



Artist: Anonymous
Formerly attrib to: Cao Yuankuo 曹元廓 (active late 7th century)
Title: *Mountain Landscape*
《山水圖》
Shanshui tu
Dynasty/Date: Yuan, 14th century
Format: Fan mounted as album leaf
Medium: Ink and color on silk
Dimensions: 27.3 x 22.8 cm (10-3/4 x 9 in)
Credit line: Purchase
Accession no.: F1944.52
Provenance: Tonying and Company, New York

Description: Gourd-shaped silk fan separately mounted as album leaf on folded cardboard.¹

Two (2) outside labels. No artist signature or seal. Three (3) partial collector seals.

Outside label 1: Anonymous

Mounted on outside of cardboard. Ink on brown paper slip

Two characters, standard script

曹興

Cao Xing

Outside Label 2: Anonymous (20th century)²



Mounted on outside of cardboard. Ink on cream paper.

2 columns, running-standard script

Erroneous attribution to Cao Yuankuo 曹元廓 (active late 7th century)

唐，曹興，一名元廓。天后時，朝散大夫、左尚方令。師閻立本、王洽，工人馬、山水，善於布置。《圖繪寶鑑》。

Cao Xing of the Tang dynasty had another given name: Yuankuo. During the time of Empress [Wu Ze]tian [reigned 690–705], [he held the ranks of] Grand Master for Closing Court and Left Director of Imperial Manufactories. [In painting] he took Yan Liben [ca. 600–674] and Wang Xia [8th century] as his masters; he was skilled [at painting] horses and people as well as landscape, and good at composition. [Quoted from] the *Tuhui Baojian* [Precious Mirror of Painting].³

Collector seals: (3)

1. Cao Zhibai 曹知白 (1272–1355)⁴ – (1) – real or fake?

Yunxi 『雲西』 (rectangle intaglio) – lower left

2. Yuan dynasty official seal⁵ – (1)

[*Dusheng shuhua zhi*] yin 『[都省書畫之]印』 (square relief, lower left corner) – upper right

3. Unidentified (Yuan?) official seal – (1)

Undeciphered official seal (rectangle relief; right edge) – upper left

Traditional Chinese catalogues: none

Bibliography

Huggins, Mabel Irene. “Some Aspects of Chinese Fans.” In *Antiques Journal* 16 (April 1961): 6.

Fu Shen 傅申. *Yuandai huangshi shuhua shoucang shilüe* 元代皇室書畫收藏史略. Taipei:

Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1982. Pp. 93–95 and 239 (plate 103).

Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬 (1920–2007), ed. *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku* 中國繪畫總合圖錄
(Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Paintings). 5 vols. Tokyo: University of Tokyo,
1982–83. Vol. 1, 239 (A21–130).

Notes

¹ A vertical crease in the center of the painting indicates its early mounting on a frame and use as hand fan. Prior to acquisition by the museum in 1944 from Tonying Company, New York, this leaf together with three others in the Freer collection (F1944.50, .51, and .53) were evidently part of an album of seventeen disparate leaves, presumably all attributed to early artists,

belonging to one “Ch’eng Chang-chu” (Cheng Zhangzhu?). By 1949, one leaf was in the collection of the Seattle Art Museum, four were in the Freer, and twelve were in the collection of H. L. Hsieh (New York). See Sherman Lee, “A Probable Sung Buffalo Painting,” in *Artibus Asiae* 12 (1949): 294, note 3.

² The calligraphy of this outside label is by the same hand as similar labels on F1944.51 and F1944.52, published elsewhere in this website, as well as F1944.53, which is not included.

³ As indicated, this text is largely adapted from Xia Wenyan 夏文彥 (14th century), *Tuhui baojian* 圖繪寶鑑 (preface 1365), 2:20b, in *WSKQS*. However, the artist’s stated given-name Xing 興 is not recorded in any known source relating to Cao Yuankuo, nor is the anachronistic reference to Wang Xia, eighth century innovator of the *pomo* 潑墨 (splashed ink) style of painting.

⁴ As Cao Zhibai was a renowned Daoist landscape painter, perhaps this seal should be taken as the “artist seal,” especially given its location on the painting. The Freer seal impression closely resembles a seal of Cao’s known from other works, though the authenticity of both remains unclear.

⁵ On the identification of this seal and the reading of its text, see Fu Shen 傅申, *Yuandai huangshi shuhua shoucang shilüe* 元代皇室書畫收藏史略 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1982), 93–95 and 239 (plate 103).