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## TOWARD A SEMANTIC TAXONOMY OF AUTHENTIC CHINESE ART TERMINOLOGY AS A BASIS FOR A CHINESE-UKRAINIAN ART THESAURUS

**Background.** Ukrainian society has shown a sustained and multifaceted interest in classical and contemporary Chinese art. However, the democratization of discourse around Chinese art has led to inconsistencies in terminology.

**Objective.** This paper aims to develop a semantic taxonomy for the authentic Chinese art terminology and use the same structure for compiling a Chinese-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Chinese thesaurus of classical Chinese art that would resolve existing inconsistencies in Ukrainian discourse on Chinese art and may be useful for various target groups.

**Methods.** A cognitive terminology approach is used to define the conceptual taxonomy of the authentic Chinese art terminology. Within this structure, onomasiological and semasiological approaches are used. A study of phonological, morphological and semantic adaptation is used to define the status of authentic Chinese art terms in contemporary Western discourse on Chinese art. Historiographic descriptions, notes on sociolinguistics and observations of extralinguistic factors influencing the field are provided throughout this practice-led research.

**Results.** The paper proposes a conceptual taxonomy for the classical Chinese art terminology that will inform the macrostructure of the future bilingual thesaurus. Its core and secondary authentic terminology categories are to be supplemented with two vocabularies of Western origin: borrowed Western terminology and a list of obsolete Western terms. A standard entry pattern for the future thesaurus is introduced. Ultimately, a number of secondary findings may guide linguists willing to contribute to preservation and research of Asian cultures and educational efforts on this subject in Ukraine.

**Conclusions.** The study highlights the need for a standardized approach to Chinese art terminology in Ukraine. By aligning terminographic practices with findings in onomasiology and semasiology of Chinese art terminology and by recognizing that many terms have become internationalisms, the research lays the groundwork for a comprehensive thesaurus. This will support clearer communication, academic rigor, and cultural awareness in the Ukrainian discourse on classical Chinese art.

**Keywords:** Chinese language, Ukrainian language, Chinese art, terminography, onomastics, idioms, semantics, linguistic borrowings.

### Background

Ukrainian society demonstrates a consistent interest in Chinese art, viewing it as a source of aesthetic inspiration, an object of scholarly analysis, and a medium for cultural dialogue. The proof of this interest is a variety of museums' and collectors' activities, a number of scientific papers and academic conferences, publications in media, and the books on the subject by Ukrainian authors and translated from other languages. Ukrainian universities include topics on the history of Chinese art in their curricula and encourage students to write qualification papers on Chinese art. Private initiatives to popularize Chinese art are also worth mentioning, such as videos on user-generated content platforms and postings on personal social media pages.

A generally positive phenomenon of democratizing the discourse on Chinese art results in a less favourable one. It is the unregulated use of its terminology, often accompanied by semantic shifts (Logvyn, 2023). Subsequent use of unregulated terminology perpetuates the chaos.

Paradoxically, not all practitioners in the field perceive the current situation as chaotic. Similarly, the recent in-depth (that could be otherwise called comprehensive) studies of the Ukrainian terminology (Kazymyrova, Turovska, & Yatsenko, 2023) have missed the subject of Asian arts and cultures terminology. There are no publicly available concise guides or thesauri on Asian art in Ukraine. The few high-quality terminographic works related to visual art (Sivers et al, 2011) and museum practice (Minenko, & Karpov, 2013) ignore the subject of Asian art.

World-wide, history and historiography of Chinese art constitute a thriving field of study. Every fundamental paper systematically addresses the evolution of art terminology on a bigger or smaller scale. A fine example of the latter is a new book by Zhang and De Laurentis, focusing on "only" 35 terms due to the complex nature of

the subject (Zhang, & De Laurentis, 2023). A comprehensive Chinese-English project of Chinese Iconography Thesaurus has been launched by Victoria and Albert Museum, UK (<https://chineseiconography.org>). As of June, 2025, it features almost 11000 illustrations. Yet, the same field is not as much popular with linguists.

This study evaluates abilities of terminographers to meet the needs of target groups in Ukraine to harmonize the Ukrainian-language terminology of Chinese art. It is one of several problem-oriented studies aimed at pinpointing the core vocabulary of classical Chinese art with a further goal of creating its thesaurus for the Ukrainian users.

The article will focus on unique features of the Chinese art terminology to propose a classification for its core and secondary categories. To provide a comprehensive overview of the topic, the article will highlight Western scholars' approaches to borrowing authentic terminology of classical Chinese art into European and Uralic languages and a brief historiographic overview of the use of such terminology in Ukraine over the past 75 years. Eventually, it will introduce a preliminary macrostructure for a future thesaurus, a pattern for its standard entry and suggest possible methods to provide translations and definitions for various categories of terms.

### Methods

Within the framework of the study, the method of participant observation was employed to identify key challenges, difficulties, and issues associated with the use of terminology related to classical Chinese art among art historians and museum professionals. Based on a qualitative analysis of the nature of the identified complexities, an inductive approach was adopted to formulate a generalized characterization of terminological usage within the aforementioned professional groups.

To gain a deeper understanding of the current state of the terminology usage and to uncover patterns in its functioning, a historiographical review was conducted, examining the usage of terms across various social contexts and countries. This review enabled the tracing of how, in different historical periods, certain social groups developed terms to denote specific artistic concepts, while others engaged in efforts to interpret them. In turn, this made it possible to identify the interrelations between linguistic means and extralinguistic factors influencing the development of terminology of classical Chinese art both in the country of its origin and in the Western countries.

The subsequent stage of the research was dedicated to constructing a semantic taxonomy of the original terminology of traditional Chinese art, which served as the foundation for structuring a future thesaurus. During the development of the dictionary entry template, both onomasiological and semasiological approaches were integrated. This allowed for the consideration of principles guiding the selection of terms for conceptual designation, as well as the potential for their interpretation by target users.

#### **Working with Asian Artefacts in Ukrainian Museums and Cultural Institutions**

Researching and presenting Asian artefacts and intangible cultural heritage in museums and other cultural institutions of Ukraine, specialists involved face language-related challenges. Yet these challenges differ for principal and "secondary" agents in the field.

The researchers who major in Asian culture are the principal agents. In museums that house collections of Asian art, these specialists conduct research on collections, curate permanent and temporary exhibitions of Asian art, write explanatory texts for these exhibitions, compile museum publications, and popularize Asian art through academic articles, media interviews, and publications on social media. As a result of their efforts, authentic terminology of Asian art can permeate the public sphere and even become part of the urban language landscape, appearing on posters for museum events (Lohvyn, 2024).

Museum staff specializing in Asian cultures demonstrate a wide range of Asian languages proficiency. Not all of them speak Asian languages, though some are proficient in one or more Asian languages, acquired through different means from undergraduate and graduate university studies (a minority) to self-study and learning a certain language as a mother tongue at home. Most of these specialists have academic backgrounds in history, art history, museology, or education.

In Ukraine, there are no independent museums for Asian art. Asian collections are housed within multidisciplinary museums (such as The Bleshchunov Museum for Private Collections and The Museum for the Western and Eastern Art in Odessa) and historical and architectural complexes (Zolochiv Castle in the Lviv region). So the specialists in Asian art often face challenges in selecting terminology for communication with scholars and other museum staff within their institutions. For instance, councils on research and methodology (Ukrainian, *науково-методична рада*) that review reports on artefact attribution may require an introductory explanation of the history of authentic art forms before addressing the part of the report that presents new scholarly findings.

For introducing Asian art to a broad audience, many decisions on communication strategies (including the use of art terminology and original scripts) are made through collegial consensus within the institution. For example, in some contexts, the use of authentic Chinese terminology or

even Chinese characters on exhibition posters or lecture slides is seen as a way to add clarity to the presented material and demonstrate professionalism of museum curators. In other contexts, however, the same practice may be viewed as an excessive and the one that potentially exclude some cohorts of audience.

Edutainment activities, which comprise inclusivity programs, create another challenge: texts about Asian art written in simplified language, as well as curatorial lectures and guided tours with sign language interpretation, require extra guidelines for using culturally specific terms. The nuances of popularization efforts fine tuned to diverse needs are to be addressed separately and are out of scope of this paper.

The abovementioned subtleties bring us to the conclusion that the extralinguistic factors constantly influence the discourse of museum specialists majoring in Asian art. Yet their qualification allows them to maintain high standards of communication on Asian art tailored for various communication settings.

However, the museum scholars who may potentially be involved in working with Asian art artefacts are far more numerous than those who specialize in Asian art and/or speak Asian languages. These are the "secondary" agents. The cohort includes all researchers at museums, restoration centres, and other cultural institutions across Ukraine. Their responsibilities include providing initial consultations on items brought in for expertise; filling scientific passports for artefacts; rearranging museum archives containing expert consultations; and formulating hypotheses about the country of origin of under-researched items in the collection before passing them on to a specialist. While deeper research into a specific artefact or phenomenon may be initiated locally, some workflows are of national significance. The digitalization and rearranging of museum archives and databases became especially relevant with the launch of the new information and communication system *Регістр Музейного фонду України*, the Register of the Museum Depositories of Ukraine (<https://museum.mcsc.gov.ua/about>).

In all these professional contexts, terminology of authentic styles, genres, and technical characteristics of Asian visual art becomes an integral part of discourse and documentation.

Thus it is important to identify and analyze sources of Asian art terminology for restorers, museologists, and art historians in Ukraine. To some extent, general knowledge acquired from university-level art history courses provides a foundation. Articles by contemporary art historians in accessible languages also may serve as sources of terminology. Another important method used by museum professionals is searching for analogies via Google Images and artificial intelligence (AI), and exploring related publications, including those in foreign languages. Machine translation is often used to read online publications in European and Asian languages. However, the quality of such translations in the arts domain is inconsistent, and translations from Asian languages into Ukrainian often pass through English as an intermediary. This cascade of translations distorts Asian terms and creates occasionalisms. A museum professional unfamiliar with the region's art may mistake these for terminology. Even fluency in European languages and reading original texts does not guarantee accuracy. For example, someone who has just learned the English term *hand scroll* but is unfamiliar with Chinese art may not realize that the accepted Ukrainian equivalent is *горизонтальний цув'ї* (literally, "horizontal scroll").

As it was mentioned above, currently, there are no concise yet comprehensive reference materials on Asian art in Ukraine.

The author of this article approaches the issue as a peer and not as a detached observer focused on identifying flaws for the sake of criticism. To verify insights and initiate collaborative efforts to improve the situation, the author initiated a roundtable discussion by inviting museum professionals and independent researchers who had worked with Asian artefacts and intangible cultural heritage for the purpose of their preservation, comprehensive study, and popularization in Ukraine.

#### **Roundtable discussion and follow-up**

On March 27, 2025, a roundtable titled "Terminology of East Asian art in the practice of Ukrainian museums" was held on Zoom platform, followed by in-depth interviews with some participants (Lohvyn, 2025, p. 196). Despite the title referencing "East Asian", the roundtable brought together researchers whose interests span various cultures of Asia and the Islamic. Participants included eight representatives of Ukrainian museums, the Workshop for Academic Religious Studies, and an independent researcher representing museums and cultural institutions of Dnipro, Kyiv, Odessa. Their educational and professional backgrounds covered museum studies, art history, music history, pedagogy, history, and historiography. Aside from the organizer, none of the participants were philologists proficient in Asian languages, since such specialists are underrepresented among Ukrainian museum professionals. However, all participants spoke at least one foreign language, and one researcher was fluent in several Turkic languages.

The roundtable participants shared approaches to research and a common understanding of the challenges in terminology usage: searching for visual analogies on websites of museums and auction houses (often using machine translation to read accompanying texts), consulting with foreign colleagues (typically in English), and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools. One participant mentioned using five AI systems. However, the same specialist and other colleagues demonstrated profound interest and respect towards every Asian culture's representative, especially towards the cultures that were victims of genocidal practices of the past. These specialists were also concerned by the influence of dominant languages and cultures of certain regions on minority cultures.

In contrast, the same specialists perceive academic monographs and articles as less convenient sources, since searching for a few terms might require reading dozens of pages. Similarly, older dictionaries and reference books without clear categorization are seen as slow and inefficient to use.

The roundtable addressed the internal sociolinguistic factors in Ukraine that complicate the work of museum professionals, namely the Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism and uneven transferring to the Ukrainian language in official communication. While local cultural authorities previously paid little attention to implementation and support of the Ukrainian language, they now may demand a particularly purist use of Ukrainian from their subordinates.

The discussion revealed a tendency among respondents to use Asian art terms as direct (phonetic) loanwords during research, documentation, and internal communication. This way they intend to explicitly mark a particular artefact as a product of the culture that created it, thereby avoiding potential confusion with phenomena of neighbouring cultures. Also, interpersonal communication in work settings often features the spontaneous creation of professional jargon based on a mix of languages: the Asian language of the artefact's origin, Slavic languages, and sometimes Romance and German languages (depending on a newly-discovered valuable source and its vocabulary).

Ideally, museum professionals would like to align Ukrainian terminology with "international" standards, by which they typically mean the English-language terminology.

However, in various museum programs aimed at the general public, museum professionals prefer to use terms rooted in the European artistic tradition. For example, even if a work is labelled *шаньшуй* (shanshui) in museum documentation, a researcher is likely to refer to it as *пейзаж* (landscape) or *китайський пейзаж* (Chinese landscape) when addressing an "average" tour group.

Overall, the analysis of responses revealed several needs of museums and other cultural institutions for consultations with philologists, especially those specializing in Asian languages and cultures. The four most important needs are:

- Information on transcription systems for Asian languages;
- Recommendations for translating the titles of significant literary works of the region;
- Standardization of Ukrainian-language terminology, including guidance on which terms are preferable and which are outdated or poor-quality borrowings from third languages (mostly English, Russian, and French)
- Reference materials on artistic terminology in the format "authentic term in Ukrainian > definition in Ukrainian, the authentic term in original script" with easy navigation between sections

In summary, some observed practices and requests contradicted one another. Fulfilling one set of conditions may preclude fulfilling another, complicating the work of a terminographer. The compromise yet professionally sound decisions a terminographer can make in these circumstances will be addressed later.

It is important to note that the future thesaurus is intended to become a useful tool for more professional groups and their possible tasks, such as learners of Chinese and Chinese-Ukrainian translators working on texts on Chinese art by Chinese authors. Although their needs are out of scope of this paper, it is still worth to keep them in mind. A thesaurus constructed of Ukrainian terms will be inutile for learners of Chinese and specialists of this language aiming to advance in culturally-specific artistic vocabulary. Fortunately, an electronic format allows for easy cross-referencing without compromising any thesaurus elements and their purposes.

Thus, addressing the challenges in harmonizing Ukrainian-language Asian arts terminology would require the involvement of philologists specializing in phonology, onomastics, translation strategies, realia, terminology, terminography, historical linguistics and history of literature of at least each major language of the region.

This complex task should be divided into measurable and time-related tasks that individual philologists can handle.

In response to the request for guidance on transcription systems, it was emphasized that existing systems do not teach the language or pronunciation. Therefore, museum professionals and art historians should accept the conventional nature of such representations. To ensure consistent communication and facilitate workflow, it was recommended to choose one of the currently relevant transcription systems, adhere to it, and always indicate which system is used in each completed document. This would allow future users to transition smoothly to another system if needed.



The temporary nature of the acceptable transcription systems was suggested as an idea worth considering for colleagues preferring the direct loanwords. Adapting a certain spelling and pronunciation of a term "once and for all" and sticking to it after the change of transcriptional principles will hardly bring clarity to communication both within the scientific community and towards broader audiences.

To address the issue of languages that have no set transcription systems in Ukrainian, it was advised to add notes that the terms in a certain document reflect an author's perception of pronunciation of a certain individual or a group of individuals (mostly artists, musicians and other creators) or follow the spelling in their writings. To help the efforts of preserving minority languages and cultures, a concept of an author-specific dictionary was introduced for the museum specialists to consider as further work tasks and collaboration projects with philologists.

#### **Terminology and terminography: foundational questions**

Following the discussion on transcription systems, the roundtable organizer went back to the topics of terminology and terminography of Chinese art, which are subject of their research and form the core of this article. These topics inevitably raised an array of intermediary tasks for the researcher.

To identify the distinctive features of authentic terminology of classical Chinese art. To examine the adaptation and usage of authentic Chinese art terms across various European languages. To investigate if there is a standardized global framework for Chinese art terminology outside the Sinosphere. To assess how the findings on terminology usage can inform the structure and content of a future multilingual thesaurus of Chinese art. To trace the historical development and current usage of Chinese art terminology in the Ukrainian language, and to evaluate the extent of scholarly attention to the matter on part of Ukrainian lexicologists, lexicographers, and terminographers.

To address these issues, it is necessary to review the basic concepts of terminology (as a vocabulary and as a science), terminography, and language borrowings.

Terminology as a discipline is tied to logic, ontology and cognitive science (Valeontas, & Mantzari, 2006, p. 2–3). It analyzes professional vocabularies, proposes for the structure of concepts and their relationships, and proposes for new terms.

Terminology as a vocabulary of terms (Harping, 2010; L'Homme 2014, p. 334) is defined by several core attributes:

- Coherent system of concepts of a certain discipline or activity (ontological aspect);
- Systems of concepts reveal subordination and other forms of relations (logical aspect) as follows:
  - a. Mutual exclusivity of meanings within a shared level of precision (in a category of colours, *red is not green, green is not red*);
  - b. Univocity. Each term should be free from excessive informational load and nuances, although;
  - c. hyperonyms and hyponyms are inevitable phenomena (*landscape* is a hyperonym and *marina* is a hyponym, thus *every marina is a landscape but not all landscapes are marinas*);
- Semantics of morphological elements of some terms may suggest their meanings (*chiaroscuro* that derives from Italian "bright-dark" prompts that the term is related to contrasts of light and shadow);
- Neutral tenor.

In most disciplines, terminology can be divided into theoretical and practical categories. Theoretical terminology

often includes abstract concepts that are harder to define and understand, while practical terminology refers mostly to objects, states, processes, tools, and methods that are easier to observe and define. The terminology of any discipline is organized into a structure upon which new concepts and corresponding terms can be built. Some terminology might be applicable in several fields thus becoming interdisciplinary.

Terminography is closely related to terminology. Its tasks are systematic description of existing terminologies (vocabularies), the recommendations of preferred terminological choices, the standardization of definitions, and the proposals for new terms. Unlike general lexicography, which is usually descriptive in nature, terminography adopts a prescriptive or at least proscriptive approach (Bergenholtz, 2003; Bergenholtz, & Kaufmann, 2017), since standardization of terms is necessary for precision and consistency in communication within specialized domains and interactions with general public. Needs of target groups define the structure and scope of the terminographic product (Alberts, 2001).

Language borrowings are necessary to fill in the conceptual gaps in a recipient language. Their categories are direct loanwords (that keep the original phonetics and/or spelling in the recipient language), loanshifts (a loanword gets a semantic extension in the language it permeates), calques (literal translations of foreign words or their elements), and loan blends (combinations of borrowed and native words). Borrowings from one donor language into many languages are internationalisms (Wexler, 1969).

#### **Origins and features of Chinese art terminology. A proposal for semantic taxonomy**

Engaging in painting, calligraphy, decorating with refined and rare objects, seeking mystical experiences were privileges of the Chinese elite. It was the elite who shaped the value system and aesthetic principles of classical Chinese art, developing its special language. Thus, both the practice of certain arts and discourse on them are markers of elitism, and its terminology bears the traits of a prestige language. (Kahane, 1986, p. 496).

One of the most striking features of this terminology is its ancient origin, especially in the case of more abstract terms. These terms are rooted in authentic Chinese natural philosophy concepts (Bush, & Shih, 2012, p. 6), which is now most commonly associated with Daoism. Chinese natural philosophy is characterized by synaesthesia: it projects the characteristics of time and space onto human physical and mental activities, including creativity. Thus, some terms may carry connotations of emotional exaltation and mysticism. For example, the term 气韵 *qì yùn*, "*spirit resonance*" first appears in 古画品录 *Gǔhuà Pīnlù*, *The Record of the Classification of Old Painters* by Xie He 谢赫 (479–502), where it describes dynamism and inspiration in painting (Xie, n. d.). However, it was soon applied to calligraphy and even music and literature. This term can also be used to describe a person as inspired and full of creative ideas like in a quote attributed to Ren Bonian describing his friend Wu Changshuo 吴昌硕 (1844–1927): 胸中有才华, 笔底有气韵 *Talent in the heart, spirit resonance in the artistic creations* (Zhao, 2018, p. 66). This brings its usage close to fields that nowadays belong to psychology and social anthropology. Thus, part of the theoretical terminology of Chinese art is interdisciplinary in nature.

Some of the more "tangible" terms may also have extensive historical lineages. For example, the term 破墨 *pò mò*, *broken ink* first appears in 历代名画记 *Lìdài Míng huà jì*, *Record of*

*Famous Painters through the Ages* by Zhang Yanyuan 张彦远 (815–907). (Zhang, Y. (n. d.). *Lidai mǐnghuà jì* [Famous Paintings Through the Ages]. Chinese Text Project]. [张彦远. (n. d.). 历代名画记, 第十卷. 中国哲学书电子化计划. (<https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=722335&remap=gb>). Similarly, the term 三远法 *sān yuǎn fǎ*, *the method of three distances* was introduced in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by the famous artist Guo Xi 郭熙 (1020–1090) in his treatise 林泉高致 *Línquán Gāozhì*, *Lofty Record of Forests and Streams* (Guo, n. d.). Interplay and mutual influence of literature and other arts make them share terminology like 典故 *diǎngù*, *literary quotation*, *classical allusion*, *art motif*. Therefore, not only the theoretical but also practical terminology has an interdisciplinary group of terms.

This lexicon is complemented by a number of specific terms and idioms such as 斋号 *zhāiháo*, *studio title* (a studio title, that, in its turn, may become an artist's sobriquet), 秃笔 *tūbǐ*, *worn-out brush* (as a self-deprecatory term for one's creations), and 呵冻 *hēdòng*, *creating against hardships* (it implies that someone *warms fingers and brush with their breath*), 临池 *línchí*, *to practice calligraphy* (hints to anecdotes about Zhang Zhi (?–192) and Wang Xizhi (303–361). Classifiers like 幅 *fú* for scrolls/paintings and 方 *fāng* for seal prints also belong to this "miscellaneous" vocabulary. These lexes and idioms denote unique concepts, practices, and categories, hint to famous creators of the past. They carry emotional connotations and/or are part of an etiquette vocabulary. Although not defining techniques or suggesting critical assessment of an artwork, these culturally-specific and morphology-specific words and phrases have onomasiological ties to the artistic practices and are inseparable from the discourse on Chinese art. For brevity and consistency it is proposed to call this category herein "idiomatical".

The titles of the above-mentioned famous treatises, as well as the established motifs and classical subjects in Chinese art, such as 村童闹学图 *Cūntóng Nào Xué Tú*, *Children's Mischief in a Village School* and 清明上河图 *Qīngmíng Shànghé Tú*, *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* belong to the domain of specific onomastics and inevitably enter the vocabulary of a person proficient in Chinese art history. Many of the classical painting motives derive from the classical Chinese poetry titles and quotes. For example, the title 寒江独钓图 *Hánjiāng Dú Diào Tú*, *A lonely fisherman on a cold river* is a paraphrase of a quote 孤舟蓑笠翁, 独钓寒江雪 *Lone boat, an old man in straw cape and hat, Fishing alone in the cold river snow*, from a poem by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819). (The English translation is quoted after Burton Watson (Watson, 1984, p. 282).)

At first glance, the wide range of application and emotional load of many lexes and idioms might argue against classifying them as terminology. However, the very nature of art presupposes that creativity and perception of artworks are connected to emotions. These specifics should be reflected at least in a certain group of terms.

Despite contact with other cultures, the development of Chinese visual art has been marked by unique techniques and a strong adherence to tradition. Due to the Chinese culture's deep reverence for antiquity, and the prestige associated with practicing ancient arts, the archaic terms have remained relevant and have survived to the present day. These terms have largely preserved their ancient morphology and, in some cases, syntax, while accumulating numerous interpretations. Many of these concepts and

phenomena were borrowed into the neighbouring cultures, thus into their languages.

The democratization of cultural processes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the adoption of Western concepts in artistic practices and art criticism, and the shift from the classical Chinese language to the colloquial 白话 *báihuà* in literature have not diminished the importance of ancient terms in Chinese-language discourse on art. To this day, the global community of Chinese art scholars continues to study and popularize (Li, & Liu, 1999, p. 780–781; Sernelj, 2021) classical literary works that form the theoretical foundation of Chinese classical art. The research of the famous tableaux like *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* 清明上河图 (Su, 2013) may shed light onto nuances of their names and stimulate reconsidering the possible translations of the said names. Educational efforts are not narrowed to academic circles. Many Internet resources attempt at compiling "lists of important terms that will help to sound like a connoisseur", where about 2/3 of terms are still authentic Chinese (Yikouqi dudong Zhongguohua "shuyu" [Understanding Chinese painting "terminology" at a glance]. (n. d.). Masters Art [In Chinese] [一口气读懂中国画"术语". (n. d.). (<http://www.mastersart.org/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=201&id=3058>).

The uniqueness of concepts and phenomena determines another characteristic of the Chinese art terminology: it is culturally bound and often lack direct equivalents in other languages. While filling in the conceptual lacunae in languages of the region like Japanese and Korean about a thousand years ago, these terms still fall into the category of conceptual lacunae in other languages.

In summary, the core terminology of Chinese art has ancient origins, denotes unique concepts and phenomena, might serve as interdisciplinary terminology and functions as a prestige language. Its taxonomy, formulated taking into account both ontological and semasiological aspects and correlations, might be presented as four categories that cover more subjects than merely styles, techniques, and art criticism criteria. The two core categories are theoretical and practical terms, and the two adjacent categories are onomastics and culturally specific terms, idioms, and verbal etiquette formulas peculiar to the Chinese discourse on art. While practical terms are emotionally-neutral, the theoretical ones along with idioms and some onomastics may have markers of various speech tenors from poetical language and religious discourse to colloquial and self-deprecatory expressions.

Last but not least, the Western lens of art criticism has complemented and enriched the authentic Chinese art terminology with its theoretical and practical terms. Western concepts like *imagery* 意象 *yìxiàng* and *composition* 构图 *gòutú* are now crucial for understanding contemporary Chinese discourse on both innovative and traditional Chinese art (Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago, 2019). Therefore, the Western concepts (both theoretical and practical) must be considered the fifth category.

#### **Comparative terminology and international practices. Authentic Chinese art terms as internationalisms**

To approach the question of which uses of Chinese terms might serve as positive examples for revising the terminology of classical Chinese art in Ukrainian, it is useful to turn to comparative terminology.

Historically, European scholars and traders imposed their own classificatory frameworks on East Asian art (Lynn, 2016). However, over the past 75 years, original Chinese terms have gained global recognition (Pope, 1947, p. 388–417). This shift is part of broader globalization and

decolonization trends, leading to hybrid evaluative approaches that blend Western and Chinese concepts. Yet, some conservative communities, such as some art dealers and collectors, may stick to outdated, culturally insensitive terminology (Oriental Antiques UK, 2023). *Terminology of Asian art – Frequently used terms and their meaning* (<https://orientalantiques.co.uk/terminology-of-asian-art-frequently-used-terms-and-their-meaning/>).

Chinese art terms enter other languages through phonetic borrowings, calques, and descriptive translations, undergoing transformations shaped by the recipient language's phonology, morphology and semantic fields of native art terms. Borrowed into multiple languages, these terms become internationalisms.

English offers numerous examples of various ways of borrowing: *bird-and-flower painting* as a calque for 花鸟画, and *Xuan paper* as a loan blend for 宣纸 *Xuānzhǐ*. 工笔 *gōngbǐ* might be rendered as either *gongbi* (loanword) or *meticulous brush* (calque), thus creating synonymy. The use of *pinyin*, standardized by the UN in 1984, facilitates such borrowings without conforming to English phonetics and spelling. The choice between loanword(s) and calque(s) is dictated by the communicative settings.

French texts show inclination to calques, such as *peinture de fleurs et d'oiseaux* for 花鸟画 *huāniǎo huà*. Some authors combine calques highlighted by quotation marks with *pinyin*, using the latter as a foreignizing device rather than suggesting its regular usage in the French language. For example, a popular text on the Guimet Museum site (Musée Guimet (n.d.)) explains that calligraphy and painting are referred in Chinese as "*traces d'encre*", *moji* ("ink traces", *moji*) and "*jeux d'encre*", *moxi* ("play of ink", *moxi*).

The same approach is often observed in Italian texts: *Coppa di forma rara, che riprende la forma delle "coppe alate" (yushang) ma ne varia la forma dei manici e presenta dimensioni maggiori della media.* ("Cup of a rare shape, which resembles the shape of "winged cups" (*yushang*) but the shape of its handles differ and it is larger in size than the average cups of this kind.") (<https://www.maotorino.it/it/archivio-catalogo/grande-coppa-ovale-2/>).

Punctuation marks and font styles are used to highlight and organize pieces of information within these borrowings.

Hungarian terminology for classical Chinese art would deserve a special study due to its special contexts, both linguistic (an isolation of Hungarian as the Uralic language surrounded by Slavic and Germanic languages) and geopolitical (state control in the countries of the so-called Socialist camp). Yet some scholars maintained their intellectual autonomy and contributed to the development of new approaches in the world art history. Miklós Pál (1927–2002), a renowned sinologist and art historian intended to research and represent Chinese art through its original lens (Fajcsák, 2003, p. 437–439). His book *A sárkány szeme* (The Eye of the Dragon: An Introduction to the Iconography of Chinese Painting, 1973) was translated into German, French, and Polish thus contributing to creating and sustaining art history internationalisms of Chinese origin. This scholar avoided *pinyin*-based terminology in his Hungarian-language publications, using poetic or descriptive phrases instead. Nowadays the Hungarian sinologists and art historians either use loanwords as original *pinyin* forms (*gongbi*) – particularly in more recent or internationally oriented academic contexts – or descriptive Hungarian phrases (extended calques).

Overall, the most widespread borrowing methods in many languages of Europe are loanwords and calques. Slow shifts

towards the use of loanwords might be observed within professional communities, but it was not possible to trace either "local standards" or "international standards" for the Chinese art internationalisms in the languages of Europe.

Having reviewed the history of authentic terminology and its transformations in other languages, it is worth to briefly outline the historical factors influencing the development of Ukrainian sinology and the evolution of the Ukrainian terminology used to denote **authentic Chinese artistic practices in Ukrainian-language discourse**.

The development of Ukrainian sinology experienced prolonged artificial interruptions (Kiktenko, 2002, pp. 147–149). The popularization of Chinese culture saw a brief boom in the 1950s during the period of "great friendship" between the USSR and the newly established PRC. Soviet foreign policy pragmatism stimulated interest in Chinese culture within Soviet Ukrainian society, employing all available propaganda tools, including museum exhibitions (Rudyk, 2023, p. 32). Publications on Chinese art appeared in the Ukrainian SSR, but due to internal processes of centralization and Russification in the USSR, researchers often chose to write in Russian (Biletsky, 1957). An art historian and museologist Platon Biletsky (1922–1998), a future academician, used a mix of Western and authentic Chinese terminology: on one hand, *пейзаж* (landscape) as a more universal term (Biletsky, 1957, p. 102), and on the other, *в манере "гунь-бу" – "прилежной кисти"* (in the manner of 'gunbi' – 'meticulous brush') to interpret the Chinese term and highlight its uniqueness (Biletsky, 1957, p. 110), although one may notice some issues with transcription in this example.

The deterioration of Soviet-Chinese relations in the 1960s negatively influenced the cross-cultural communications. Fortunately, some research and publishing processes continued by inertia, and in 1965, the Kyiv Museum of Western and Oriental Art (now the Khanenko Museum) published a catalogue of Chinese paintings from its collection (Kryzhytskyi, 1965). It featured Ukrainian catalogue entries and the introductory text by the head of the museum's Asian Art Department, Oleksandr Kryzhytsky (1903–1981), fully duplicated in Russian. An introduction consists of nearly 7000 words; approximately 125 single lexes and compound phrases in this text are either art terms *cyiū* (*scroll*), *myu* (*ink*) or characteristics given by the author to the object of his study, the Chinese paintings in the museum's collection: *велична простота* (majestic simplicity), *благородна суворість* (noble austerity). Some Chinese complex terms and famous quotes are easily recognizable in their Ukrainian variants. Seeing *триєдність живопису, каліграфії та поезії* (triumph of painting, calligraphy, and poetry) one may easily identify the authentic term 三絶 *sān jué*, *the three perfections [of painting, calligraphy, and poetry]* and *його віршів картинні, а картини сповнені поезії* (his poetry is picturesque and his paintings are full of poetry) one can easily translate backwards as 诗中有画, 画中有诗 deriving from Su Shi's appraisal of Wang Wei's creations. Considering that Kryzhytsky was not proficient in Chinese so he relied on others' translations and explanations of terms and phrases, his attempts at conveying the semantics and form of authentic terms and ancient quotes were rather successful and even poetic. Therefore, at the time of its publication, the museum catalogue served as a reliable source of knowledge on Chinese painting history and the related terminology in Ukrainian. Many of the terms appearing in the catalogue are relevant to this day.



However, the next generation of museum researchers and art history lecturers who began working in the 1970s resorted to the Russian language in their research and educational activities.

In post-Soviet society, the release of political pressure, emergence of new information sources, and a certain identity crisis induced a new wave of interest in Chinese culture, along with broader exposure to Western discourse on the subject. A new generation of Ukrainian sinologists took a proactive stance, creating professional associations and university departments but focused primarily on language, philosophy and history. The study of Chinese art, and especially its terminology, remained peripheral to sinologists' interests.

As previously noted, the democratization of discourse led to a chaotic usage of Chinese visual art terminology. It was mostly borrowed via Russian and English and often contained hints to mysticism without adequate explanation on the history of terms. Outdated terms coined by Europeans to denote Chinese cultural phenomena also resurfaced, such as "Foo dog" for guardian lion sculptures. (Rakhno, 2022, p. 104).

At this stage of describing the dynamics of terminology usage, we approach the issue of the approximate prevalence of certain terms and the ways they are borrowed into Ukrainian from "relay" languages. Examples of borrowings from Chinese into Ukrainian include the same donor-language terms discussed for English. For instance, *гунбі* or *гонбі* (*gongbi*) is a phonetic borrowing. Calquing is observed in the term *keimu i nmaxu* (flowers and birds), although the variant *nmaxu i keimu* (birds and flowers) is also common, likely due to indirect borrowing, from Chinese via English, preserving the word sequence of the English term *bird-and-flower* yet choosing plural forms for the term's constituents. As it was outlined before, depending on the communicative context, synonymy may occur: the same term may appear as a calque in one situation, as a loanword in another, and as a descriptive phrase in the third.

Currently, there are no studies summarizing the use of Chinese art terminology in the Ukrainian academic environment. A notable attempt to fill a terminological gap is appendices to a dissertation by an art historian Dr. Olha Novikova on Chinese porcelain in Ukrainian museum collections (Novikova, 2021). These appendices include over 300 lemmata on Chinese art and culture, grouped into categories: forms of Chinese ceramics; porcelain marks; geographical names and names of ceramic production centres; technical and technological characteristics and decorative methods of applied arts; colours and shades; styles, genres, and motifs of visual art; titles of famous literary works on art; proper names of cultural figures, historical and mythical characters; and types of Chinese ceramics according to old-fashioned European classification. In most entries, the scholar provides simplified Chinese characters, their *pinyin* transcription, and Ukrainian-language explanations, sometimes including English and French equivalents. Some entries are illustrated with one or two images, enhancing both the informative load and attractiveness of the work. The thematic grouping and organization of the terminological appendices resemble a thesaurus. The entries mainly belong to the onomastics and terminology of visual art, literature, and religion. Overall, the selection of vocabulary, illustrations, and explanatory methods aligns with the pragmatic goals of the dissertation and aims to help readers grasp its core content. The frequency of a term's use in Chinese or, as a borrowing, in Ukrainian is not relevant for such a specialized text, but

about one-tenth (approximately 30 words) can be considered the most frequently-used terminology of Chinese art.

Unfortunately, the existence of only one thesaurus compiled single-handedly by one art historian as a secondary material of the dissertation reflects lack of attention to the matter on part of both art historians and philologists. Ideally, these professionals should combine their efforts to systematically compile such reference materials and disseminate them among diverse groups of potential users. Yet, as Rufus Gouws admits, "the lexicographic practice is much older than lexicographic theory" (Gouws, 2018, p. 217), so the case of almost non-existent Ukrainian terminography works on Asian art falls into the category of "natural" processes within the discipline.

Going back to the questions that arose after roundtable discussion, it is safe to conclude that the subject of discourse on the authentic Chinese art and its current terminology in both the Chinese language and the languages of Europe is multifaceted and intricate. It was influenced by many extralinguistic factors throughout its history. The usage of the same terminology in Ukraine for the last 75 years followed the international trends overall but on a smaller scale and encountered more unfavourable extralinguistic conditions.

The aforementioned observations prompt new avenues of inquiry. How do these findings may be reflected in the structure and the scope of the future thesaurus? Is it appropriate, given the current situation of borrowings from third languages, to conduct a stern revision of previous borrowings? Should the role of the terminographer be limited to descriptivism? How can the proscriptive intentions of the terminographer be implemented? Should a section on common erroneous terms be included? What proportion of a future terminographic product should be devoted to onomastics? What methods should a terminographer apply to create a product that not only satisfies the needs that linger for a long time but proposes something that will be relevant and attractive in the future?

### Results

It is worth to consider the terminology of Chinese visual art in Ukrainian not only as the Chinese-language realia but also as internationalisms and an already existing niche professional vocabulary within the Ukrainian language. Under such conditions, a revolutionary revision of the field's terminology does not seem appropriate. However, a relevant and feasible task is the terminographic documentation of internationalisms of Chinese origin along with resolving inconsistencies and clearing unnecessary elements that developed in secondary borrowings. It is also possible to create a category of erroneous obsolete terms complimented with adequate and up-to-date substitutes. Such a revision could help preventing the recurrence of undesirable forms. As a Ukrainian terminologist Turovska admits, "The current situation in Ukraine requires the creation of dictionaries whose terms would meet several criteria: 1) most fully reflect the essence of the concept; 2) fully comply with the norms and rules of modern Ukrainian literary language; 3) be agreed upon and satisfy both specialists in a particular field and linguists (Turovska, 2018, p. 61).

From the above, it follows that a single terminographic product may require different approaches (proscriptive and prescriptive) to its various sections. What framework would be appropriate for such a thesaurus? What pattern its entries should follow depending on their category?

The future thesaurus of Chinese art terminology should follow the six semantic categories taxonomy. Its four core categories should be authentic Chinese art terminology and

adjacent names, titles, idioms, and general lexes. These four core categories are **theoretical**, **practical**, **onomastic**, and **idiomatic** vocabularies. The two supplementary categories should include the contemporary Chinese terminology of the Western origin and a list of obsolete European terms that used to denote authentic Chinese art phenomena. The authentic Chinese art practical terms category should include subcategories of genres; styles and brushwork methods; elements of a composition; colours; artistic materials, building a hierarchical structure (<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/publications/professional-report/115.pdf>; Harping, 2010). The onomastics should be divided into two categories a) titles of literary works only (often famous treatises on art) and b) titles applicable to both the famous works of art and canonical literature works. The latter category should be organized by genres of painting. The names of classical subjects and artistic motifs often originate from literary works. This allows consulting with the sinologists who research literature and drama and make this part of the art thesaurus cohesive with some literature and drama onomastics. Ties with these disciplines also allow for the use of emotionally charged vocabulary. Names of religious and legendary subjects may correlate with theonyms, hagionyms and other onomastics of religion and folklore studies. Onomastics will inevitably bring up the issue of choosing the transcription system for proper names.

The part labelled "idiomatic" although not being homogenous from either onomasiological or semasiological point of view, should have no special substructure except for the alphabetical order. Only a few of terms may ever enter the databases of Ukrainian museums, yet these terms are crucial for successful communication in the field, so they are important for learners and translators.

Lemmata in all the categories and subcategories should be organized in an alphabetical order.

At this stage, it is hard to estimate the number of lemmata in each category. It is reasonable to assume though the ratio of some categories. The list of obsolete terms should be the shortest part of the thesaurus, followed by onomastics. The practical part seems to be the most numerous.

While the last category's thesaurus entry bilingual structure should follow the simple pattern "an obsolete Ukrainian term – a term in the language of its origin (French, English) – the up-to-date Ukrainian substitution" (IFLA Working Group on Guidelines for Multilingual Thesauri (2009). Guidelines for multilingual thesauri (<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/publications/professional-report/115.pdf>). International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (<https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/publications/professional-report/115.pdf>), the other five categories should follow a more complex "Chinese – Ukrainian" pattern. An electronic format will allow for cross-referencing and easy search for both Ukrainian and Chinese categories and lemmata.

A complex thesaurus entry should consist of the following elements in the following order:

**Term in Chinese** (Simplified and Traditional characters separated by a slash followed by *pinyin* transcription).

**Ukrainian equivalent(s)** containing all possible variants suitable for various communicative situations, marked correspondingly.

#### Category

**Definition in Ukrainian** elaborating on history of a term, related anecdotes.

**Example of usage** in Chinese, possibly with the Ukrainian translation.

**Related terms** in Chinese (**synonyms** and **antonyms** marked correspondingly).

While striving for unambiguity and consistency, thus preferring to shorten the number of possible Ukrainian equivalents, it is advisable to think of possible field and circumstances of a term usage that may dictate the search for synonyms.

While Ukrainian equivalent should use the synchronic approach, the definition in Ukrainian may contain suggestions for using a diachronic approach. Even within a selection of practical terms, depending on communicative pragmatics, a tendency toward synonymy emerges. For documentation, phonetic borrowing may be used, while for popularization, a calque accompanied by an explanation using familiar European art terms may be more appropriate. All these nuances should be included in the Definition category.

It is necessary to elaborate on the synchronic and diachronic approaches. The **synchronic approach** involves working with the semantic field relevant to contemporary Chinese culture representatives. It is suitable for contemporary discourse on the history of Chinese art and the works of contemporary traditionalist artists, for translating such expressions from modern Chinese into Ukrainian, and for institutional documentation in museums and controlling institutions. It is important to use modern Ukrainian vocabulary without literary tropes, emotional load, or deliberate archaisms.

The **diachronic approach** has significant practical value for translating ancient literature. Here, it is considered appropriate to use everything that is undesirable in the synchronic approach: literary tropes, emotional descriptions, dialect lexes, and archaisms. Sources for archaisms may include monuments of Ukrainian literature that reflect on the nature of creativity and mention artists, e. g. writings by Meletius Smotrytsky (1577–1633) and Ioanikii Haliatovskiy (1620–1688). However, this recommendation is presented as a hypothesis and requires preliminary comprehensive examination considering cognitive frameworks of old Ukrainian literary works.

#### Discussion and conclusions

The exploration of Chinese visual art terminology within the Ukrainian linguistic context reveals a nuanced and multifaceted landscape. The current terminological corpus in Ukrainian is not a blank slate but a layered system comprising internationalisms, secondary borrowings, and niche professional vocabulary. This complexity suggests that a targeted and pragmatic approach focused on documentation, clarification, and refinement is both feasible and beneficial.

The proposal to develop a comprehensive thesaurus structured around six semantic categories reflects a thoughtful response to the needs of various potential users: translators, educators, museum professionals, and scholars. The taxonomy that divides terms into six categories (theoretical, practical, onomastical, idiomatical, Western-origin Chinese terms, and obsolete European terms) provides a robust framework for organizing knowledge. Particularly notable is the emphasis on practical terms, which are expected to form the main body of the thesaurus and require a hierarchical structure to reflect their internal complexity.

The thesaurus structure and its entry patterns are to be tested by both the participants of the round table mentioned in this paper and larger and more diverse target user groups: art historians, translators, educators. Feedback forms and follow-up roundtable discussions will be helpful in refining this terminographic product. Collaboration with groups developing the Ukrainian state language standard and



Chinese-Ukrainian corpora appears to be perspective for all parties involved.

Further research and development of the Ukrainian thesaurus for Chinese visual art terminology should focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, comparative studies, corpus-based analysis, digital platform creation, educational (including special needs) integration, diachronic enrichment, terminological standardization, and user-centred design to ensure accuracy, usability, and cultural relevance.

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## ДО СЕМАНТИЧНОЇ ТАКСОНОМІЇ АВТЕНТИЧНОЇ ТЕРМІНОЛОГІЇ КИТАЙСЬКОГО МИСТЕЦТВА ДЛЯ СТВОРЕННЯ КИТАЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОГО ТЕЗАУРУСА ОБРАЗОТВОРЧНОГО МИСТЕЦТВА

**Вступ.** Українське суспільство демонструє стійкий і багатограний інтерес до класичного та сучасного китайського мистецтва. Однак демократизація дискурсу про китайське мистецтво призвела до термінологічної непослідовності, що, у свою чергу, спричиняє семантичні зсуви.

**Мета цієї роботи** – розробка семантичної таксономії автентичної термінології китайського мистецтва й використання цієї структури для укладання китайсько-українського та українсько-китайського тезауруса класичного китайського мистецтва, який усуне поточну непослідовність і стане у пригоді різним цільовим групам.

**Методи.** Для створення концептуальної таксономії автентичної термінології китайського мистецтва використовується когнітивний підхід у термінології. У межах створеної структури застосовуються ономазіологічний і семасіологічний підходи. Дослідження фонологічної, морфологічної та семантичної адаптації використовується, щоб надати якісну характеристику вжитку автентичних китайських мистецьких термінів у сучасному західному дискурсі про китайське мистецтво. Роботу доповнюють історіографічні описи, нотатки з соціолінгвістики та спостереження за позамовними чинниками, що впливають на галузь.

**Результати.** У роботі представлено семантичну таксономію термінології класичного китайського мистецтва, яка стане основою макроструктури двомовного тезауруса. Основні та другорядні категорії автентичних термінів доповняться списком застарілої термінології західного походження. Запропоновано стандартну модель словникової статті для майбутнього тезауруса. Опис похідних від основного дослідження потреб окремих цільових груп тезауруса може стати орієнтиром для лінгвістів, які прагнуть долучитися до збереження, дослідження і популяризації культур Азії в Україні.

**Висновки.** Дослідження підкреслює необхідність стандартизованого підходу до термінології китайського мистецтва в Україні. Узгодження термінографічної практики з результатами ономазіологічного та семасіологічного аналізу термінології китайського мистецтва, а також визнання факту, що багато термінів стали інтернаціоналізмами, стане теоретичною основою для укладання комплексного тезауруса. Ця термінографічна праця сприятиме ефективній комунікації, якості академічних досліджень і демонстрації культурної чутливості в українському дискурсі про класичне китайське мистецтво.

**Ключові слова:** китайська мова, українська мова, китайське мистецтво, термінографія, ономастика, фразеологія, семантика, мовні запозичення.

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