

# Artistic Features of Boundary Drawing in Tang Dynasty Tomb Mural Paintings

## Take the "Side Tower Drawing" in Prince Yide's Tomb as an Example

Yuan Shao

Academy of Fine Arts  
Shaanxi Normal University  
Xi'an, China

**Abstract**—Boundary drawing is one of the most full-feature categories in the history of Chinese painting, it takes all types of buildings as the main object, add the abundant wisdom and creativity of the artists, depicting the magnificent picture to the world. Boundary drawing based on architectural paintings, started its development from the Warring States period, began to develop a separate branch in Sui and Tang dynasties and reached a high achievement. Among them, the "Side tower drawing" of Prince Yide's tomb is the concrete embodiment of boundary drawing reached the development peak in Tang Dynasty. "Side tower drawing" had detailed building structure, majestic shape, beautiful line drawing works, neat color setting, clearly showed the artistic beauty, formal beauty, shape beauty and structural beauty of boundary painting. Despite the several rises and falls of Boundary drawing in the history of painting, but its tenacious vitality will make it shining in the present age.

**Keywords**—boundary drawing; Tang Dynasty tomb mural painting; side tower drawing; artistic feature

### I. THE TRADITIONAL FORM OF PAINTING - BOUNDARY DRAWING

Boundary drawing generally refers to the painting type which use boundary drawing pen, ruler and other boundary drawing tools to draw buildings, bridges, and other objects, it also called "Jie hua". The term first appeared in the "Tuhua Jianwen Zhi" of Song Ruoxu in Song Dynasty, but the "Xie fang" of Qin Shihuang period architecture which recorded in "Shi Ji" (Historical Records) actually known as the first performance of boundary painting, which is the first engineering drawings. Boundary drawing in Tang Dynasty has begun to become an independent painting branch, the "Wu mu" and "Lou guan" in art history both are the expression form of boundary drawing in painting, but the "boundary drawing" term first officially appeared as a painting branch was in Tang gong's "Hua jian" in Yuan dynasty: "Normally the painting has thirteen branches, start with landscape painting, end with boundary drawing."<sup>[1]</sup> Since then the development of social science and technology provided a strong material foundation for the boundary drawn 's prosperity in the Five Dynasties and Song Dynasty, the performance content of boundary drawing has become diversity. But after the Yuan Dynasty, the rise of literati painting made boundary drawing suffered a great shock, and to the Ming and Qing Dynasties,

boundary drawing tend to decline, but there were well-known boundary drawing painters and works spread in the world, such as Yuan Jiang ,Yuan Yao, unfortunately left no successors.

Part of boundary drawings took the buildings which really existed in the history as its performance theme, such as "Huanghe Lou", "Yueyang Lou" and so on, other part of the boundary drawings based on architecture at that age added painter's own artistic imagination, such as the more than one hundred "Jingbian Tu" in Dunhuang mural painting.

The biggest art feature of boundary drawing is neat and meticulous, very strict depicting images, it is very precise without the slightest sloppy. "Xuanhe Huapu" said boundary painting "each dot and line must draw with ruler". But the "Lidai Minghua Ji" also said, Wu Daozi draw "curved arc, edge, plant column and beam structure with no ruler", that is, he could draw neat and straight lines without boundary pen and ruler. According to historical records, in Tang Dynasty there were many boundary drawing painters, such as the well-known traditional Chinese painting artist Yan Liben, Yan Lide, Wu Daozi, Yin Jizhao, Dong E and the like. Relying on the materials, there were paper and silk boundary drawing and murals boundary drawing. Many boundary drawings which recorded in Tang Dynasty's literature have failed to be handed down, we can only glimpse its wonderful paintings from paper and silk boundary drawings and mural boundary drawings. Mural boundary drawings also divided into the cave, temple and tomb murals. Cave boundary drawing such like the Dunhuang mural painting "Guan Wuliangshoujing Biantu" ,"Anan Qirutu" and so on, temple mural boundary drawing basically no longer exist because there is no presence of the Tang Dynasty temples, according to the study, tomb mural boundary drawing now only left the "Side tower drawing" in the tomb of Prince Yide.

### II. "SIDE TOWER DRAWING"IN PRINCE YIDE'S TOMB

Tomb of Prince Yide is the tome of Prince Yide Lee Chongrunthe who was the eldest son of Emperor Tang Zhongzong, it located in the southeast of Qianling, about three kilometers northwest of Qianxian, it is one of the Qianling burial tombs. About the construction of Prince Yide's tomb, there is not too much literature records. But the tomb of Prince

Yide is the first "Haomu Weiling" prince tomb explored by Shaanxi Province. Tomb of Prince Yide has a total length of 100.80 meters which divided into eight parts: Tomb passage, six holes, seven patios, eight small niches, front corridor, back corridor, front vault and back vault. [2] The tomb of Prince Yide began to excavate in 1971 and it cleared 40 large murals with a total of over 400 square meters. Prince Yide was only 19 years old when he died, the tomb murals truly reflect the court life at the time, the most striking is the large Side tower drawings on the east and west walls of the passage entrance. The height and width of these two murals are both 280cm, each piece about nine square meters. Outside the side tower is the palace wall, extended northward, far from the tower there are rolling hills. There are one major tower, two sub towers on each west wall and east wall which constitute the "three towers".

"Side tower drawing" in Prince Yide's tomb make up for the shortcomings of historic buildings, and it provided a reliable historical basis for the rehabilitation of Hanyuan Dian in Xi'an Daming Palace and other Tang Dynasty buildings. On the artistic features, it sophisticated depict the structural beauty of the buildings and known as the "delicate and exquisite, graceful and classic" early Tang dynasty boundary drawing.

### III. ARTISTIC FEATURES OF THE BOUNDARY DRAWING "SIDE TOWER DRAWING"

#### A. Subject Content

Prince Yide tomb mural from the east passage entrance is honor guard ranks with armor and coat armor, after the honor guard is the dragon and walls and towers, the corner of the wall is square, tower is in the south of the city wall, inside the city there is a large number of honor guards, the tower part among them is the "Side tower drawing".

Chinese traditional architecture is inseparable from the so-called mountain, water, tree, stone, house and road. For people, building is more than just a place to live, but also embodies this aesthetic ideal which combines building and natural environment harmony together.

The composition of boundary drawing pay attention to the opening and closing, accept and reject, density and thin, such as the relationship between architecture and far mountain, stone, tree; the relationship between the main building and the attachments, the relationship between the density of the building itself, the occlusion relationship between pavilion and trees and rocks slopes.

"Que" (watchtower) generally exists as the etiquette building, in ancient it is high buildings symmetrical placed in front of palace or tomb. The term "Que" originally appeared in the "Book of Songs", starting from the Zhou Dynasty lasted until later. "Que" Although exist as an architecture, but also revealed its role in mental function. When people arrive there, they will naturally think of their own "shortcomings", frightened fear from the heart, "Que" reflects the symbol of imperial power. Tomb mural "Side tower drawing" takes the side tower as the main building, the former House Que, Que floor far as rocks, clouds have about Que floor, behind a body, side towers at front, mountains and stones in distance, clouds

around the towers, city wall at back side, these parts consist the seamless landscape, reflect the noble rank of the tomb owner.

#### B. Architectural Form

Architecture and boundary drawing are closely linked in the history of Chinese painting, architecture associated with the origin and production of boundary drawing, particularly ancient architecture and boundary drawing have interlinked on drawing tools and drawing technique, it can be said that boundary drawing come from architectural painting. Chinese traditional architecture has strict hierarchy, which reflected in the "Yingzao Fashi", different decorations, components, patterns also have different meanings. In Tang Dynasty, the various components and materials of wooden building began to normalization which indicates the level of management in constant progress. Characteristics of the Tang Dynasty wooden architecture is simple structure, plain, majestic style, usually with huge brackets and simple Chiwen, it has tall roof and thick pillars. However, due to the wooden structure building easily damaged, there is not much Tang buildings survived in the world now, just Nanchan temple and Foguang temple two places in Shaanxi Wutai Mountain, and also the book records are few.

In "Side tower drawing" of Prince Yide's tomb, the four side towers stand side by side, pier is gorgeous, with a cloister, tower corner is tilt, brackets have a large proportion, fully showing architectural features of Tang Dynasty. At both ends of the ridge there is Chiwei which symbolized the fair extinguishing mythical animal, it has fireproof effect on the ridge. In Tang Dynasty there was a systemic regulation for architectural hierarchy, in the "Yingshan ling" it clearly states: "Palace all has hip roof Chiwei"... Side tower is consist with roof, housing body, flat seat, pier four parts, the roof is hip roof style with Chiwei on top of it. House body has three rooms in plane and three rooms in deep, the gate is in the middle, the mullioned windows at both sides, corbel brackets shop for five, dual copy closer made, tween has three herringbone arches. There are architrave and sublintel on the flat seat and supported by three herringbone arches and Timu at bottom of them. Piers are brick and stone structure, in the middle part paying with rectangular brick, surrounded by a stones, decorated with creeping honeysuckle pattern. [3]

Boundary drawing like other categories of Chinese painting, also use "cavalier perspective" to deal with spatial relationship. Specifically speaking is the buildings which use no parallel vanishing point perspective. [4] It will separately use overlook, looking up and look at front horizontally observation methods, as well as the shifting perspective and multi-point perspective methods for the overall layout. The side towers in the tomb painting of Prince Yide built on the high platform, the overall layout uses the space performance method of boundary drawing "Shenyuan fa", it uses variety of perspective methods such as Deep and far view, horizontally view, cavalier view, etc., to describe the front side, side face and the top side three sides with strong three-dimensional sense to organize the buildings from different orientations into the same screen.

### C. Line Drawing

Lines in boundary drawing mostly are straight lines, neat and meticulous, which also has weight, shades, density, false or true, hide or reveal changes. According to the "Ciyuan" records, boundary ruler made of jade or wood, used to draw straight lines or press paper, it is an essential drawing tool for boundary drawing. In traditional boundary drawings, the lines are substantially parallel, if extended them, generally they will not intersect. Traditional Chinese mural art is also use lines and colors as the main expression technique, line drawing plays an important role in traditional Chinese painting, it carries important Chinese humanistic ideas, tomb murals give full play to the high representability of line drawing. "Side tower drawing" has the fine and delicate lines and the neat drawing style, with the realistic style of architectural boundary drawing in Tang Dynasty. In the paintings, all the pavilions, colonnades and brackets are delicate, use fine iron line to finished drawing, the lines are stiff straight without any change, it should be drawn with a boundary drawing ruler. At the same time the density arrangement of lines clearly shows the author's conscious layout, such as first outline the platform with parallel lines, in parallel lines depict complex floral patterns, the wall brick of platform center split into trapezoid with horizontal and diagonal lines, colored with black and white intervals. The thickness contrast with pavilion and brackets lines also has some kind of order, full with rhythmic. Most rocks outlined with thick and black hook line, thick lines with easy forms, which make a comparison of the strict and easy with the neat lines of side tower, in order to make the whole picture seemed relaxed and natural.

### D. Colors Setting

The colors of boundary drawing is created by the actual color of the architecture and based on the painter's color concept. Early time mostly with heavy colors and applied with gold and silver, mainly express the imperial palace architecture; later mainly use light color as the main style to perform marketplace, palace and gardens. In Tang Dynasty the major expression methods of boundary drawing is mainly use heavy colors, the roof mostly use malachite, azurite and yellow ocher.

Since the different content and form of tomb murals, so it has big difference with temples and cave paintings, tomb mural use less color. But for tomb murals, the colors of Prince Yide's tomb is more diversity than other Tang tomb murals in Shaanxi regions, the pigment used is essentially mineral pigments. It uses azurite, malachite green, mineral yellow, vermilion, cinnabar, vermilion, red, dark red, white lead, gold, silver, purple (mixture of limonite, hematite and manganite), and other colors. Specific analysis, brackets and column in the tower are in red, the main color is cinnabar; roof coated with azurite, ocher and ink, but due to the passage of time, azurite has been dimmed, appeared with dark gray color. Background and clouds yellow should be yellow lead or litharge, green color is malachite. The bricks in the platform paint with ink, dye out different levels, the overall murals show people with warm colors.

The landscape in the side tower drawing has the embryonic form of landscape painting. In the literature, in Tang Dynasty landscape painting has gradually matured, Tang Dynasty

landscapes pay attention to learn from nature at outside, and follow the heart in the middle. It is described in the literature that such as Li Sixun and Wu Daozi are all have a great breakthrough for landscape painting based on previous landscape paintings. These breakthroughs are also reflected in landscape painting of Tang Dynasty tomb murals. The landscape in "Side tower drawing" focuses on rendering, use ocher, green coloring to reveal a natural, elegant style. Mainly use azurite, malachite green and ocher to express the rock's concave-convex and back and forward. But due to the passage of time, the malachite green on the rocks already faded.

It is very common to use metal foil in Chinese traditional paintings, especially to express the building components with foil in architectural painting and murals. In the "Side tower drawing", it uses gilt bronze ornaments cross point between single hook and handrail, and cross point part between handrail and cloud arch, also at the top and bottom of Shu column there are gilt bronze ornaments too, the gilt bronze ornaments uses gilding as its main painting technique. The gold foil appears peeling due to passage of time, the areas without peeling still showing gold luster.

In the color setting method, "Side tower drawing" mainly uses outline, hook fill, flat coating, rendering and gilding methods. The columns, square column, bucket, arch all have adopted the color setting method of single line flat coating, and it made simple picture and vivid color effects.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Chinese traditional culture nurtures Chinese boundary drawing art, and at the same time it reflects the aesthetic sense of Chinese culture and spiritual qualities of ethnic culture. "Side tower drawing" as the outstanding performance of ancient boundary drawing, it fully reflects the beauty of Chinese traditional boundary drawing and fully reflects the artistic feature of boundary drawing. Because contemporary buildings no longer have cornices and pavilions with clear brackets, it seems the boundary drawing is about to lose its existing meaning. But from the above analysis about artistic features of boundary drawing "Side tower drawing", we can see the significance of boundary drawing in Chinese painting history, we still need to explore the expansion of themes and techniques of boundary drawing on the basis of inheriting the boundary drawing traditions, in order to make boundary drawing this traditional painting art regained its vigor.

## REFERENCES

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