Close-up of her and attendants

- 2.1.4. Photo of her preserved body. Still can be seen, in glass case or tank, in formaldehyde, in museum at Changsha. (Last I heard: better preserved than Chairman Mao's body in his mausoleum on Tiananmen Square—not holding up well.) Excavators remarked on real resemblance between picture of her in tomb and real woman in tomb. Only case in pre-modern art history where portrayal in ptg can be matched agst original.

- 2.1.5. Upper right: crow in sun; all the additional suns that a famous mythical archer had to shoot down to save the earth from burning up. ..Dragons, etc.

- 2.1.6. Center section, below woman; intertwined serpent-dragons, human-headed birds, etc.

Loehr ends his paragraph on this painting by writing: “The conquest of the third dimension, depth, was yet to come.” Yes, that's the way it looks, again until we get close in and see things Max Loehr couldn't see on the reproduction he had available. Here, note undulations of dragons, produced by rhythmic variations in white on scales etc. And, of course, all the overlapping.

- 2.1.7. Even more remarkable is the section just below this. Jerome Silbergeld (etc., about human-like deity). But I want to look even more closely, at what appears to be a funerary rite of some kind being performed just above.
- 2.1.8. (Describe: what old art historians called a “space cell”. Term first used by Loehr’s teacher Ludwig Bachhofer—I’ll speak abt him in Lecture 3.)
- 2.1.9. Big ptg in Tomb 3: A Ritual Gathering. 3000 Fig. 17, p. 27. Nearly a meter in height, two meters in breadth. Assemblage or procession of people and chariots, placed as if on grand expanse of ground.
- 2.1.10. Left half of this.
- 2.1.11. - Detail of upper left corner of this big ptg: Three rows of figures (etc.)

2.2.- Han painted houses, tomb objects (mingqi)

From Han sites in northern China, no such paintings on silk or other perishable materials survive; burial conditions weren’t right for their preservation. But we have a lot of tomb art. Huge number of tombs in China—hard to dig anywhere without finding one—if you build roads, excavate for buildings, likely to strike a tomb. Huge production in Han and later of low-fired ceramic figurines and other objects, painted (later glazed) called *mingqi*, “afterlife objects.” Some paintings on those.

- 2.2.1. Han painted house. Granary: landlord and others dickering, measuring grain. Sheep, or goats.
(Also showing: tomb figurines from other tombs, Han period)
- 2.2.2. Painting on lower part of granary. (describe)
- 2.2.3. Closer in: figures pouring grain, dickering etc. Different kinds of brushstrokes for dif. kinds of images.
- 2.2.4. Sheep, or goats. Not at all kind of ptg we used to argue was universally true of Han ptg: image outlined, silhouetted, repeated as necessary. Instead, quick impression of group of them.

- 2.3. Painted Lintels, Loyang, Boston M.F.A.

- 2.3.1. 1st cent. B.C. tomb near Loyang, in which is partition gable with painted lintel, tomb made accessible to visitors by putting ptgs under glass, with wood frame (awful light blue), electric light.
- 2.3.2. Me photographing (slide made by another of my delegation.)
- 2.3.3. Lintel from reproduction, without frames and glass. Upper part: openwork ceramic panels depicting heavenly creatures among clouds fighting for jade *bi*-disks. Below: horizontal panels with narrative scenes, figures and props.
- 2.3.4. Drawing of these. Scenes from fictional historical anecdotes, of the kind the Chinese love to cite and to depict. Lower one:
 “Two Peaches Kill Three Warriors.” 3000 Fig. 18, p. 28. Story from late Zhou period: Prime Minister of Qi state resentful at three brave warriors for failing to show him proper respect, suggests to Duke that he send them two peaches with suggestion they divide according to their personal merits. Complex outcome, ending with deaths of all of them by suicide.
- 2.3.5. Detail of bent old man, expressive gesture etc.
- 2.3.6. More scenes on other side: preparations for banquet, Roasting meat. Slabs of meat, horse’s head, hanging above.
- 2.3.7. Detail of this.
- 2.3.8. Another scene, outdoors: monster at right, three men. Hills behind to indicate landscape setting: very simple.
- 2.3.9. Detail of figures. Strong characterizations in lively drawing. Again, an unknown artisan expanding our understanding of what Han painting was capable of. From such humble works as these, we can imagine great wall paintings in palaces, known only from texts.

- 2.3.10. Boston M.F.A., set pf hollow clay tiles, was partition and lintel in tomb: people at animal fight; bear. Cahill Ch.Ptg. p. 12 (detail), Loehr Fig. 7, p. 15, Siren 2.3. Subject appears to be people come to be entertained at a bear fight. Bear, rather un-fierce, cowers in lower corner. Keeper? Bellow: woman seems to be entreating man to buy for her something held b merchant?
- 2.3.11. Group of male figures. Rather more sophisticated, less rustic and vigorous, than one showed before—different kind of artist, or patron. Figures turn, gesture, relate to each other.
- 2.3.12. This was first plate in my old Skira book. Used it to make various points about Han painting. Much more now to look at, talk about.

- 2.4. Painted Basket from Lolang (in North Korea). Siren 4.

- 2.4.1, 2.4.2. together? Lacquer painted basket, found at Lolang in North Korea; but from mainland China. A.D. 1st-2nd cent. Paragons of filial piety, popular subject (we'll see others). Identified with written names. Also heroes, figures from history. Active, paired with interrelationships implied. Some objects, such as screen.

- 2.4.3. End view. One figure full face; this generally avoided in early ptgs. Single figures in small panels: figures from history & legend. Much moralizing going on in Han art; unclear how much attn. people paid to this. Art supposed to have a moral purpose . . . (etc.)

Similar lacquer-painted box, from excavation in China, reproduced and discussed by Wu Hung in 3000 Years, p. 20.

Leaving out here (showing only briefly), although proper course in Chinese art would spend time on them, the many engraved stones with pictorial designs that we have from Han, notably those from Wu Family Shrines, Wuliangci , in Shandong in NE China, mid-2nd cent. A.D. Very important, but not for our purpose. Have many pages of notes on them from my old lecture course, in which I talked about them for several sessions. Highly formalized, maybe deliberately archaistic. More to the point, for us, are:

- 2.5. Tomb Tiles, Sichuan, with which I'll end this lecture.

- 2.5.1, 2.5.2. - Sichuan area, tomb tiles, some w. landscape designs. T&V 4-9, p. 128; Loehr fig. 5-6, p. 12.

Found in vicinity of Chengdu; date to latter part of Han, maybe 2nd cent. A.D. Tradition of realistic representation stronger there? compared to engraved stone slabs in Shandong, which are highly formalized, unrealistic.

Made in molds, presumably wooden, with designs carved in them; designs in fairly high relief, not just linear or flat. About a foot and a half in width. Used to construct walls of tombs. Represent idealized scenes from life of deceased (but generalized, not for particular person.)

- 2.5.3 with 2.5.2. Designs better seen in *rubbings* (explain).

- 2.5.4. Another one, Low tables on floor, for writing? They focus mostly on single, dominant figure representing deceased. Furniture, objects, arranged to define ground or floor plane.

- 2.5.5 Salt mine: Tall scaffold in lower left, men lowering buckets to bring up brine (having pumped hot water down to dissolve salt.) Taken to saltery in lower r., vats of brine boiling to remove water, get salt. Images set agst hills, which compartment scene. (etc.)

- 2.5.6. Another, two scenes (describe). Landscape imagery: suggests there must have been some flourishing of painting of these subjects underlying their appearance in relatively lowly production of tomb tiles. Beginnings, for our purpose, of landscape imagery. Could talk about mentions of landscape representations in texts of time, how people responded to those representations. Painting of “Milky Way” (river in summer?) that made viewers feel hot; of “North Wind” which made viewers feel cold. Imagery of ptg aroused same feelings, if successful, as real scenes in nature would have. Just as those looking at ptgs of people were supposed to respond as they would to real people. Early idea. Can only imagine paintings, on basis of survivals in less perishable materials such as these.

- 2.5.7. 2.5.8. Two more. Sullivan calls one on left: woman entering mulberry grove. Seems OK. Picking mulberry leaves to feed silkworms was traditional occupation of women. Right: scene on lake, or pond, w. lotus leaves and flowers, geese, someone in boat gathering lotus roots? Hills and trees in distance.

(A few others added later, along with photo, taken from above, of Chinese courtyard house, to show what walls look like viewed from above, how designer of tomb tile has “got it [visually] right.” Also added: late Zhou mirror, “Hosokawa mirror,” with man on horse, foreshortened, confronting tiger.)

Also added: rubbing from carved stone slab in Sichuan, rubbing in Academia Sinica, Taipei: more or less same design as ceramic tile. Notion of “type images”: see, if interested, my article "Continuations of Ch'an Painting into Ming-Ch'ing and the Prevalence of Type-images." In: Archives of Asian Art L/1997-98, pp. 17-41.

All for now; these take us well into beginnings of our main subject, the development of landscape imagery in China. We'll continue in next lecture with period after fall of Han, see two handscrolls, or horizontal scrolls,

ascribed to a particular, individual artist, Gu Kaizhi, and will begin to talk about individual style, and art theory and criticism. One of the handscrolls will be seen in three versions, and questions of dating, and closeness to the presumed original, will be raised and discussed—these will make up a major theme throughout the rest of the series. Sometimes we have to say: we can't really date this ptg effectively, but can say that it appears to be a relatively faithful copy after an original of such-and-such a date. Or: this is a school work preserving only certain broad features of the original style, but heavily transformed. And so forth. No use talking about all this in principle: can only demonstrate how it works, or how I think it should be done, with lots of examples. Also, I have added a "Postlude" to these lectures dealing with issues of priority and authenticity. To read my thoughts and beliefs on these problems spelled out at greater length and with more precision than I can manage in these recorded lectures, go to my website, jamescahill.info, click on the CLP (Cahill Lectures and Papers) series under "Writings of James Cahill," and read nos. 45 and 188. Texts appear there, can be read on screen or downloaded.

All for this lecture; next one will be longer, with many more images, lots of visually exciting pictures and issues.