

## The Influence of the Use of Silk and Xuan Paper in the Song and Yuan Dynasties on Painting Styles

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### Abstract

The Song and Yuan dynasties witnessed the coexistence and transformation of the two kinds of painting base materials. As for the court painting in the Song Dynasty, plain silk is the main base material, and the aesthetics of the painting most reflected the ruler's preferences. Therefore, it was mostly presented in a panoramic realistic style that represented the great rivers and mountains, and the style was neat and gorgeous. Meanwhile, the artistic paintings advocated by Wang Wei used Xuan paper as the base materials to express their ideals, and thus made it popular for a while. In the Yuan Dynasty, amateur painters were more accustomed to painting on Xuan paper, which was more affordable and accessible than silk. The style was lyrical and unsophisticated, emphasizing the improvisations of “incorporating calligraphy into painting”. Thus, the number of artists who painted on silk became small. Since the artistic effects shown by paintings on these two kinds of base materials were totally different, the style changed accordingly.

**Keywords:** Chinese paintings, the silk, Xuan paper, the painting style

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## Introduction

In the Song and Yuan dynasties, the Chinese landscape painting came to two peaks, and achieved remarkable achievements. At this time, the base materials for painting were relatively abundant, and it was a period of transition in the popularity of paper and silk materials. Different painting materials will have an impact on the style.

### Historical Development of Xuan-paper and silk

#### The invention and use of silk

Silk was derived from the woven products in early days of human history. Due to the shortage of materials, turf was used to weave clothing. Through years of improvement, fine silk was woven for painting. Ye, Y. (2011)

The earliest surviving painting works using silk should be “Picture of Lady Officials” in the Jin Dynasty, which is a copy of that in the Tang Dynasty. Since then, most of the early paintings were drawn on silk.

In the Han Dynasty, the technique used to weave the silk was very mature, which was often exported.

Silk, as the main base of paintings in the Sui and Tang dynasties, was much better than that in the Han Dynasty, which can be seen from Mi Fu's “History of Painting”: In ancient paintings, silk was born in the early Tang Dynasty. Zhao, Q. L (2006).

In the Song Dynasty, silk-making technology had undergone a progress again. According to Wang Anjie:

In the Song Dynasty, the silk was evenly thick and dense, and the single-spindle silk



was as fine as paper.

In the Song Dynasty, In the court painting academies, silk was the mainstream base material of painting.

After the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty, there was no painting academy, and the painters who lost royal patronage did not have more money to use expensive silk to paint. The painting style has also changed.

### **The invention and use of Xuan paper**

Paper, as one of the materials of Chinese painting, has promoted the development and innovation of Chinese painting.

Xuan paper, as a unique painting material for Chinese painting, was first created in the Western Han Dynasty by working people through their life and practice. It was summarized and promoted by Cai Lun in the Eastern Han Dynasty for writing and painting. Huang, F.S & Wang, X. (2014).

Paper, also called Xuan paper, was produced in ancient Xuanzhou. The paper used in ancient paintings was called Xuan paper. Xuan paper, the cornerstone of culture and art, is one of the carriers of civilization and tradition. Therefore, to some extent, paper itself is also the history of cultural civilization. The term “Xuan paper” first appeared in the book “Famous Paintings in Past Dynasties” by Zhang Yanyuan in the Tang Dynasty. Ni, Z. (2006).

In the Western Han Dynasty, due to the invention of paper, the paper began to be used in writing. It was in this period that the base of painting was renewed, opening a new chapter in writing and painting materials with paper.



In the Tang Dynasty, Xuan paper was further developed, and the production place of Xuan paper was Xuanzhou, which was also used to name Xuan paper. At this time, it was more common to use Xuan paper as the base material for painting, and ink painting gradually became popular. Liu, R.Q. (1989)

During the Southern Song Dynasty and the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the manufacture of silk and Xuan paper progressed and developed, but the development and use of Xuan paper became more common, thus promoting the development of ink painting. Jiang, X. Z. (1986).

During the Yuan Dynasty, although the development of paper industry slowed down, more materials of making paper appeared. It is more economical to use Xuan paper for painting. Influenced by the literati painters of the Northern Song Dynasty, most of the literati in the Yuan Dynasty used Xuan paper for painting, which made Xuan paper as a base material for painting widely and popular.

### Research Objectives

The Summary and Analysis of the Changes in the Styles of Using Silk and Xuan Paper in the Song and Yuan Dynasties

### Question hypothesis

1. Advantages and Limitations of Painting on the Silk
2. Advantages and limitations of Painting on the Paper



### Definition of terms

**Xuan paper:** Paper, also called Xuan paper, was produced in ancient Xuanzhou. The paper used in ancient paintings was called Xuan paper. Xuan paper, the cornerstone of culture and art, is one of the carriers of civilization and tradition. Therefore, to some extent, paper itself is also the history of cultural civilization.

**Silk:** Silk is also called plain silk (jin bo), and bo is the general term for silk fabrics.

### Literature Review

#### Literature of Chinese painting materials

In his book *“The History of Chinese Painting Materials”*, the late professor Jiang Xuanyi from Tongji University in Shanghai detailed the silk and Xuan Paper from varieties, raw materials, origins, usages, and development history. The book is very valuable as a reference.

Zhao Quanli, of the Chinese Academy of Arts, discussed the interaction of artistic styles from the use and development of writing brushes, ink sticks, paper and inkstones in his doctoral thesis *Outline of Ancient Chinese Painting Techniques, Materials and Tools*. He thought that the painting of the Yuan Dynasty was based on paper, which had an absolute advantage over silk. This is the result of the improvement of paper quality and painting output after the Song Dynasty, and it is closely connected with the technical changes brought about by the prosperity of literati painting in the Yuan Dynasty. Ni, J. (2004).

In his master's thesis *On the Relationship between the Style Evolution of*



*Landscape Painting and Paper or Silk in the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, Qi Shaozan from Yangzhou University believes that the characteristics of paper and silk in the Song and Yuan Dynasties directly or indirectly influenced the style evolution of painting, and the style of literati paintings promoted the development of painting materials. If the painting material is always silk, and the painting system is always the imperial-court decorative system, it is likely to pursue imitation and the blue-and-green landscape style in painting. Qi, S. Z. (2016)

## Research Methodology

### Research design

The paper analyzes and discusses the history and development of the silk and Xuan paper in the Song and Yuan dynasties, and their influence on painting styles in the Song and Yuan dynasties. In the end, it compares the painting styles caused by different base materials, and the styles of blue-green landscape paintings on silk in the Song Dynasty and the ones on paper in the Yuan Dynasty. It also counted the number of landscape painting materials in the Song and Yuan dynasties, the proportion of silk and Xuan paper used, and then drew the conclusion. The discipline this paper studies is the discipline of humanities. It mainly uses the qualitative research and image analysis methods, and supplements the use of quantitative analysis methods. The main research methods used in the paper include literature review, literature comparative analysis, image analysis, the quantitative analysis, etc.

### Qualitative research methods

The subject of the paper is that the styles of landscape paintings shown on different



painting materials in the Song and Yuan dynasties vary. By studying the use of painting materials in the Song and Yuan dynasties, the paper aims to find out the reasons for the change of styles.

### **Image style analysis methods**

The presented painting styles is closely associated with base materials of the painting, which is what this paper studies and compares. This author will use the silk-based painting of the Song Dynasty and the paper-based painting of the Yuan Dynasty to make image comparisons and analysis, and draw a conclusion.

### **Quantitative analysis**

Since the existing number of paintings in the Song and Yuan dynasties is limited, the number of paintings on silk and paper, and the proportion of silk and paper used in the two dynasties can be counted. By so doing, we can get the conclusion that materials have played a certain role in the change of painting styles.

### **Results**

The works created by different painting materials will be different, even if the painting content of the same theme is created. The Song and Yuan dynasties were a period when silk and rice paper coexisted as painting materials. That is to say, the green and green landscape paintings of the Song Dynasty were mainly made of silk, while the paintings of the Yuan Dynasty were mainly made of paper. Their styles were different. Below we analyze



their style differences with the green and green landscape paintings of the Song and Yuan Dynasties.

### Characteristics and style of silk painting

The earliest and best surviving silk paintings in Warring States Period of China are “Painting of a Lady, a Phoenix and a Dragon on Silk” and “The Silk Painting of Riding the Dragon” unearthed in Mawangdui, Changsha. Zhan Ziqian's “Spring Outing” in the Sui Dynasty is the earliest surviving blue-green landscape painting, which marks the separation of landscape painting from portrait painting and became an independent painting genre.

Silk has the characteristic of silk woven fabrics. The plane formed through weaving vertically and horizontally is delicate, soft, breathable, and highly transparent. It contains rich color pigments and can be painted on both sides. The early silk was quite thick and was not the ideal material for painting. After a long period of improvement, it became much thinner and delicated. After smashing and processing, the refined silk was delicate and smooth, making it suitable for fine brushwork and blue-green landscape painting. In particular, the Yuan silk of the Song Dynasty was evenly thick and dense, which was as dense as paper. In the Song Dynasty, all people, from the emperor and the officials to common people, strongly commended those who were able to paint. Under the influence of good painting atmosphere, Bai, J. (2012). many exquisite paintings, such as Wang Ximeng's “The Vast Land”, Zhao Boju's “Autumn Scenery of Rivers and Mountains”, “Spring Morning in the Han Palace”, Zhao Bosu's “Immortal Palace in Pines”, as well as “Qu Yuan Lian Xiang Tu” and “Xian Shan Ge Lou Tu” by an unknown artist and so on.





The landscape paintings of the Northern Song Dynasty mostly feature the magnificent panoramic composition. The schools and styles varied. The heavy blue-green landscape paintings were more delicate and neater along with strong colors, which were more suitable for painting on silk as a base.

The silk of the Song Dynasty was mostly the refined one. The brush on the refined silk was not so ink-absorbable, which was the same as the ink on the Xuan paper. Since the ink would not penetrate on the silk, it was especially suitable for fine brushwork. Painters would draw lines, mountains, trees, rocks, pavilions and water with a thin brush, and then slowly highlight the image of the object with thread. Then painters would dye it with ink, and finally color it. The colors were painted layer by layer, and water-color pigments came first, and then the stone-colored pigments, and finally it was brightened with finer pigments. The whole painting was gorgeous, and the colors were dazzling. In view of its complex painting processes, the large blue-green landscape painting could only be completed on silk. In the fine brushwork, the “three times of application of alum and nine times of dyeing” are greatly stressed, which means that the painting has to be rendered and dyed many times from different levels so as to achieve the desired effect. The heavy blue-green landscape painters of the Song Dynasty used stone-colored pigments, which needed the help of vitriol to be fixed on the painting. For this reason, a solid base of the painting was a must, for it would be dyed far less frequently than silk, which made it easy to pilling and thin, and even break when wetted. Sometimes, to meet the requirements of the painting, it was necessary to paint from the back, and also to wash it. After these procedures, only the silk can remain



intact.

The “The Vast Land” by Wang Ximeng of the Northern Song Dynasty is preserved at the Palace Museum in Beijing. Outlining with thin and a long thread, it was dyed with the ink color to distinguish the shade from light and shade. On the slope of the water bank nearby, the painter outlined the shape and green grass with lines. Mi ,F. (1985) After dyeing with ink, the painter used ochre as the base, then added juice green, and then colored with stone green. The water surface was drawn with a thread that resembles a fish-scale pattern, and then dyed with juice green several times. The water pattern on the water surface in the distance became smaller and lighter, and looked like water and sky. The waterfalls were also drawn with thin lines. The sides of the waterfall were dyed black with ink to squeeze out the white ones. Some were also dyed with juice green and brightened with white powder. The stone next to it was colored black to make a comparison. Houses, bridges and boats, as adorned scenes reflecting traces of human life, were portrayed realistically with rigorous proportions and structures. In particular, houses, as the darkest elements in the picture, highlighted the harmony between human and nature, and also played a role of balanced distinction in the picture. The hillside and the mountain body took a larger area in the picture. After the line was drawn, the structure of the mountain could be separated by a long line. The texture of the mountain could be distinguished from the light and shade. Dyed with ochre and ink, the concave and convex of the front and the back as well as the light and shade could be distinguished clearly, and then the painter added the color of stone and stone green. As to the painting method of the tree, the trunk was a thin line with



double outlines, the middle was filled with color, while the leaves were the mixture of leaves and outlined ones. The dotted leaves were darker, which were dotted with juice green and ink, and colored with stone green after the outlined leaves were dyed with juice green. As the single most vivid element in the painting, the men were also wonderful. Various laboring postures were vivid and painted with white powder. Although men were pretty small, they were prominent but not obtrusive. Most of the techniques are filled with lines and colors, which are particularly delicate and neat. The style is quite realistic.



Fig. 1 Wang Ximeng. The Vast Land (partial) 55.5\*1191.5

Collection of the Palace Museum in Beijing Zhang, Y. Y. (2016).

The silk-based work “Xian Shan Ge Lou Tu” by an unknown painter is not large in size. In the painting, we can see the immortal mountains, pavilions, clouds and fog around it. Also, the moon was high in the sky, and the fairy came from a distance on a crane, which was somewhat like a dream and an illusion. As to painting method, the painter used outlines to express the shape and characteristics of the object, which was slightly rough, and then dyed with green colors, and outlined the painting with decorative gold color, and thus made it full of richness.





Fig.2 Song Dynasty. Unknown. Xian Shan Ge Lou Tu. Silk-based. 26\*27. Liaoning Provincial Museum

### Characteristics and styles of painting on paper

The thicknesses and color as well as ink absorbing and moisturizing properties of paper varied, which exerted an impact on the presented feeling of painting, and thus are closely related to the style of Chinese paintings. Li, L.C. (2014)

Xuan paper is made of plant fibers and then processed to form a film. It is characterized with meticulousness and smoothness as well as strong water absorption and good ink retention. Compared with silk, it is more brittle when dry, softer when exposed to water, and fragile. However, because of its strong water absorption capability, it has the effect of moisturizing the ink and retaining the ink color. It also provides paint retention for literati painters who emphasize “the five shades of ink”, namely, the coke, thick, heavy, light, and clear. Yu, F.A. (2015).

Silk was regarded as a precious painting material by the court of the Song Dynasty, and the showcased painting style was considered to be noble by people in the Yuan Dynasty. Nevertheless, they liked the wild leisureliness of paper painting more.

The earliest painter who painted on Xuan paper was Han Huang who painted the “Five Oxen” in the Tang Dynasty. The work was painted on jute paper and is preserved at Palace



Museum in Beijing. Dong Yuan, a famous painter from the Southern Tang Dynasty in Five Dynasties, created many paper paintings, such as “Ping Lin Ji Se Tu Juan”. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, there were many well-known ink painters, whose ink-wash paper painting represented the highest level of painting techniques at that time. In the Song Dynasty, Li Gonglin, Wang Shen, Mi Fu, etc. were the big names, while Zhao Mengfu, Qian Xuan, Huang Gongwang, Wang Meng, Wu Zhen, and Ni Zan were the representatives of the Yuan Dynasty.

Let’s look at the surviving paper work “Song Lin Xie Zuo Tu” by Wang Meng preserved at the Cleveland Museum of Art in the United States. The ink color displayed in this work is imposing. The shapes of mountains and trees and other objects were drawn with dry ink, and the lines were not like the stable thin ones in the blue-green landscape paintings of the Tang and Song dynasties. The curved and twisted lines of this work are fully dynamic, and the hills intersected with each other. The lines seemed to be extremely dry, and the hollow strokes together with a faint dyeing of cyan in the distance endowed the images of painting with a sense of sanding and gravitas. The way of drawing the trees was the combination of point and outline, which was incorporated into the mountain. The figure in the thatch and the water were detailed with fine lines. The whole painting was rendered with cyan and stone green, displaying a faint sense of cyan color, which is an ink-wash blue-green landscape painting, namely, and also called the light blue-green landscape painting. This work represents the painting style of the light blue-green landscape painting presented on paper as a painting material.





Fig.3 Wang Meng. Song Lin Xie Zuo Tu. Paper-based.

Collection of Cleveland Museum of Art

### **The style difference between silk-based painting and paper-based painting**

The paper mainly makes comparisons between the heavy blue-green landscape paintings of the Song Dynasty and the light blue-green landscape paintings of the Yuan Dynasty from the perspective of brushes, coloring, inking, and the formation of styles.

Silk was the main media of paintings in the Song Dynasty. Since the court painting academies was well funded, they could afford the delicate silk. Since the rulers of the Yuan Dynasty were Mongolians who shared different aesthetic systems, they grew up on the nomadic grasslands. Rough and unrestrained by nature, they valued force and entered the Central Plains with force. They were more confident that they were strong defenders of force and paid less attention to humanities and arts. Therefore, it was difficult for them to appreciate and understand the aesthetics of painting, let alone spending money on it. The court did not establish painting academies in the early stage, so painters did not get enough financial support. Along with the development and widespread use of papermaking, Xuan paper, Pan, J. X. (2009). a more economical choice, was produced, which naturally



became the main base painting materials of the Yuan Dynasty. In addition, influenced by the theory of literati paintings in the Song Dynasty, plus financial difficulty caused by job shortage, the painters were quite disappointed with the country. In order to express their inner feelings, they turned to cheap Xuan paper available.

Paintings in the Yuan Dynasty discarded the reappearance of paintings that presented real natural landscapes since the Tang and Song dynasties, and developed the wrinkle brushstroke, combining literary with calligraphic brushes. It put more emphasis on lines, brush and ink, stressing that lines in painting should display the inner world of painters emotionally. Painting spontaneously express the painters' feelings. According to Ni Yuanlin:

*"I draw bamboo to express my inner world instead of describing its sparse leaves and the oblique and straight branches..."*

And again:

*"The so-called painters focus more on the expression of the inner world, so the painting was hastily brushed without any similarities."*

Even so, such paintings were considered to have developed from the traditions and cultural trends of the Wei, Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties. During this process, Qian Xuan and Zhao Mengfu in the early Yuan Dynasty were representatives of such painting practice. Full of ancient artistic concepts and tranquil, Qian Xuan's works were typical light blue-green landscape paintings. He used paper as the base for painting, which is different from the thick, imposing, and gaudy feeling expressed by silk.

From Qian Xuan's "Mountain Landscape", we can see that he learnt techniques of



landscape painting from the Tang and Song dynasties, using thin lines like spring silkworms spinning silk to sketch the shape. Part of the mountain slopes was drawn with long lines to form the mountain-shaped structure, and then lightly dyed with cyan that was not as strong as the ones in Tang and Song dynasty. The effect is loose and elegant, quiet and distant, which is a totally different feeling.



Fig.4 Qian Xuan, Yuan Dynasty, Mountain Landscape. Paper-based. 31.1\*411.5

Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA

In addition, the paper painting “Fuyu Mountain” currently preserved at Shanghai Museum shows a calm, deep yearning style. In terms of color, it was lighter than “Mountain Landscape”, which was only dyed with a faint cyan and light color, and thus can be called a light blue-green landscape painting. The mountains and rocks were dotted with faint fine brush and ink, layered on top of each other, but not so thick. The leaves of the trees were dotted with a small amount of ink, and the color was dotted with cyan. The picture has a faint hazy feeling, as if shrouded in a white mist, like a dream or a fantasy. Although it was not as glorious as the silk, the faint green can be expressed on paper. Smooth as it was, it gave people a sandy, hazy feeling. This kind of texture and painting method seemed more



suitable to express his sadness of losing the Song Dynasty at that time.



Fig.5 Qian Xuan, Yuan Dynasty. Fuyu Mountain. Paper -based. 29.6\*98.7.

Collection of Shanghai Museum collection

Zhao Mengfu's three works provide a glimpse of the different styles displayed on silk paper as a painting material. The earliest one should be “Mountain Gully by Xie Youyu”, his early representative work, which followed the fine brush and line filling of the Tang Dynasty. Like the other works on the silk, it was classical and delicate. The color was strong, and the atmosphere was quiet.



Fig.6 Zhao Mengfu, Yuan Dynasty. Mountain Gully by Xie Youyu. Silk-based. 20\*116.8.

Collection of Princeton University Art Museum, USA

Another representative work, “The Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountain”, is a



depiction of realistic landscapes, using textured sand brush lines, plus long lotus leaf and hemp wrinkles. With these methods, the painter used dry brushes, or brush with less ink, and rubbed on the paper, so the lines changed between reality and fiction, between lightness and heaviness. It felt like a style of cursive calligraphy, which is full of movement, so we can imagine that he was attentive and calm when painting. However, he used internal force in order to penetrate to the back of the paper and produce many changes as well as the “ancient style”. The ancient style can be interpreted from Zhao Mengfu’s far-reaching comments on painting: Li, Z.J. (2008).

*Painting with an ancient style is of great importance, without which the work is useless. Nowadays, people think they are skilled because they know how to use the brush and how to color the painting gloriously. Indeed, they lack feelings and have so many shortcomings. Their paintings are not worth mentioning. My paintings seem to be simple, but those who know them in modern times are pleased with them, for my works were only painted for those who understand its meanings not for those who don’t understand it. Zhao Mengfu, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the third month of the third year of Dade (1301) during the reign of Emperor Chengzong.*



Fig.7 Zhao Mengfu, Yuan Dynasty. The Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountain.

Paper-based. 28.4\*98.2. Collection of National Palace Museum in Taipei

Expressed by the same meaning of “learning from the ancient”, the style is totally different. Of course, learning the ancients here does not mean blindly copying the ancients and restoring ancient ways. It inherited the artistic conceptions and some techniques, and at the same time, created new ideas in painting. In terms of color, it is obvious that the “Mountain Gully by Xie Youyu” was much gaudy, and neat. Many of its painting techniques originated from the painting method of Tang Dynasty, and the line has not changed much. On the contrary, in term of the lines, the “The Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountain” was obviously much thicker. With a change in strength, some lines were drier on the paper. When the brush was quickly drawn, it created hollow strokes, forming a bifurcated state and leaving paralleled space on the painting. We can tell that the ink of the brush was not sufficient, which was the brushwork in calligraphy and the ideal expression of “putting calligraphy into painting” in his mind. This is more clearly reflected in his ink-wash painting on paper “Xiu Shi Shu Lin Tu”. In the painting, he wrote a poem:

*The brushwork of painting stones is like the hollow strokes style of calligraphy, and the brushwork of painting trees is like that of calligraphy. To draw freehand bamboo, especially bamboo leaves, you need to be familiar with the “eight methods”. If someone wants to understand and comprehend this, he must know that calligraphy and painting are originally the same in ancient times, and the brushwork used today is basically the same. Bian, Y.Y. (2020)*



From this poem, we can see that while inheriting the “ancient style”, the painters then also have a new concept of calligraphy brush and a new look of painting, namely literati painting. Judging from the characteristics of these brushwork and materials, the more varied brushwork is more suitable for expression on paper, and rice paper is more expressive and more suitable for the literati painting style of literati painters.



Fig. 8 Zhao Mengfu, Xiu Shi Shu Lin Tu. Paper-based. 27.5\*62.8. The Palace Museum in Beijing

### Conclusion Discussions and Suggestions

From the above analysis of the blue-green landscape paintings in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, we can clearly see that the painting styles of the Song and Yuan Dynasties were different. The paintings in the Song and Yuan Dynasties were created with silk, and the colors of the works were brighter and brighter, and the brushwork was delicate, is more realistic, while the blue-green landscape paintings of the Yuan Dynasty were mainly created on paper, with lighter colors, more changes in the use of brushes, and thicker, and more white space in the composition. Secondly, different painting materials, especially the base materials, also have an influence on the painting style.

Research Question 1. Are there more possibilities for the relationship between painting



styles and painting materials?

During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the landscape painting came to its peak. The two dynasties made their own achievements and developed different styles. There are many reasons for many scholars to study the transformation of the two styles of the two contiguous dynasties. From this paper, we can see that the relationship between painting styles and materials, and the formation and development of painting styles can be attributed to the influence of painting materials, as well as the development and innovation of painting materials. Cui, W. X. (2007). It is the development and innovation of painting materials that lead to changes and innovations in painting forms and techniques, and thus different presentation styles. Bai, J. (2012).

2. What Were the Influences Exerted by Different Painting Materials, Especially by Different Base Painting Materials?

The prosperity of literati paintings in the Yuan Dynasty turned the style of large blue-green landscape paintings to light blue-green landscape paintings. Of course, there are many factors that contributed to the formation of the style of painting. This is just one of them. The painting materials have exerted a great influence on the painting style. Also, it is the emergence of new materials that stimulates new forms of expression and painting techniques. Meanwhile, the new painting styles have also been developed. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the proportion of silk painting materials used for paintings changed dramatically. The following table shows the proportion of silk painting materials in the Song and Yuan dynasties. In the Song Dynasty, silk paintings accounted for more than 80%, while



in the Yuan Dynasty, silk painting materials only accounted for 37%. The proportion of using paper as the base for painting has exceeded half. In the Yuan Dynasty, the technique of silk may not have improved, and was stagnated. It can also be seen that the conversion of painting materials not only affects the technological progress of materials but also affects the formation of painting styles.

Table 1 Base Material Statistics of Song and Yuan Paintings

	Paper -based (Piece)	Silk-based (Piece)	Unconfirmed (Piece)	Total (Piece)
Paintings of the Song Dynasty	28	210	15	253
Proportion	7.11%	83%	5.92%	100%

Table 2 Data as per Paintings of Song Dynasty. There are still some works with incomplete information that have not been recorded.

	Paper -based (Piece)	Silk-based (Piece)	Unconfirmed (Piece)	Total (Piece)
Paintings of the Yuan Dynasty	86	59	13	158
Proportion	54.43%	37.34%	8.22%	100%

Data as per the Contents of “High-definition Gallery of Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy of Various Dynasties”. There are still some works that have not been recorded with



complete information.

### New Knowledge from research

From the above analysis of the blue-green landscape paintings in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, we can clearly see that the painting styles of the Song and Yuan Dynasties were different. The paintings in the Song and Yuan Dynasties were created with silk, and the colors of the works were brighter and brighter, and the brushwork was delicate, is more realistic, while the blue-green landscape paintings of the Yuan Dynasty were mainly created on paper, with lighter colors, more changes in the use of brushes, and thicker, and more white space in the composition. Secondly, different painting materials, especially the base materials, also have an influence on the painting style.

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