

CHINESE PICTURE, A PO(I)ETICS OF SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCES

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Abstract

Chinese picture represents a relatively unitary aesthetic system, its most distinct feature being its attempt at "painting ideas". If the European picture starts with the reproduction of nature and depicts reality, Chinese picture has focused, since its early beginnings, on a subjective re-creation of images, as it does not offer to its onlookers images of the surrounding reality, of the real universe, instead it suggests, leaves room to imagination, imparting to some special elements (water and numerous, numerous flowers and animals, etc.) a symbolic image of thoughtful meanings.

Chinese picture fascinates by its distinct style, differing from the European one in its technique, principles and composition. A peculiarity of European picture is the reality of its representation, its anatomism, perspectivism, and tendency towards a sculptural relief. The Chinese artist wilfully ignores the laws of linear perspective, applying the principle of the *mobile center*, according to which the eye is free to wander about, which intensifies the feeling of unknown vastness, and suggests the immeasurable *dao*.

Specialized criticism established the basic principle of all Oriental artistic exegeses, namely of involving a certain artistic subordination to an active spiritual objective. Oriental cultures require from art, on one side, a thorough knowledge of reality and, on the other, the capacity of transposing the image within a more profound, symbolic thinking level, capable of expressing the axiological perspective inherent to art.

Keywords: *Chines picture, pictorial poetry, picture of ideas, symbolic meaning, poetics.*

The unique creative profile of Chinese civilization is reflected and decanted in the spiritual ethos of its culture. Benefitting from an uninterrupted development along more than two millenia, the Chinese culture and art exercised for centuries a strange fascination upon Europe. In numerous situations, it has been stated that the principles of thought and the classifying categories of the Western culture are innocuous at the level of Chinese culture and art. Starting from the comparison between the Chinese culture and the spirituality of other

cultures, from the angle of three fundamental concepts characteristic for human experience – Nature, Human Creature and Divinity – Georges Rowley states that, in the equation of Chinese spirituality, the last term of the mentioned triad is almost wholly absent. The Chinese people have never contemplated life from a religious, philosophical or scientific perspective, but exclusively by means of art. Apparently, all the other activities of theirs have been marked by their artistic sensitivity.

Together with philosophy, art represents the most relevant expression of Chinese spirituality, its irreducible nucleus. As a thinking and representation system, philosophy facilitates to art – in general – and to painting – especially – the power of translation, based on the formulas of aesthetic sensitivity, *The book of transformations* or other fundamental works. The organic fusion between the artistic and philosophic thinking turns a painter into a philosopher, while the philosopher becomes a commentator of painting. According to Confucius' conceptions, a painter may reach perfection only when/if he has, in his turn, a perfectly moral nature, he loves and obeys nature, illustrating the idea that human nature follows the rhythm of cosmic order¹. However, the Chinese people did not interpret life in terms of religion or of the philosophical concepts put forward by Confucius or Dao as, instead of a rational living system, they "developed a poetic, imaginative type of thinking and, instead of science, they followed the fanciful ideas of astrology, alchemy, prophecies or used to tell fortunes in pieces of earth"².

Out of the five arts – architecture, sculpture, calligraphy, painting and music – improperly defined as "minor", only calligraphy and painting were considered as worthy of being called arts,

once involving ancient traditions characteristic exclusively to the Chinese culture. In the opinion of most of the Chinese art critics, painting and calligraphy have common origins. Also, the two arts used the same materials: brush, bambus plates, ink, japan and silk, replaced, in the IInd century, by paper, also invented by the Chinese genius. Quite frequently, the finished paintings are accompanied by ideogrammes or calligrammes (a sort of pictorial abstractions), the so-called "pre- and postfaces", which complete the work in an organic and harmonious manner, while also having a decorative role, as stylizations of some real images. Chinese painters frequently use the syntagm "writing a picture". In this way, the principle of combing painting, poetry and calligraphy, when "the poem is a picture, while the picture contains poetry" becomes the main peculiarity of Chinese painting. Generally, according to Chinese tradition, a painting is formed of one or several calligraphed poems, a painted image and the seal of its author.

Chinese painting, to a high degree lyrical and suggestive, is a poem "which got form", in the same way in which Chinese poetry may be considered a painting with no form: " 'Poetic sentiments, picturesque language', 'painting in poetry, poetry in painting' - these are some common attributes expressing the affinity between painting and poetry."³ Privileged among the other arts, painting has been even considered "an art of arts", occupying the first position, prior to calligraphy, poetry and music.

The oldest Chinese paintings, dated as early as the IV-IIIth centuries B.C., have been excavated in the year 1949 in some tombs discovered near Ciangşa. Along its evolution, painting was characterized by several distinct periods, each of them bringing its own, noticeable contribution.

One of the most flourishing periods of Chinese art and literature is the Tang period (618-907), marked by the works of Wu Tao-zuo, considered the greatest painter of all times, author of a vast creation with a preponderantly religious character. If Wang Wei is the father of the monochromic landscape in ink and the discoverer of the pictural technique in ink, other paintings of those times represent human figures, horses, images from the imperial courts. To this period, painter Djou Fang, one of the outstanding

representatives of paintings devoted to aspects of court life, and reputed author of portraits of noble ladies, also belongs.

Chinese artists conferred to the brush and Indian ink a connotation superior to their simple functionality as technical means of artistic works: "The brush is the marrow and bone for Indian ink, while ink, in its turn, is for the brush the flower of its spirit" (Sben Hao), "each stroke drawn by the brush is a force propelling energy in various directions, each new touch adding tension up to the moment in which the completed ideogramme is capable of representing an equilibrium of forces with reciprocal influence upon one another."

The Sung epoch (960-1276) is dominated by artists painting flowers, birds, human figures and especially landscapes, by a monochromic technique. Among its main representatives, special mention should be made of Xing Hao, painter of mountains and author of a painting treatise, Li Sheng and Xu-Tao-ning, the best paysagist of that epoch being Guo Xi⁴. Also important is to mention the formation, in this period, of a group of literary men and painters, led by Su Şi, a famous philosopher, poet and painter, author of more than one hundred poems dedicated to the image of bamboo, "orienting art towards conventional aestheticism, devoid of life."

In the Yuoan and, especially, Ming epochs (1368-1644), numerous schools of landscape painting appear. For the artists of those times, the supreme form of painting was the landscape, the word *ideogramme* referring to "mountains and waters", an immobile and calm art rejecting any movement and effort - Yang and Yin - the distinct philosophical doctrine of the IVth century B.C. This moment launches the cult of bamboo, a special genre in Chinese painting⁵.

In the last imperial epoch, Quing (1644-1911), Chinese painting liberates itself from the old dogmas and principles and becomes more individualized; various creative groups are now formed, such as: The Eight Masters of Nan-Jing, The Four Wang, The Group of the Great Hermits, etc.

The manner of its displaying makes use of two bamboo sticks, on which the painting is rolled up. When progressively unrolled off the stick

kept in the left hand unto the one from the right hand, the picture appears in front of the onlooker from the right to the left, which transforms Chinese painting in "an equally time and space art" or favours its "understanding, along the time, as music or as literature".⁶

The conclusion to be drawn is that, in Chinese art, the ancient traditional picture has continuously evolved along its history. "Nevertheless, there also existed epochs in which artists contribution was extremely reduced, almost wholly absent. Painters confined themselves to copying the works of their masters, namely of the school leaders, which, in time, diminished the value of traditional Chinese art."

⁷Unlike Western Europe, the Orient never gave up its roots, the link between the present-day culture and the preceding millenia, "along which the basis of the presence, in the world of spirit, of the Oriental mode of existing in the world - in Heidegger's terms, of being in the world, with the world and for the world - has been settled" ⁸ being much richer and more complex.

Chinese painting may be classified into three categories: landscape picture (mountains and waters), picture of flowers and birds, genre picture. The contemporary Chinese art attempts at revigorating the traditional "painting of mountains and waters", accordingly the works should represent a synthesis between the inherited experience and the contemporary reality, "while the painter should express by means of his art lively, personal impressions. Consequently, he has to know to see, to discover, to observe reality and to consider the landscape as something alive, representing a certain time and space" ⁹.

In Chinese painting, "the first position is occupied by landscape picture, known as "the picture of mountain and water"¹⁰. In Chinese, the notion of landscape means "mountain, water" (*idem* 5), namely combining of light with dark, and of sky with earth. The unparalleled development of this type of art may be explained by the uniquely specific conception of this people on man's integration in nature, painting being probably the most refined modality of knowing and idealizing nature. Chinese people conceive the natural world as a universal system

comparable with the cosmic one, space becoming a means of suggesting infinity. Man's essence is to be found in nature - concomitantly a refuge and a family background - while the unit between the human creature and cosmos substantiates the perpetual dynamism of the universe¹¹. The antithetic dichotomy embraced by the Western world is understood in the Orient as an organic integration (and not as alienation or hostility) of the human being in nature, while taking upon himself all its specific elements: seasons, waters, mountains, plants and animals. The delicate and refined forms of the painted landscapes (trees, branches, paths, springs, clouds with contorted forms - dragonic veins or valleys, stones with splendid dented contours, a possible personification of a painful thought of the artist) bear a special significance, reproducing an ideal state of mind or an infinite dreaming and escape into another universe: "a Chinese landscape is a synthesis among cosmological meditation, art of picture, observation and imagination. It does not reproduce reality yet, on the basis of the existing one, creates another reality, more vigorous and impressive than the concrete world. The genius of the Chinese picture is its suggestion force." (Mariana Senila-Vasiliu) That is why, all Chinese paintings have a legendary core, a fairy-tale germ, harmony and wisdom. The majestic mountain is the symbol of the spiritual vitality of this great people, of its soul, which combines cosmic greatness, permanence, equilibrium - with power. The painter sees the soul of the mountain with whose silhouette he aspires to identify himself: "Such an idea of the spirit contained in the inanimate world is quite difficult to accept by Western thinking. (...) In our minds, the rock is an inert, lifeless object; for the Chinese people, the rock should be alive."¹² The same reasons explain why the still nature type of European painting is absent in the classifications of Chinese painting¹³.

Specialized critics have focused on an important aspect, namely the great ability of Chinese people of understanding nature as it is, as well as the specific rules which govern it. "The essence which reunites everything, according to an inner, invisible rule (pulsation, vital breath, "ci" as in the ancient writings, or "road" - dao, as defined by the wise Lao Tze) (...) is a continuous

movement, flowing, determining the evolution of everything and the relativity of any sensible, concrete appearance"¹⁴, establishing a direct universe-painting-human creature relation. Even if it can be defined, "Dao is void, yet, when acting, it appears as inexhaustible (...) Dao never sleeps. Forms appear and disappear in water, clouds or fog; their rhythms are ceaselessly resumed and twisted in a permanent revolution"¹⁵. The Chinese concept also involves other fundamental notions, such as *Wu* (situated between *yes* and *no*; anything is also something else), the *Yan-Yang* couple, a relation producing tension in the whole universe (coherence of parts through the interdependence of contrasting aspects which complete one another). According to Chinese perception, universe is an immense organism, on which man should not ask himself futile questions related to its origin, form or limitations, which explains the contemplative attitude towards nature, including insignificant forms by themselves, yet coherently linked among them as cycles, alternancies, rhythms and connections. This is the language of the creative metamorphoses of life.

As generally known, the Chinese spirit avoids the extremes, the world is not understood by the matter/spirit, real/ideal, human/divine, classic/romantic, tradition/modernism, etc. antagonistic dualisms, but by the fusion of the contrary. As a result of such complementarity, the Chinese artist is – as stated by G. Rowley – neither traditional, nor original; neither classic, nor romantic, etc., he is both of them¹⁶. Even if accused of relativism and compromise, the specific Chinese perspective favours the contraries as parts which need one another for completing each another.

Chinese painting forms a unitary aesthetic system, the supreme characteristic is this aesthetics being that it generates "painting of ideas". If European paintings start with reproducing nature, aiming at depicting reality, the Chinese one focuses on subjective reproduction, on recreating the image sedimented in the mind of the artist, appearing as simplified reproduction. No Western *mimesis* will characterize Chinese art. An interesting aspect is that the landscapes are not painted *en plein-air*, yet in the studio, after a prolonged concentration

upon the impression left by the external image. Prior to reproducing an image, the artist recomposes it at mental, imaginary and emotional level, without resorting to external inspiration sources. This is an absolutely essential, reliable and simple aspect for one's becoming capable of painting and writing, as the materials employed – ink, paper, silk – permit no possible retouches. The Chinese painter is not expected to reproduce nature as, for him it is not uncommon and strange to paint places which he had never seen, or to represent things "as they have never been up to now". In this way, the artist was himself renewed and capable of announcing "another world". The space of Chinese picture is the boundless universe of dreaming, which encourages extended awareness.

In making so, Chinese picture did not overvalue imitation at the expense of an imaginative recreation of one's experience. Such a painting, called "art of the ideatic image", evolved from complicated to simple, favorising lines to the detriment of colour, which finally came to differentiate it from the chromatic palette of the European artists¹⁷.

Along with the realistic and abstract art, Chinese picture occupies a special place in the art of the world. "The images – the so-called "siang" – are initially conceived as *abstractions*, starting from worldly phenomena and aspects seen around, yet isolated off their context and transformed into concepts, being therefore framed within the "pictogrammes" of pictographic painting, the most ancient representations of Chinese art", as stated by James Cahil, reputed specialist at the Free Gallery of Washington, in his book devoted to Chinese painting, issued in Geneva, at Skira Publishing House. "Analyzing genuine picture, the great poet Su Dongo used to say: "The mountain, the rock, the bamboo, the tree, the waves, the darkness and the clouds, all these things forming nature do not have a fixed form; instead, they have a constant line. It is exactly that line which should inspire the spirit of the painter"¹⁸. In this way, Chinese picture became an abstract structure, with no hint to shadows.

National Chinese painting fascinates with its unique style, being wholly different from the European one both as to its content and technique.

The main characteristic of traditional European picture lies in the reality of its representations, anatomism, perspective, tendency towards sculptural relief. Even if Chinese painting starts from the real landscape, in which it goes deeply, both spiritually and ideatically, it re-establishes the contours of the real world, imparting to some of its most special elements (flower, leaf or stone) a symbolic meaning¹⁹. Chinese vocation towards immanence explains the significance and essence hidden beyond the aspect reproduced in painting: "The manner of thought and the life of Chinese people is guided by a mentality of the concrete and of the symbol, of designation and representation, and not of logical definition (in Aristotelian terms) (Tănase IX). Specialized criticism makes mention of "a basic principle of all artistic Oriental exegeses, namely a certain subordination of any artistic work to an active spiritual objective"²⁰.

An even better explanation would state that Chinese painting is not interested in the real world, nor in its ideal representations, but in a symbolic reality, recognized in time as the nature of creative will and a matrix of existence.

Consequently, Chinese painting does not offer to the onlooker the immediate reality, the real universe, instead, it only suggests, leaving space to boundless imagination. The emotions of the Chinese artist are more controlled, more reserved, comparatively with those of the European artist, no intense or ostentatious chromatic expressions are used, which comes down from a tradition based essentially on a special type of decency, politeness and reserved behaviour. Chinese painters are subtle and delicate colourists, colour is never applied in excess, more than that, in certain historical periods of Chinese picture, colour was even forbidden, as possibly affecting the reputation of artists; in other words, monochromous painting was preferred by far: "Over the centuries, many artists held an active prejudice against the use of any significant degree of color in painting. (...) Color was a superficial, attractive, and base in its appeal."²¹ Monochromous Chinese painting is extremely expressive, using a large spectrum of nuances, which includes up to 50 shades of red or black. The aerial perspective, the impression of depth is achieved by a multitude of colour shades, of nuances in which space is suggested by forms

softening and attenuated colours of distant objects. In this respect, one should remember that one of the Chinese sayings is: "Where the painting is not, it is the painting".

Characteristic to Chinese picture is the specific composition principle (isolation of motifs, spacing as a manner of grouping the constitutive parts, linear rhythms, the relation among surfaces, the amplifying function of the empty spaces, the temporal structure). The main scope is purification of both composition and expression, for attaining intentional simplicity, expressed by poetic means. The composition is similar to the musical one: it has an introduction, development, climax and ending. Equally important is also the principle of structural cohesion, as the recommendation made is to start the work by outlining the integer and not from details (even if the Chinese people are unanimously recognized as matchless masters in rendering the minuteness of details; the excess of naturalism or of other tendencies is considered as dangerous)²². The composition of the classical Chinese landscape reproduces the hieroglyphic signs, following its asymmetrical structure.

As a matter of fact, Chinese painting reunites two representation planes: of details and of spiritual movement. For the Chinese painter, art is the organic prolongation of spiritual life.

In European picture, the frequently used linear perspective restrains the space²³ to a monocular view, to a single observation point while, in Chinese art, space is a mobile one, the impression one gets being that it looks at the picture from bottom to the top. The Chinese artist deliberately disregards the laws of linear perspective, instead he "applies the principle of the *mobile center*, according to which the eye may wander, while the onlooker also travels, in his imagination, all over the landscape"²⁴, whereas the mobility of images is meant at "intensifying the impression of strange immensity, by painting clouds, fog, various atmospheric conditions, thus growing even more blurred the voids among the three profound spaces, for suggesting the vastness of *dao* and the breath of spirit present in each place of the scenery"²⁵. In the vision of the Chinese artist, space is "an alveolar space" as Lucian Blaga put it, "in which the sight progressively passes through various depths and

regions, travelling freely from one level to another – creating, in an infinitely more suggestive manner, the impression of an immeasurable, eternally mysterious space”²⁶. The mobility of the opposite structures of the painting establishes the relations between the dominating (mountains, especially) and the dominated parts (waters, houses, people, trees).

Unlike the Occidental picture, the Chinese one is characterized neither by rich effects, nor by physical attraction, but simply by elegance and eminence. Accordingly, the Chinese portrait is marked by a special spiritual elevation and refinement of detail, so that nothing is too much and nothing is missing. No other nation, with the exception of the Japanese people, gave so much attention to the plumage of birds, to the fur of animals, anatomy of insects, to the rhythm of plants and texture of rocks. Each detail is most exactly transposed, each object has its own perspective. Decoration is the token of the extreme form and concomitantly the symbol of infinite in expression. “The formula of the Chinese art, invested with the prestige of dogma, is: perfection of form rendered by precision of drawing, to which a maximum suggestive form of the theme, equal to that of the Great Painting, should be added”²⁷, “oscillation from graphic to pictural, and sometimes back again to graphic, is also extended to flower, bird and animal picture, as well as to the themes of the human and social life”²⁸.

Contemporary Chinese painting preserves to quite a high extent the laconic style of expression, reduces the content to its essences, concentrates the various significances, and makes use of an impersonal subjective language, representing either simple or complex philosophic concepts, while gradually resorting to a (sometimes compressed) perspective and to modelling of shadows. Its main aim is of attaining the artistic magic and of subtly reconfiguring the infinite mystery of the world.

Endnotes

1. A wise poet of those times gave rhymed advice to a painter:
„Purify your heart and your vulgar torments will vanish;

Read a lot, to grasp the secret of the royal realm of principles;

Give up your former fame and you will feel accomplished,

As your power of understanding is now larger;
Your company be formed of learned people,
Which will refine your manners and style.”

(Shen Tsung-chien, XVIIIth century)

2. Rowley, George. (1982) *Principiile picturii chineze*. București: Meridiane, p. 64.
3. Yangmu, Wu. (1996) *The Techniques of Chinese Painting*. Beijing: Morning Glory, p. 6.
4. „(...) his paintings are dramatic, rich in episodes most rigorously narrated... a solemn exaltation of nature’s sublime forces, mainly of mountains, heroically presented and occupying the stage as huge protagonists. (...) The illusion of the void space, which absorbs the forms, material masses and weight of the objects it integrates, is the main aspiration of the painters of Sung epoch, as they conceive their picture by means of a diagonal line, situating the forefront, known as having the highest material contribution, only in its inferior part.” Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 12.
5. „(...) bamboo has always held a privileged position in Chinese sympathy, as it bends but never breaks, symbolically reuniting the two main qualities of the human creature, according to the doctrine of Confucius: wisdom and probity”. Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 23.
6. Rowley, George. (1982) *Principiile picturii chineze*. București: Meridiane, p. 29.
7. Yu-giu, Li. (1987) *Pictori chinezi contemporani*. București: Meridiane, p. 8.
8. Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 6.
9. Yu-giu, Li. (1987) *Pictori chinezi contemporani*. București: Meridiane, p. 8.
10. Confucius used to say that the man of soul is attracted by the mountain, whereas the man of spirit is enchanted by water.
11. The preference for paintings realized as vertical rolls may be explained by the desire of harmoniously integrating on the canvas the assembly of mountains, earth and people.
12. Rowley, George. (1982) *Principiile picturii chineze*. București: Meridiane, p. 19.
13. „Flowers should grow or develop, fruits and vegetables, in spite of their inertness, should be enlivened by a special inner life (...). How lifeless is now, in our eyes, large part of our still nature; how inanimate are now the numerous bunches of cut flowers, comparatively with the breath of spiritual life suggested by the Chinese fruits and plants.”

- Rowley, George. (1982) *Principiile picturii chineze*. București: Meridiane p. 19-20.
14. Stănculescu-Zamfirescu, Nina. (1973) „Scurtă incursiune istorică” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 17.
 15. Rowley, George. (1982) *Principiile picturii chineze*. București: Meridiane, p. 23.
 16. *Ibidem*, p. 14.
 17. „Like texture strokes, these units are derived from nature and simplified; nature’s essentials were extracted, its details eliminated. Such units of pattern were closely associated with what the Chinese artist sought both in nature and in art, not endless detail but underlying essence. (...) Again and again, Chinese artists wrote of the need to start a painting, especially a complicated one, with a few essential divisions or contours, laid down in pale ink at the outset and establishing a unified design that the lesser motifs later generated must not obscure”. Silbergeld, Jerome. (1982) *Chinese Painting Style. Media, Methods, and Principles of Form*. Seattle and London University of Washington Press p. 46.
 18. *apud* Yu-giu, Li. (1987) *Pictori chinezi contemporani*. București: Meridiane, p. 5.
 19. „With a similar starting point, Oriental cultures expect from art, on one side, a profound knowledge of reality, of nature and of its things and beings, as well as of man; on the other, transposition of image onto a deeper, symbolic plane of thought, reflected in it, assures the perspective of valorization of the observed things, in art as well as in philosophy; namely, the axiological perspective, inherent to art.” Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 8.
 20. Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 7.
 21. Silbergeld, Jerome. (1982) *Chinese Painting Style. Media, Methods, and Principles of Form*. Seattle and London University of Washington Press, p. 25-26.
 22. N. Stănculescu-Zamfirescu analyzes some essential principles: “The significance of any Chinese painting remains always a symbolic, evocative one: the Chinese painter did his best to express as strikingly as possible the unique nature of the world, along its permanent elapsing. This explains the lack of interest for the anatomic study of the human body, for the nude itself, for the laws of linear perspective or for the geometrically-built, centered, static composition.
- On the contrary, special progress was recorded – up to unprecedented subtlety – in the representation of the curved, dancing lines, of evanescent contours, and especially of the large specific white spaces which surround the lines, animated themselves by the same all-embracing life.” Stănculescu-Zamfirescu, Nina. (1973) „Scurtă incursiune istorică” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 17.
23. „Real painting is only “the pictural-type” art, namely the one whose protagonist does not touch our objects and our being in the worldly space, nor even this inevitably restricted space, instead the real protagonist becomes space itself, perceived as an all-inclusive entity of objects, defined by its own materiality and light, by its own qualities, by its density and resistance to the rays of the eclerage filtered by the atmosphere, qualities metamorphosized in the outer cover, through absorption of the objects from the fluid environment through passages of light.” Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 12.
 24. Rowley, George. (1982) *Principiile picturii chineze*. București: Meridiane p. 43.
 25. *Idem*.
 26. „I have come to understand, only after decades of art study, what does it really mean construction of the “emotional topologic space” – a space with no center but with centers, successive nuclei of affectionate interest – and, maybe, my meeting – as early as may adolescence – with the writings of Blaga – who speaks about “the successive alveolar space” of Chinese art, and to realize that it is possible to join – in the absence of any concern for concomitant constructions and for a unifying spacial receptacle – objects, human beings and heterogenous landscape elements, wholly different in both their meaning and their proportions, yet decoratively brought together over the same surface only by virtue of their equal justification to our sentimental interest.” Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 10-11.
 27. Drîmbă, Ovidiu (1985) *Istoria culturii și civilizației* vol. I, București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, p.364.
 28. Frunzetti, Ion. (1973) „Spiritul picturii chineze” in *Pictura chineză clasică*. București: Meridiane, p. 12.