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Artist: Anonymous
Formerly attrib. to: Guo Zhongshu 郭忠恕 (ca. 910–977)
Title: *Bringing a Lute to an Immortal's Pavilion*
《攜琴仙館圖》
Xiqin xianguan tu
Dynasty/Date: Yuan-Ming, 14th century
Format: Hanging scroll
Medium: Ink on silk
Dimensions: 150.0 x 95.7 cm (59-1/16 x 37-11/16 in)
Credit line: Gift of Charles Lang Freer
Accession no.: F1919.128
Provenance: Seaouke Yue (You Xiaoqi 游篠溪), Shanghai

Fitted brocade wrapper: Mounted with 1. inscribed fabric label, and 2. two inscribed end tags.

1. Anonymous

Ink on fabric. Nine characters, x script.

宋郭忠恕《攜琴仙館圖》

Bringing a Lute to an Immortal's Pavilion, by Guo Zhongshu of the Song dynasty

2. Anonymous

Ink on fabric. Two tags; affixed at ends of brocade wrapper.

Five and nine characters respectively.

郭忠恕山水

A landscape by Guo Zhongshu

第壹千九百七十八號

No. 1978

Outside label: Anonymous

Ink on paper.

Nine characters, running script

宋郭忠恕《攜琴仙館圖》

Bringing a Lute to an Immortal's Pavilion, by Guo Zhongshu of the Song dynasty

Inside label: Anonymous

Ink on paper. Affixed on mounting, upper right

Eight characters, standard script

郭忠恕《攜琴仙館圖》

Bringing a Lute to an Immortal's Pavilion, by Guo Zhongshu¹

Artist inscription: none

Other inscriptions: none

Colophons: none

Collector seals: (5)

1. Hongxiao, Prince Yi 怡親王弘曉 (1722–1778) – (3)

Yi qinwang bao 『怡親王寶』 (square relief) – top center

Mingshantang lan shuhua yinji 『明善堂覽書畫印記』 (rectangle intaglio) – lower left

Yiwang lan shuhua yin 『怡王覽書畫印』 (square relief) – lower left

2. Undeciphered half seals – (2)

(intaglio) – painting, lower right

(intaglio) – painting, lower right

Traditional Chinese catalogues: none

Bibliography: none

Notes

¹ (Stephen D. Allee, exhibition label, “Palaces and Pavilions: Grand Architecture in Chinese Painting”, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Gallery 13, 29 September 2002 – 30 March 2003) — adapted by SDA, 28 July 2009.

In the foreground, two men in scholar's robes accompanied by servants—each bearing his master's wrapped *qin* 琴 (zither, or lute)—saunter across a rough wooden bridge. Their destination, apparently, is a pair of elaborate two-storyed pavilions built on the nearby lakeshore. Other scholars and servants can be glimpsed through the open windows of the main pavilion, which stands on a stone foundation that extends into the water. Front and back sections of the pavilion are supported by ranks of sturdy pilings that rest on this foundation, while an intricate bracketing system carries the exquisitely decorated tile roofs of each storey. Across the lake, a man turns away from a fishing rig with its net lowered into the water. Two other small figures can be made out walking toward a low rustic bridge.

While the label attached at upper right identifies the two buildings as an immortal's lodge, this association with the divine should be taken as a mere figure of speech. The elaborate buildings are idealized structures belonging to the mundane world, but are essentially generic constructions, rather than depictions of an actual place. The buildings are drawn in the precise *jiehua* 界畫 (ruled line, or boundary drawing) method, a term that originated in the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). Deriving from a long tradition of architectural drawing, *jiehua* is the only non-freehand style of Chinese painting. The brush was attached to a stick that could move smoothly along a groove in an ungraduated ruler, thus allowing the artist to draw regularly spaced and consistently even straight lines, as in the buildings seen here. The label also attributes this painting to the tenth-century master of *jiehua*, Guo Zhongshu 郭忠恕 (ca. 910–977); however, the execution is technically more consistent with the fourteenth-century continuation of his style, and is probably the work of an unidentified *jiehua* master from the late Yuan dynasty (1260–1368). For two other examples of *jiehua* painting from roughly the same time period, see F1915.36h and F1915.36i, elsewhere in this website.