

Dong Qichang's Texts on Painting and their Relationship to Mi Fu's *History of Painting*

Michaela PEJČOCHOVÁ

Doctoral dissertation summary

The study entitled Dong Qichang's Texts on Painting and their Relationship to Mi Fu's *History of Painting* presents an analysis of the critical texts on painting by two important figures of the old Chinese art world, Dong Qichang (1555–1636) and Mi Fu (1051–1107). It is based on the conviction that old historical and critical treatises on painting record information important for our understanding of the actual painting practice in ancient periods, which is difficult or even impossible to document by the surviving pictorial evidence. Both authors of the texts discussed here were scholars, artists, critics and collectors and counted among the foremost literati of their day – Mi Fu was one of the initiators of the “literati culture” during the Northern Song period (960–1127), while Dong Qichang with his theories was highly influential during its late phase. Their texts thus document literati opinions on the aesthetics and history of painting in their respective periods.

The focus of the study is the corpus of Dong Qichang's texts on painting that includes treatises like *The Significance of Painting (Huazhi)*, *Notes from the Studio for Meditation over Painting (Huachanshi suibi)*, *The Eye of Painting (Huayan)* and *Discussions over Painting (Huashuo)*, formerly attributed to Dong's teacher and patron Mo Shilong, 1537–1587). The main objective lies in identifying the key concepts and problems articulated here, above all in the reconstruction of Dong's concept of the history of painting as documented by the evidence of his theoretical treatises. The analysis of Dong's theory is further contextualized and confronted with Mi Fu's painting theory presented in his *History of Painting (Huashi)*, which represents its predecessor in many respects and Dong himself claims it to be one of the sources of his inspiration. The comparison of the treatises of both authors brings forward new information on the nature of Dong Qichang's famous Theory of Northern and Southern Schools of Painting. It also offers a reconsideration of our notion of the actual painting style of some masters of the past, particularly Mi Fu himself and other famous painters active under the Northern Song dynasty.