

Picturing Celestial Certificates in Zhengyi Daoism: A Case Study of the *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang (1493)*

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Abstract

The twenty-seven-meter long scroll known as the *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* (1493) in the San Diego Museum of Art is an important Daoist artifact from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). It contains meticulously-painted images and a long inscription that records and certifies the ordination of Empress Zhang (1470–1541), consort of the Hongzhi 弘治 emperor (r. 1488–1505), by Zhang Xuanqing 張玄慶 (d. 1509), the forty-seventh Heavenly Master.

This paper examines the visual features and format of the scroll in order to situate it in relation to other kinds of Daoist and imperial documents and images. It begins by identifying visual sources that may have shaped the design of the *Ordination Scroll*, namely, Heavenly Court images, imperial edicts and documentary paintings as well as Daoist registers. This paper then compares the scroll to another Ming dynasty work known as the *Investiture of a Local God*. Although the two scrolls record different Daoist rituals, this paper argues that the two scrolls share notable similarities in their formats. The paper also compares the *Ordination Scroll* to model ritual documents compiled in Zhou Side's 周思德 (1359-1451) *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* 上清靈寶濟度大成金書 (Golden Writings on the Great Achievement of Deliverance by the Numinous Treasure of Highest Purity). In this compendium, there is a standard certificate with the same kind of textual format as the *Ordination Scroll*. It is

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also referred to as “tablet of transcendence,” which is the shortened formal title of the scroll.

These comparisons suggest that Daoist documents certifying transmissions of scriptures and registers shared conventions in format not only in text but maybe also in images. The *Ordination Scroll* is a highly elaborate example of such documents that includes both text and images. However, this paper questions whether the *Ordination Scroll* was the actual certificate of ordination that was transmitted to Empress Zhang in ritual. This is because of the separate depiction of the empress’ image, the absence of traces of authorization from priests, and prescribed treatment of ordination documents.¹

Keywords: Ming dynasty, Zhengyi, Empress Zhang, Ordination Scroll, images

Among the many notable objects on display at the *Taoism and the Arts of China* exhibition in late 2000 and early 2001 was an enormous horizontal scroll measuring over twenty-seven meters long and half a meter in height. Known as the *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang*, the work appeared on the front cover of the exhibition catalogue, identifying it as a highlight of the occasion.² The scroll, from the San Diego Museum of Art collection, is a visually impressive object: apart from its size, it is filled with text and images of celestial beings painted with fine outlines and bright colors (fig. 1). According to its inscription, the scroll records and certifies the Daoist ordination of a Ming-dynasty empress by

¹ This paper is derived from my DPhil dissertation “Empresses, Religious Practice and the Imperial Image: The *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* (1493)” (Oxford University, 2010). Parts of it were presented at the Fifth International Daoist Studies Conference, Wudangshan, China, 18–21 June 2009. My thanks go to the three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions. I would especially like to thank the first reviewer who came up with the title of the paper and provided me with numerous reference suggestions. I hope my revisions are able to address the issues that the reviewers raised. The serial numbers for texts in the Daoist Canon follow Kristofer Schipper and Francis Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

² Stephen Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

the forty-seventh Heavenly Master Zhang Xuanqing 張玄慶 (d. 1509). Ordination (*shoulu* 授籙) in Daoism involves the ceremonial transmission of empowering texts and objects that can change the ordinand's social and divine status.³ The dating in the inscription identifies the ordinand as Empress Zhang (1470–1541), wife of the Hongzhi 弘治 emperor, Zhu Youtang 朱祐樞 (r. 1488–1505).



Fig. 1: Detail from *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang*, 1493. Anonymous handscroll, ink, colors and gold on paper, 54.6 x 2,743.2 cm. San Diego Museum of Art, gift of Mr and Mrs John Jeffers (1961.94) (Image ©: San Diego Museum of Art)

The *Ordination Scroll* has attracted the attention of art historians and Daoist studies scholars. It was initially mentioned by Richard Barnhart in his study of Ming court painting as an example of a work produced

³ Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* (London: Routledge, 2008), 17–20. For more on Daoist ordinations, see for instance Charles Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission: A Taoist Ordination Rite of A.D. 711* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991); Kristofer M. Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, trans. Karen C. Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 82–88; Livia Kohn, “Medieval Daoist Ordination: Origins, Structure, and Practices,” *Acta Orientalia* 56 (2003): 379–398; Vincent Goossaert, *The Taoists of Peking, 1800–1949: A Social History of Urban Clerics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 97–107.

by court painters for an empress.⁴ Stephen Little's entry on the scroll in the *Taoism and the Arts of China* exhibition catalogue provided the first in-depth discussion of the Daoist content of the work.⁵ In particular, he offered a summary of the main inscription, which spans the middle section of the scroll. Since the exhibition, scholars of Daoism such as Livia Kohn and Richard Wang have referred to the scroll as evidence of imperial ordinations in the Ming period.⁶ Art historian Craig Clunas has also mentioned the scroll in the context of Ming visual and material culture, noting the "privileges of movement" that Empress Zhang enjoyed through the scroll.⁷

There are many issues concerning the *Ordination Scroll* that still need to be addressed.⁸ In this paper, I will focus on the visual features

⁴ Richard Barnhart et al, *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993), 119. There is also one unpublished conference paper on the scroll written by Lydia Thompson, "The Empress' New Clothes: A Daoist Ordination Scroll and the Projection of Female Authority in the Ming Dynasty," presented at the annual meeting for the Association of Asian Studies, Washington DC, USA, April 4–7, 2002.

⁵ Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China*, no. 57, 208–213. See the catalogue for a clear reproduction of the scroll. Both Little and Shawn Eichman, who was also involved in organizing the exhibition, have referred to the scroll in separate articles. See Stephen Little, "Daoist Art," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 736–737; Shawn Eichman, "The Art of Taoist Scriptures," *Orientalism*, no. 10 (Dec 2000): 42–43. In addition, the San Diego Museum of Art has published catalogues that include entries on the *Ordination Scroll*. See Sung Yu, *Selections from the Chinese Collection: The San Diego Museum of Art* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 1999), 136–139; Polly Cone, ed., *San Diego Museum of Art: Selected Works* (San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 2003), 44–45.

⁶ Kohn, "Medieval Daoist Ordination," 394; Richard Wang, "Ming Princes and Daoist Ritual," *T'oung Pao* 95 (2009): 75.

⁷ Craig Clunas, *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368–1644* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 69–70.

⁸ For an in-depth study of the *Ordination Scroll* and the context of the ritual, see Luk Yu-ping, "Empresses, Religious Practice and the Imperial Image: The *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* (1493)" (DPhil diss., Oxford University, 2010).

and overall format of the scroll. The format of Daoist ritual documents has received some scholarly attention, but the visual aspects of these documents have yet to be fully explored.⁹ This paper takes the *Ordination Scroll* as a case study for this issue. It will first consider the possible visual sources that shaped the appearance of the scroll. It will then investigate whether the format of the *Ordination Scroll*, both visual and textual, can be identified in other Daoist documents. Lastly, this paper will question whether the *Ordination Scroll* was in fact transmitted to Empress Zhang during her ordination ceremony.

Images in the *Ordination Scroll*

Images feature prominently in the *Ordination Scroll*. Rather than simply illustrating the text, images work with the text in the scroll to record and certify the empress' ordination ceremony. The images visualize Empress Zhang's elevated position in the pantheon as well as the celestial beings under her control, while the inscription by Zhang Xuanqing lists the items conferred upon her as part of her ordination, which provides the basis for her celestial status. Images also appear on the border and wrapper of the scroll.

The content of the *Ordination Scroll* can be divided into the following parts from right to left: an opening section with cloud-seal script (*yunzhuan* 雲篆) giving the formal title of the work, a sequence of celestial figures, a long inscription in regular script, an auspicious phrase in large characters, a blank section, and finally a second sequence of

⁹ For example, see Kristopher Schipper, "The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremonies," in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, ed. Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 309–324; Catherine Despeux, "Talismans and Sacred Diagrams," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 298–540; Ren Zongquan 任宗權, *Daojiao zhangbiao fuyin wenhua yanjiu* 道教章表符印文化研究 (Research into the Culture of Daoist Petitions, Talismans and Seals) (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006); Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Patricia Ebrey, "Huizong and the Imperial Dragon: Exploring the Material Culture of Imperial Sovereignty," *Qinghua xuebao* 清華學報 (Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies) 41.1 (2011): 39–71.

celestial beings. In addition, there is a wrapper decorated with dragons attached to the left end of the scroll. As a result of this wrapper, the scroll now unrolls from left to right, which is opposite to convention. However, on the basis of the condition of the scroll, the current location of the wrapper must have been the result of a later remounting of the work and as such does not have bearing on the scroll's original composition.

The first and longer of the two processions in the *Ordination Scroll* consists of civil and military celestial officials as well as perfected beings, while the second procession depicts only military figures (fig. 2, 3). Breaks in the painting indicate that parts of the first procession are missing, including its opening scene. In this procession there is a figure, dressed in Daoist costume and surrounded by celestial maids, who has been identified as Empress Zhang (fig. 1). Her female gender is evident from her white skin and the absence of facial hair, while her special status is indicated by her retinue and the imperial apricot-yellow color of her robe decorated with dragon motifs. This image is the only known depiction of Empress Zhang other than her official portrait in album leaf form in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.¹⁰ Yet, this image of Empress Zhang is peculiar because it is painted on a separate piece of paper that is then pasted onto a blank space of corresponding size on the scroll. Some thoughts on this unusual feature will be offered at the end of the paper.

The two processions in the *Ordination Scroll* have a consistent format: the figures are lined up in single file, facing right. They are evenly spaced and spread out in an orderly and repetitive fashion

¹⁰ On the collection of imperial portraits at the National Palace Museum, Taipei, see Nie Chongzheng 聶崇正, "Di hou xiaoxiang hua suotan" 帝后肖像畫瑣談 (Miscellaneous Talk about Portrait Paintings of Emperors and Empresses), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal), no. 1 (1980): 64–90; Li Lincan 李霖燦, "Gugong bowuyuan de tuxianghua" 故宮博物院的圖像畫 (Portrait Paintings in the Palace Museum); and Jiang Fucong 蔣復聰, "Guoli gugong bowuyuan cang Qing Nanxundian tuxiang kao" 國立故宮博物院藏清南薰殿圖像考 (Study into the Paintings from the Hall of Southern Fragrance in the National Palace Museum), *Gugong jikan* 故宮季刊 (National Palace Museum Quarterly), no. 1 (1970): 51–61 and no. 4 (1974): 1–16.

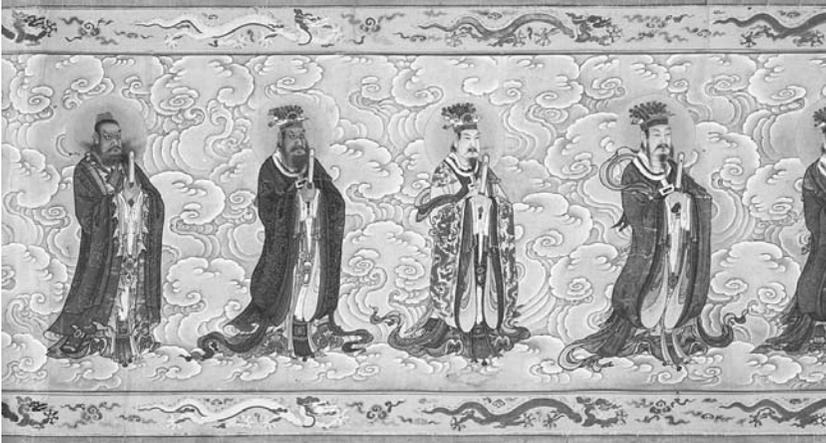


Fig. 2: Detail from the *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* showing celestial officials. (Image ©: San Diego Museum of Art)



Fig. 3: Detail from the *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* showing celestial beings of Empress Zhang's register. (Image ©: San Diego Museum of Art)

over a long length of the scroll. The formal titles of each figure are written in gold next to them except in the case of the image of Empress Zhang. The backgrounds of the two processions are covered in clouds washed lightly with colors indicating that the two processions are located in the celestial realm. In addition, the entire scroll is framed by a border of repeated dragon motifs in a largely recurring sequence of colors. The pictorial sources that may have informed these features will be discussed below.

The Ordination Scroll and Heavenly Court Images

The depiction of a procession of celestial figures facing one direction in the *Ordination Scroll* is reminiscent of a category of images that Lennert Gesterkamp refers to as “Heavenly Court painting,” which “depicts an audience ritual of Daoist deities in a court in heaven very similar to the audience rituals held by the emperor in his terrestrial court.”¹¹ In Chinese, such images may be called *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖 (picture of an audience with the Origin). The mural paintings of the Hall of the Three Purities (Sanqing dian 三清殿) at Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy), Shanxi province, are referred to in modern scholarship as a representative example of the *chaoyuan tu* subject matter.¹² Produced in 1325, the paintings depict a vast pantheon of deities lining the walls around an altar space that once held sculptures of the Three Purities (*sanqing* 三清), the highest deities in the Daoist pantheon. As in the *Ordination Scroll* processions, the deities in the Yongle gong wall paintings are presented as celestial officials, many holding ceremonial tablets and some with haloes. They are facing the same general direction towards the supreme deities and are organized in groups.¹³

The *chaoyuan tu* category is derived from titles recorded in Song dynasty painting catalogues. For instance, *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Painting

¹¹ Lennert Gesterkamp, *The Heavenly Court: Daoist Temple Painting in China, 1200–1400* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1.

¹² For instance, Meng Sihui 孟嗣徽, “Xinghua si bihua yu Jinnan Yuandai bihua de ji ge wenti” 興化寺壁畫與晉南元代壁畫的幾個問題 (Several Questions on the Murals in Xinghua Temple and Groupings of Yuan Dynasty Mural Paintings from Southern Shanxi), *Gugong xuekan* 故宮學刊 (Journal of Gugong Studies) 3 (2006): 291–292.

¹³ The Yongle gong murals have been extensively studied. For instance, Anning Jing, “Yongle Palace: The Transformation of the Daoist Pantheon during the Yuan Dynasty, 1260–1368” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1994); Paul Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999); Gesterkamp, *The Heavenly Court*. For clear images of the paintings see Jin Weinuo 金維諾, ed., *Yongle gong bihua quanji* 永樂宮壁畫全集 (Complete Collection of Wall Paintings from the Palace of Eternal Joy) (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997); Xiao Jun 蕭軍, ed., *Yongle gong bihua* 永樂宮壁畫 (Wall paintings from the Palace of Eternal Joy) (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008).

catalogue of the Xuanhe era) from the Northern Song (960–1127) mentions a painting by Wu Zongyuan 武宗元 (active early eleventh century) titled *Chaoyuan xianzhang tu* 朝元仙杖圖 (Picture of transcendents and seniors in audience with the Origin).¹⁴ Since the Yuan dynasty this work has been identified as a scroll now in the C. C. Wang collection in New York.¹⁵ Painted with ink outlines on silk, the scroll shows a procession of richly adorned deities on a bridge over a lotus pond. Xu Bangda 徐邦達 and others have suggested that the scroll is copied from a section of a mural painting.¹⁶ Like the *Ordination Scroll*, the deities in the C. C. Wang scroll are labelled with their names written in standard script in individual cartouches next to the figures.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Painting catalogue of the Xuanhe era) (c. 1120, repr. Shanghai: Shanghai remin meishu chubanshe, 1963), j. 4.40, 47.

¹⁵ The attribution was made by Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254–1322) in a colophon on the scroll. The scroll is reproduced in Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China*, no. 74. There is a smaller version of the work on paper in the Xu Beihong Memorial Museum, Beijing that does not carry the same inscription.

¹⁶ Xu Bangda 徐邦達, “Cong bishua fuben xiaoyang shuo dao liangjuan Song hua: ‘Chaoyuan xianzhang tu’” 從壁畫副本小樣說到兩卷宋畫—「朝元仙杖圖」 (From Mini-plans of Wall Paintings to Two Song Scroll Paintings: “Picture of Transcendents and Seniors in Audience with the Origin”), *Wenwu* 文物 (Cultural Relics), no. 2 (1956): 57–58; Huang Miaozhi 黃苗子, “Wu Zongyuan he Chaoyuan xianzhang tu” 武宗元和朝元仙杖圖 (Wu Zongyuan and Picture of Transcendents and Seniors in Audience with the Origin), *Zhongguo hua* 中國畫, no. 2 (1982): 56–62. Sarah Fraser suggests that the scroll may have circulated as an independent object in studios. See Sarah Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618–960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 114–119.

¹⁷ For a recent discussion on the identity of the deities in the scroll, see Wu Yu 吳羽, “Chuan Bei Song Wu Zongyuan ‘Chaoyuan xianzhang tu’ zhushen zuhe kaoshi: jian lun qi yu Tang Song daoguan diantang bishua de guanxi” 傳北宋武宗元「朝元仙杖圖」主神組合考釋—兼論其與唐宋道觀殿堂壁畫的關係 (Investigation into the Arrangement of Main Deities in “Picture of Transcendents and Seniors in Audience with the Origin” Attributed to Northern Song Wu Zongyuan: with Discussions on Its Relationship to Wall Paintings of Tang and Song Daoist Temple Halls), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal), no. 1 (2008): 80–159.

The portrayal of celestial officials in audience with the highest deities also appeared in print form, which suggests its dissemination as a format for representing the Daoist pantheon. An example of this is the frontispiece of the scripture *Yushu baojing* 玉樞寶經 (Precious Scripture of the Jade Pivot), which has recently been re-dated by Maggie Wan to the early Ming period.¹⁸ It depicts the original revelation of the scripture from Jitian yingyuan leisheng puhua tianzun 九天應元雷聲普化天尊 (Celestial Worthy Who Transforms All of the Sound of Thunder Responding to the Primordial of the Nine Heavens). The Celestial Worthy is shown seated on a throne behind an altar, while perfected beings as well as civil and martial celestial beings stand in rows to the front and side of the high deity.

On the basis of these examples, the processions depicted in the *Ordination Scroll* derive from a manner of representing the Daoist pantheon that is well-established by the Ming dynasty. It is also likely that the missing section at the beginning of the scroll once depicted one or a group of supreme deities, accompanied by guardians and attendants, towards whom the procession faces. However, the way that the celestial beings in the *Ordination Scroll* are depicted is not exactly the same as that of Heavenly Court images. Instead of grouping the figures close together and visually overlapping each other, the *Ordination Scroll* is distinctive for its depiction of celestial beings strictly in a single file with even gaps between them, resulting in an orderly and repetitive visual effect. This may be explained by a mundane need to stagger the figures across an enormous scroll, but why would such a large space be needed in the first place? Furthermore, what is the significance of the border with dragon motifs that frames the entire scroll?

The *Ordination Scroll* and Imperial Documents

Not surprisingly, size and scale are common ways that rulers in China communicated grandeur and authority. During the Ming dynasty, the

¹⁸ Maggie Chui-ki Wan 尹翠琪, “Daojiao banhua yanjiu: Daying tushuguan cang *Yushu baojing* sizhuben zhi niandai ji chahua kao” 道教版畫研究：大英圖書館藏《玉樞寶經》四註本之年代及插畫考 (Daoist Woodblock Prints: A Study of the Illustrations and Dating of the Glossed *Yushu Baojing* collected in the British Library), *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 道教研究學報：宗教、歷史與

Yongle 永樂 emperor (r. 1402–1424) took this strategy particularly seriously as he commissioned a series of large-scale projects, such as a gigantic bronze bell now housed at Dazhong si 大鐘寺 (Great Bell Temple), measuring 5.6 meters tall and weighing 46 tons.¹⁹ Another example of his large-size commissions is the scroll *Miracles of the Mass of Universal Salvation Conducted by the Fifth Karmapa for the Yongle Emperor* (*Pudu Ming Taizu changjuan tu* 普度明太祖長卷圖), painted on silk at nearly fifty meters in length. Produced as a gift to the Tibetan lama Dezheng Dekpa, it commemorates the miracles that took place during ceremonies held in Nanjing in 1407 by the lama in honor of the emperor's deceased parents.²⁰ Judging from Ming and Qing examples, the monumental horizontal scroll format was a popular mode at court for documenting imperial events. The two longest paintings in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, are *Departing from the Ming Forbidden City* and *An Imperial Procession to the Ming Tombs* (*Mingren chujing rubi tu* 明人出警入蹕圖) at twenty-six and thirty meters respectively. They form a pair depicting the journey of the Wanli 萬曆 emperor (r. 1573–1620) to and from the imperial mausoleum in the company of a massive retinue.²¹ Further examples of large horizontal scrolls recording imperial events have survived from the Qing dynasty, such as a set of twelve scrolls (nine of which survive) of *The Southern Tour of the Kangxi Emperor* (*Kangxi nanxun tu* 康熙南巡圖), ranging from around fifteen

社會, no. 2 (2010): 135–183. For images also see Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China*, no. 73, 237–239.

¹⁹ James Watt and Denise Leidy, *Defining Yongle: Imperial Art in Early Fifteenth-century China* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 18.

²⁰ For a discussion of this work, see Patricia Berger, “Miracles in Nanjing: An Imperial Record of the Fifth Karmapa’s Visit to the Chinese Capital,” in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 145–169.

²¹ The emperor has traditionally been identified as the Jiajing 嘉靖 emperor (r. 1521–1567). However, this view has been convincingly refuted by Zhu Hong who has identified the sites depicted in the scrolls and reconstructed the journey taken by the emperor. See Zhu Hong 朱鴻, “‘Mingren chujing rubi tu’ benshi zhi yanjiu” 「明人出警入蹕圖」本事之研究 (Research on the Subject of “Departing from the Forbidden City and Imperial Procession to the Ming Tombs”), *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 (National Palace Museum Research Quarterly) 22.1 (Autumn 2004): 184–213.

to twenty-six meters in length. The enormous size of the *Ordination Scroll* at twenty-seven meters long (even longer with the missing sections) is thus appropriate for a work that records the ordination of an empress.

The border framing the *Ordination Scroll* is another feature that clearly has imperial connections (fig. 1–3). Outlined in red and decorated with dragons separated by *ruyi* 如意 (wish-granting) cloud motifs, it gives the appearance of a mounted border even though it is painted on the same sheet of paper as the rest of the scroll. This type of decorated border on to the same surface as the body of the work resembles those in examples of imperial official documents. The National Museum of China, Beijing, has published a number of Ming-dynasty imperial decrees with this feature, including an edict on paper from the Hongzhi emperor dated 1491 (fig. 4).²² This document measuring 42 x 112.5 cm carries instructions to an Assistant Administrative Commissioner regarding silver mines in Yunnan. The text and the seal of the emperor are framed by a printed double-lined border in monochrome showing dragons separated by *ruyi* clouds meeting in the middle. This type of border is probably based on woven edicts in textiles, examples of which have survived from the beginning of the Ming dynasty.²³ The connection between borders with dragon motifs and imperial decrees would have been widely recognized beyond the imperial court. For instance, steles

²² Zhongguo guojia bowuguan 中國國家博物館, ed., *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guan cang wenwu yanjiu congshu. Mingqing dang'an juan. Mingdai* 中國國家博物館館藏文物研究叢書·明清檔案卷·明代 (Studies of the Collections of the National Museum of China. Ming-Qing Archives Volume. Ming Dynasty) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 16–17. This type of border continued to be used in Qing imperial decrees, see examples from 1679 and 1701 respectively reproduced in Lin Boyou 林泊佑 and Su Qiming 蘇啟明, eds., *Long wenhua tezhan* 龍文化特展 (The Beauty of Dragons) (Taipei: Guoli lishi bowuguan, 2000), 246; National Museum of Chinese History, *A Journey into China's Antiquity* 4 (Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers, 1997), 183.

²³ Zhongguo guojia bowuguan, ed., *Mingqing dang'an juan. Mingdai*, 2–7. Also, Yan Xing mentions an imperial document for postal riders woven in silk from 1427 in the National Museum of History, Taipei. See Yan Xing 晏星, *Zhonghua youzheng fazhan shi* 中華郵政發展史 (History of Postal Services in China) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1994), 190–191.

erected in temple courtyards recording imperial patronage are normally framed with dragons and would have been readily seen by temple visitors during the Ming dynasty.²⁴ The border in the *Ordination Scroll* evokes the visual format of imperial edicts, which helps to communicate the prestige and authority of the document. Furthermore, the similarity in form of the borders in the Hongzhi decree and the *Ordination Scroll* adds credibility to the mid-Ming dating of the latter work.

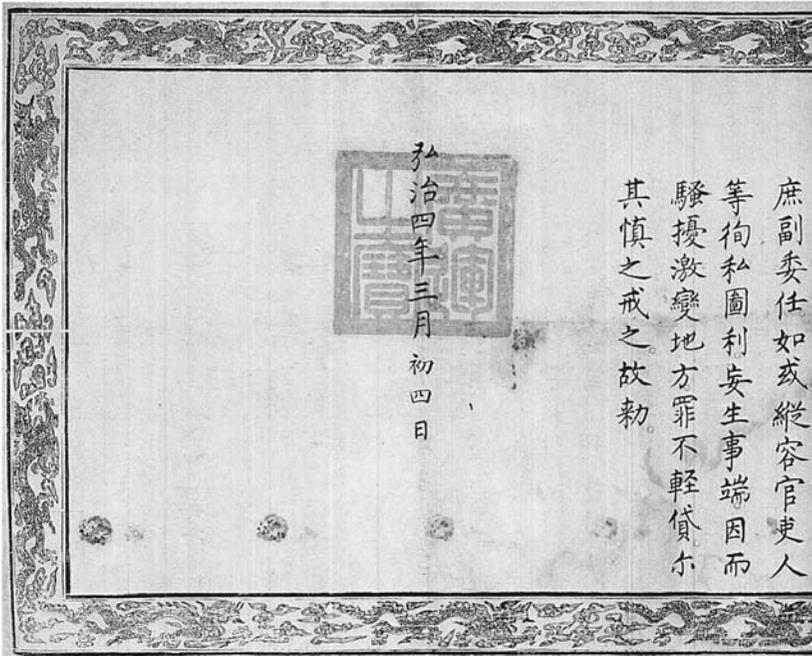


Fig. 4: Section of an imperial edict by the Hongzhi emperor, dated the fourth day of the third lunar month of 1491. Ink on paper with printed border, 42 x 112.5 cm. National Museum of China, Beijing. After *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guan cang wenwu yanjiu congshu. Mingqing dang'an juan. Mingdai* 中國國家博物館館藏文物研究叢書·明清檔案卷·明代 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), no. 7.

The relationship between visual conventions in Daoist ritual objects and imperial official documents is worth exploring further given the

²⁴ On the typical location of commemorative steles at temples in Beijing, see Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2000), 27–28.

bureaucratic organization of the Zhengyi order and the historically close ties between treasures that guarantee the imperial mandate and sacred items in Daoist rituals.²⁵ Furthermore, as noted earlier, Heavenly Court paintings are meant to echo the terrestrial court. The visual representation of the celestial pantheon in a sequence may be compared to imperial images that record events showing officials in procession. One example is the Northern Song (960–1127) *Picture of the Imperial Guard of Honor* (*Lubu tu* 鹵簿圖) in the National Museum of China, Beijing (fig. 5).²⁶ Painted on silk at around half a meter in height and nearly fifteen meters long, it served as a visual aid for the organization of the Grand Carriage Procession (*dajia* 大駕) used for major state occasions.²⁷ The complex composition representing thousands of officials is brought together by a symmetrical layout with precisely lined up figures and horses. The two scrolls of the Wanli emperor in procession mentioned earlier are also depicted with a sense of balance between variety and overall order that is achieved by a repetition of form and ornamentation.²⁸ Such neatly composed imperial paintings that document events present an ideal image of how a procession should appear in an orderly world under the rule of the emperor. The ritualized formality that is clearly expressed in the *Ordination Scroll* corresponds with this vision.

²⁵ Anna Seidel, “Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies: in Honour of R. A. Stein*, vol. 2, ed. Michel Strickmann (Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983), 291–371. On the bureaucratic model of the Zhengyi order, see Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), especially chapter 7.

²⁶ For images, see National Museum of Chinese History, *A Journey into China’s Antiquity* 3, no. 245, 238–243.

²⁷ Chen Pengcheng 陳鵬程, “Jiuti *Dajia lubu tushu*, *Zhongdao yanjiu*: ‘Yanyou lubu’ niandai kao” 舊題《大駕鹵簿圖書·中道》研究—「延祐鹵簿」年代考 (Research into the old inscription “Illustrated document of the Imperial Guard of Honour: Middle path”—Investigation into the dating of “The Imperial Guard of Honour of the Yanyou era”), *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal), no. 2 (1996): 76–85; Patricia Ebrey, “Taking Out the Grand Carriage: Imperial Spectacle and the Visual Culture of Northern Song Kaifeng,” *Asia Major* 12, no.1 (1999): 33–65.

²⁸ For images see Na Chi-liang, *The Emperor’s Procession: Two Scrolls of the Ming dynasty* (Taipei: The National Palace Museum, 1970).

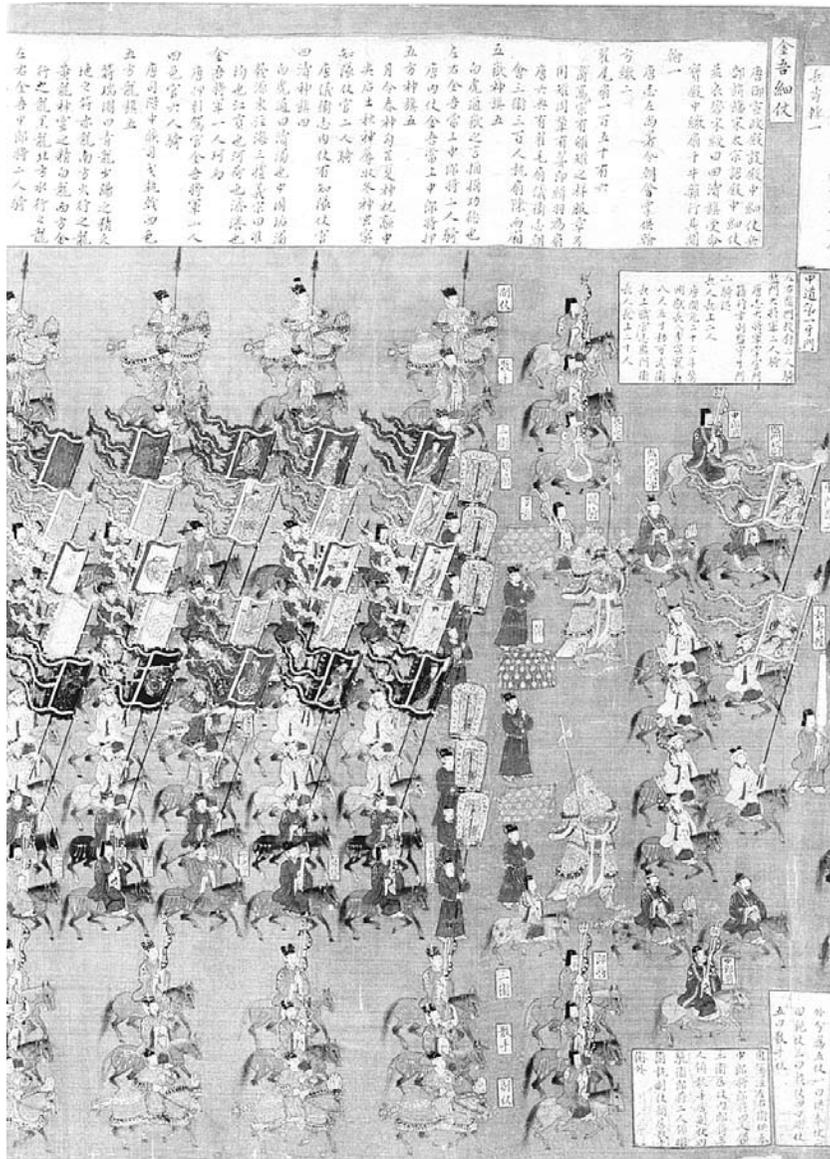


Fig. 5: Section of *Picture of the Imperial Guard of Honor*, Northern Song dynasty. Anonymous handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 54.1 x 1,481 cm. National Museum of China, Beijing. After *A Journey into China's Antiquities 3* (Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers, 1997), no. 245.

The Ordination Scroll and Registers

Another important consideration for understanding the visual format of the *Ordination Scroll* is its design as a ritual document. According to its inscription, the scroll was meant to be given to Empress Zhang as part of her ordination. It is referred to as *Zongzhen xianjian* 總真仙簡 (Tablet of Transcendence of the Totality of Perfection) in the list of items transmitted to the empress. *Zongzhen xianjian* is the shortened form of the formal title of the scroll written in large cloud-seal script at the beginning of the work: *Sandong chiwen zongzhen xianjian* 三洞赤文總真仙簡 (Tablet of Transcendence of the Totality of Perfection in Red Script of the Three Caverns). Specifically, the scroll contains a register (*lu* 籙), a list of celestial beings under the command of the ordinand. The names of the celestial beings under Empress Zhang's control are written near the end of the inscription. They are:

Mysterious Woman who Protects Correctness and Slays Evil of the
Nine Heavens
General Tang who Transforms through the Dao of Upper Prime
General Ge who Protects Correctness of Middle Prime
General Zhou who Sets Resolve of Lower Prime
Marshal Zhao of the Wish-granting Wand and Golden Wheel who
Expands Destiny and Supports Heaven
Celestial Stalwart Fu of Great Brightness who Adds Ranks and Sets
Noble Titles of the Supreme Divine Emyrean
Celestial Stalwart Hu of High Character who Sets Destinies and
Adds Emoluments of the Supreme Divine Emyrean
Celestial Stalwart Li of Great Fairness who Spreads Celebrations
and Stores Blessings of the Supreme Divine Emyrean
Six Ding Spirit Maidens
Six Jia Generals
九天斬邪護正玄女
上元道化唐將軍
中元護正葛將軍
下元定志周將軍
扶天廣運金輪如意趙元帥
高上神霄定爵增品大明傅天丁
高上神霄增祿定命上格胡天丁
高上神霄儲福衍慶大公李天丁

六丁神女
六甲將軍

The second procession of celestial beings on the left end of the scroll is a visual representation of this register. There is one notable difference between the written list and the depicted celestial beings: the first figure in the written register, the Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens (*Jiutian xuannü* 九天玄女), is not depicted in the procession. One possible reason for this may be the potential inappropriateness of portraying a deity with ancient ties to the art of the bedchamber in an empress' ordination document.²⁹ It may also have been problematic to depict a female celestial figure in the composition who could potentially take attention away from the representation of Empress Zhang.

Visual examples of Daoist registers and other documents can be found in the Daoist Canon.³⁰ The images in these registers vary. For instance, *Taishang beiji fumo shenzhou shagui lu* 太上北極伏魔神咒殺鬼籙 (Register that Kills Ghosts of Demon-subduing Divine Spells of the Northern Dipper of the Most High) includes an image of the Emperor of the Northern Dipper with an entourage portrayed as a separate small-scale procession.³¹ Images of celestial figures may appear within the written register as they are introduced. For instance, in one of the registers compiled in *Taishang sanwu Zhengyi mengwei lu* 太上三五正一盟威籙 (Registers of the Covenant with the Powers of Orthodox Unity of the Three and Five of the Most High), three generals are

²⁹ This aspect of the Mysterious Woman of Nine Heavens is discussed in Robert Hans van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China: A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1644 A.D.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 75–76. Also see Suzanne Cahill, “Sublimation in Medieval China: The Case of the Mysterious Woman of the Nine Heavens,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 20 (1992): 91–102.

³⁰ For more visual examples of Daoist documents, see DZ 466, *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* 靈寶領教濟度金書 (Golden Writings for Deliverance by the Sect Leader of the Numinous Treasure Tradition); DZ 508, *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 (Standard Liturgies of the Supreme Great Yellow Register Retreat).

³¹ DZ 1215, 8a–9a.

individually represented, separated by lines of text describing their names, appearance, attributes, and powers.³² In other examples, the depiction of one celestial figure may be used to represent a whole group, such as in *Shangqing dantian sanqi yuhuang liuchen feigang siming da lu* 上清丹天三氣玉皇六辰飛綱司命大籙 (Great Register of Flying Steps of the Six Stars that Govern Fate of the Jade Sovereign of the Three Pneumata of the Cinnabar Heaven of Highest Clarity) where each jade maiden stands for five hundred of her kind.³³ In this latter example, the figures face right and are separated by textual descriptions that give further information about them. The visual effect of this type of image where the figures are evenly separated is similar to that of the pictorial register in the *Ordination Scroll*.

There are also fully visualized registers like the one in the *Ordination Scroll* where the deities in a register are individually depicted in a sequence, but these are found outside the Daoist Canon. For instance, the *Yushu baojing*, mentioned earlier, contains pages of individually labelled celestial beings surrounded by clouds that can be considered a register.³⁴ The *Yushu baojing* is mounted as a narrow book in accordion format, so that one deity (occasionally two) can be suitably depicted on each page. Despite their difference in format, Shawn Eichman noticed the similarity in visual effect of this arrangement in the *Yushu baojing* to the processions in the *Ordination Scroll*.³⁵ Another example of a fully visualized register in handscroll format—from the twentieth century—has been identified. This register, dated to 1942, was found inside the cavity of a sculpture from Hunan 湖南 province.³⁶ Printed on two sheets

³² DZ 1208, 1.12b–15a.

³³ DZ 675, 7b–8a.

³⁴ This was discussed by Poul Andersen in his presentation titled “The Pantheon of the *Yushu jing* and the Gods of Late Song Thunder Rite,” at the Association of Asian Studies 2011 Annual Conference in Honolulu. I thank one of the reviewers for this information.

³⁵ Eichman, “The Art of Taoist Scriptures,” 41–42.

³⁶ Discussed and reproduced in Alain Arrault and Michela Bussotti, “Statuettes Religieuses et Certificats de Consécration en Chine du Sud (XVIIe–XXe siècle),” *Arts Asiatiques* 63 (2008): 50–51, fig. 18a–b. I would like to thank Professor Arrault for sharing this paper with me.

of paper in monochrome, the document depicts a series of talismans as well as a procession of military deities in two rows, some with their surnames written next to them. According to Alain Arrault and Michela Bussotti, the two sheets should be read side-by-side as a continuous register of deities under the command of a ritual master who is also depicted in the document.³⁷ The depiction of the celestial beings in this register is once again in a single line with spacing between them. Judging from these examples, it may have been a common practice in visualized registers to show each celestial being in an evenly-spaced sequence so that the figures can be clearly identified.

The *Ordination Scroll* and *Investiture of a Local God*

While there are various visual sources in Daoist and imperial images that the creators of the *Ordination Scroll* may have drawn from for the design of the work, one may ask whether these visual features are unique to this scroll or if it is a particularly elaborate example of a wider production of documents that use both images and text to record the transmission of scriptures and registers. The existence of another Daoist scroll from the Ming dynasty called *Investiture of a Local God* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, suggests the possibility of the latter. It is another interesting work featured in the *Taoism and the Arts of China* exhibition.

Investiture of a Local God is a nine-meter long scroll (including colophon) that records the elevation of a local god into the Daoist pantheon through the authority of the Zhengyi order (fig. 6).³⁸ From the Song dynasty (960–1279) onwards, it became increasingly popular for communities to petition the Heavenly Masters and the imperial court to

³⁷ Arrault and Busotti, “Statuettes Religieuses et Certificats de Consécration,” 48–49.

³⁸ For a clear reproduction of the scroll, see Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China*, no. 82, 256–257. The scroll is also discussed in Alan Priest, “Li Chung Receives a Mandate,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 34, no. 11 (Nov 1939): 254–257.

bestow official titles on their local gods.³⁹ Vincent Goossaert calls this process canonization (*daofeng* 道封). He explains that it is comparable, in principle, to ordinations as it also involves the transmission of powerful scriptures and registers.⁴⁰



Fig. 6: Detail from *Investiture of a Daoist Deity (Local God)*, 16th–early 17th century, colophons dated 1641. Anonymous handscroll, ink, colors, and gold on silk, 48.3 x 916.3 cm. 12 of 16 interior views. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1938 (38.31.1) (Image ©: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY)

Produced on silk, the *Investiture of a Local God* opens with a painted procession, followed by an inscription recording the details of the canonization ceremony. According to the inscription, the local god to be elevated is named Li Zhong 李忠. He is represented by a master called Li Daoqing 李道清 who requests the canonization on the god's behalf

³⁹ Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 256; Vincent Goossaert, “Bureaucratic Charisma: The Zhang Heavenly Master Institution and the Court Taoists in Late-Qing China,” *Asia Major* 17, no. 2 (2004): 139–141. On Song emperors giving honors to deities, see Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127–1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 80–84.

⁴⁰ Goossaert, “Bureaucratic Charisma,” 139–141.

from the fiftieth patriarch of the Zhengyi order Zhang Guoxiang 張國祥, citing an earlier Song ritual. This gives an end date to the scroll since Zhang Guoxiang passed away in 1611.⁴¹ A colophon written by a descendent of the Ming royal family was later added to the scroll, in 1641.

There are notable similarities in the pictorial elements found in both the *Ordination Scroll* and the *Investiture of a Local God*. Firstly, both have a border of dragons depicted in a regular sequence of colors. They are similarly painted onto the scroll and outlined in red to give the appearance of a mounted frame. As noted earlier, this type of decorated border resembles examples found on imperial official documents used in the Ming dynasty. Secondly, both scrolls present a long procession of civil and military celestial officials before the main inscription. In particular, the processions in the two scrolls are characterized by their evenly spaced figures that are, on the whole, facing right (compare fig. 2 and 7). The civil celestial officials in both scrolls have haloes and hold ceremonial tablets in a repeated pose. As in the *Ordination Scroll*, the recipient of the transmitted scriptures and registers in the *Investiture of a Local God*, Li Zhong, is depicted in the procession, although he is located at the back of the procession rather than at the front (compare fig. 1 and 6). He is identifiable by his larger size and the celestial messenger who is descending towards him with the celestial mandate that would elevate him in the pantheon. Furthermore, Li Zhong is surrounded by attendants and led by a distinctive male figure, probably his representative Li Daoqing, and two other figures dressed as Daoist priests, most likely Heavenly Masters. This arrangement is comparable to that of Empress Zhang and her entourage in the *Ordination Scroll*, preceded in that procession by Zhang Xuanqing, who was responsible for her ordination.

⁴¹ Pregadio, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 983.

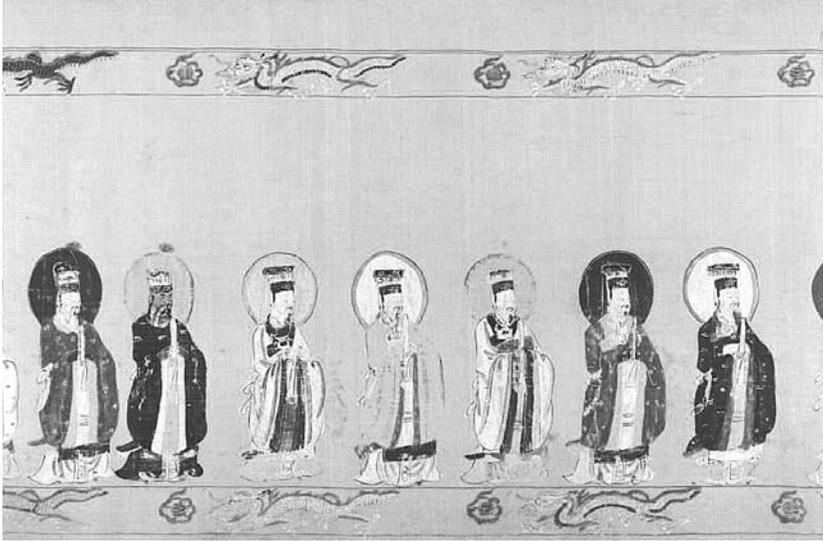


Fig. 7: Detail from *Investiture of a Daoist Deity (Local God)* showing celestial officials. 6 of 16 interior views. (Image ©: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY)

Thirdly, the inscription that follows the procession in the *Investiture of a Local God* states that four officials of the “Peak Office” (*Yuefu* 嶽府) with the surnames Wen 溫, Lü 呂, Tie 鐵 and Liu 劉 are being dispatched to assist the newly elevated Li Zhong in his duties. These four figures apparently refer to the first four Grand Guardians (*taibao* 太保) of the Eastern Peak who have the same surnames, except that Lü is normally Li 李.⁴² These Grand Guardians are military figures and are referred to as generals (*yuanshuai* 元帥).⁴³ In the *Investiture of a Local God*, there are four martial figures carrying weapons standing in front of Li Zhong’s attendants (fig. 8). With their flame-like aura, these four figures are clearly celestial beings, markedly different from the mortal guards in the group that precedes them. Given their distinct appearance and their proximity to Li Zhong’s group, they are most likely depictions of the officials under the local god’s command. Thus, although the ordering of

⁴² Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會, *Zhongguo daojiao da cidian* 中國道教大辭典 (Dictionary of Daoism in China) (Taipei: Dongjiu, 1996), 662–663.

⁴³ Ibid.

the procession is different from that in the *Ordination Scroll*, the *Investiture of a Local God* is similar in that the register of celestial beings that Li Zhong receives is also portrayed in the document recording his elevation in celestial status (compare fig. 3 and fig. 8). Given the notable similarities between the two scrolls, the opening scene of the *Investiture of a Local God*, which portrays a celestial audience with a supreme deity and his attendants, may be a good indication of the composition of the missing sequence in the *Ordination Scroll*.

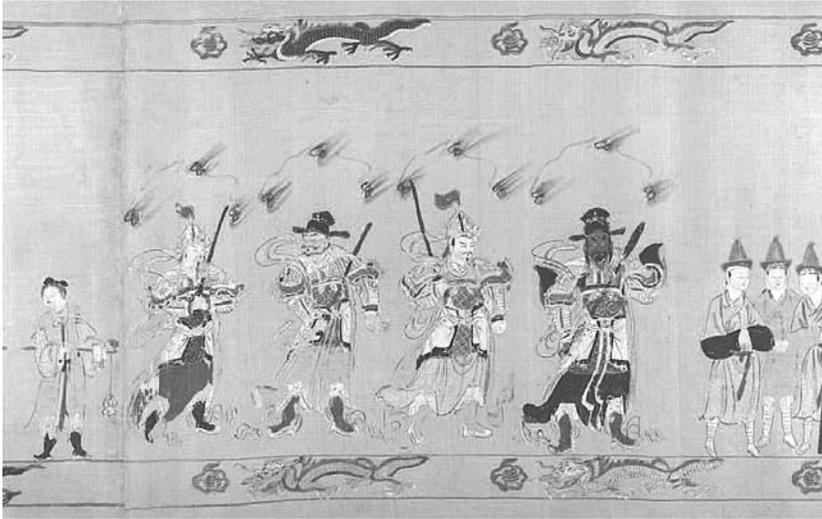


Fig. 8: Detail from *Investiture of a Daoist Deity (Local God)* showing the Grand Guardians. 10 of 16 interior views. (Image ©: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY)

In addition to the arrangement of the composition, there are some differences between the two scrolls that should be noted. The procession in the *Ordination Scroll* is completely located in the celestial realm filled with clouds, while the *Investiture of a Local God* shows a separation of those figures located in the celestial court from the following realm inhabited by human beings, and then the local god and other celestial beings who appear to be related to the ritual of canonization. The hierarchy of space is made clear by the depiction of an upper guarded red gate between the celestial court and the rest of the procession, as well as a messenger who descends from the celestial realm towards the local god. Temporally, this suggests two different points in the ritual process. The

Ordination Scroll, however, shows Empress Zhang as a member of the pantheon, which is the end result of her ordination, while the *Investiture of a Local God* portrays the moment that the local god receives the celestial mandate of recognition prior to his rise in celestial status.

Despite these differences, the similarities in the overall layout and content of the images in both scrolls are striking. Furthermore, the comparison can be extended to the text, which will be briefly discussed here. Both the inscriptions in the *Ordination Scroll* and the *Investiture of a Local God* record a request for the transmission of specific scriptures and registers from a Heavenly Master at Mount Longhu (Longhu shan 龍虎山).⁴⁴ They then record the elevated celestial position of the recipient of transmission as well as the names of the martial helpers who will assist them in their new role. Furthermore, both scrolls include talismans written in red in the inscription. In the *Ordination Scroll*, there are three talismans, while the *Investiture of a Local God* has one, on top of which is written in ink the earlier Song dating of the ritual. In both cases, the inscription refers to the talismans as “jade talismans” (*yufu* 玉符). The inscription in the *Ordination Scroll* is longer and more elaborate, partly because of the larger number of items that are transmitted to Empress Zhang, but the basic contents of the two inscriptions are comparable. Thus, although one scroll records an ordination and the other a canonization, they can be considered together as material records that document and certify the transmission of specific sacred items from the Zhengyi order that elevate an individual, either mortal or supernatural, into the celestial pantheon. Moreover, the two scrolls, which are produced in different social contexts, suggest the possibility that such documents may have shared similar pictorial elements and formats during the Ming dynasty.

The *Ordination Scroll* and Model Certificates

The *Ordination Scroll* and *Investiture of a Local God* are rare surviving documents that record transmissions of Daoist scriptures and registers that must have been produced in greater numbers. The wider dissemination of records of ordinations is indicated by the existence of

⁴⁴ Little, ed., *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 256.

model documents that are found in the Daoist Canon and *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist Texts Outside the Canon). Of particular relevance to the *Ordination Scroll* are model documents from the Ming dynasty found in *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* 上清靈寶濟度大成金書 (Golden Writings on the Great Achievement of Deliverance by the Numinous Treasure of Highest Purity, henceforth *Golden Writings*) compiled by Zhou Side 周思德 (1359–1451) and included in *Zangwai daoshu*.⁴⁵ This large compendium includes sections on documents used for the transmission of particular sacred writings.⁴⁶ Much of this ritual paperwork is used to notify the various otherworldly offices of the ceremony performed and request them to acknowledge the items transmitted. According to Ding Huang, the variety and quantity of transmitted documents recorded in *Golden Writings* reflect the increased complication in Zhengyi ritual procedures for ordinations between the Song and Ming dynasties after this institution was officially appointed the leader of the various Daoist lineages.⁴⁷

Among the model documents in *Golden Writings*, there are certificates with content comparable to the *Ordination Scroll*'s inscription. One example is a model document used to certify the transmission of *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (Great Rites of the Numinous Treasure of Highest Clarity), a title that refers to two texts originating from the thirteenth century, both of which are included in the Daoist Canon.⁴⁸ The model document is referred to as a “certificate for conferring ordination” (*jiaodu zhaotie* 交度照帖). It lists the sacred text, the ordinand's celestial rank, the altar established for the ritual, the

⁴⁵ *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist Texts Outside the Canon) (repr. Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992), vol. 16 and 17.

⁴⁶ *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* 上清靈寶濟度大成金書, in *Zangwai daoshu* 17, j. 36 and 37.

⁴⁷ Ding Huang 丁煌, “Zhengyi dahuang yuxiu yanshou jinglu chuyan” 《正一大黃預修延壽經錄》初研 (Initial Study into *Scripture and Register that Prolongs Longevity for Preparatory Cultivation of Great Yellow of Orthodox Unity*), in *Haixia liang'an daojiao wenhua xueshu yantaohui lunwen* 海峽兩岸道教文化學術研討會論文 (Papers from the Cross-Strait Symposium on Daoist Culture) 2 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996), 761.

⁴⁸ One is compiled by Jin Yunzhong 金允中 (fl. 1224–25) (DZ 1223) and the other by Wang Qizhen 王契真 (fl. c. 1250) (DZ 1221).

celestial offices that the ordinand can summon, as well as ritual implements and other related documents transmitted to the ordinand.⁴⁹ The register of celestial beings under the ordinand's control and precepts that he or she has to follow are given in separate documents.⁵⁰ The inscriptions of the *Ordination Scroll* as well as the *Investiture of a Local God* are clearly similar to this type of certificate in *Golden Writings* in that they also list the items transmitted to the figure undergoing ritual transformation. In particular, the inscription of the *Ordination Scroll* resembles the "certificate for conferring ordination" in terms of the structure and some of the language used. For instance, the model certificate lists the items with headings such as *zoushou* 奏授 (bestow by memorial) and *chuji* 出給 (give out), which is also the way the inscription is organized in the *Ordination Scroll*. It also introduces the transmitted items with following the statement:

Apart from notifying in writing the High Sovereigns of various heavens, submitting documents to the perfected directors of the three realms seeking their response, now extend issue of...

除已狀聞 諸天上帝，申牒三界真司咸祈照應外，今則延降⁵¹

This is comparable to lines in the inscription of the *Ordination Scroll* that likewise leads on to the items and ranks transmitted to Empress Zhang:

Apart from memorializing the elevated and deep, notifying the Master's Ministry in writing, sending documents to all the perfected directors ordering them to respond accordingly, a memorial is especially presented requesting ranks of registers and titles of honour to serve at the place of office...

奏聞高厚，啟箋師省，遍牒真司咸令照應外，特為奏請錄階睿號為任所

In addition to such similarities in the organization of the text, the connection between the inscription of the *Ordination Scroll* and the

⁴⁹ *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu*, in *Zangwai daoshu* 17, 36.41b–42a.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.40a–b, 36.42a–43a.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 36.40b.

“certificate for conferring ordination” is suggested in the ending of the latter:

Tablet of transcendence given to Inheritor of Rites, disciple so-and-so, as a certificate

Given in the [blank] year [blank] *sui* [blank] month [blank] day and time

Acting Master who Guarantees the Initiate, rank etc, surname, signature

Acting Master who Inspects the Ordination, rank etc, surname, signature

Acting Master of Ordination, rank etc, surname, signature

仙簡給付嗣法弟子某人執證

年 歲 月 日 時 給

攝保舉師具位云云姓 押

攝監度師具位云云姓 押

攝傳度師具位云云姓 押⁵²

In the above, the phrase “tablet of transcendence” clearly refers to a document that is given to the ordinand as a certificate (*zhizheng* 執證) that is the “certificate for conferring ordination.” As noted earlier, the formal title of the *Ordination Scroll* is “Tablet of Transcendence of the Totality of Perfection in Red Script of the Three Caverns.” Here in the *Golden Writings*, we find a standard transmitted certificate carrying similar content to the *Ordination Scroll* that also refers to itself as a “tablet of transcendence.”⁵³ However, it is notable that no images appear

⁵² Ibid., 36.41b–42a.

⁵³ Although the phrase “tablet of transcendence” is linked to a certificate similar to the *Ordination Scroll* that is used for the transmission of *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, it is not a fixed definition of the term. The phrase is mentioned again elsewhere in *Golden Writings* in relation to a different document used in the transmission of another text *Yuxiu huanglu* 預修黃籙 (Yellow Register for Preparatory Cultivation), which is specifically concerned with the salvation of the dead. In *Yuxiu huanglu*, the phrase “tablet of transcendence” appears at the end of a document of precepts (*jiedie* 戒牒). In other words, “tablet of transcendence” does not refer only to a certificate that lists various items transmitted. See *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu*, 36.19b–20a, in *Zangwai daoshu* 17.

in the standard certificates compiled in *Golding Writings*. Given the examples of the *Ordination Scroll* and *Investiture of a Local God*, there appears to be a gap between model documents and actual documents in terms of the use of pictorial elements.

The *Ordination Scroll* as a Certificate of Empress Zhang's Ordination?

So far, this paper has discussed the *Ordination Scroll* as an example of a ritual document that records and certifies the transmission of scriptures and registers from the Zhengyi order to Empress Zhang. As shown above, the textual format of the *Ordination Scroll* is closely related to standard ritual certificates from the Ming dynasty. However, it is questionable whether the present *Ordination Scroll* could have functioned as an actual certificate that was transmitted to Empress Zhang during her ordination ceremony. One reason for this is that the scroll makes no mention of any officiating priests of the ordination ritual nor are there any authorizing seals or signatures from them on the scroll. On the other hand, two seals that read “Seal of the Chief Official of Yangping Diocese” (*Yangpingzhi dugong yin* 陽平治都功印) are clearly visible on a Qing dynasty set of scriptures and registers given in 1754 to Yunbi 允祕 (1716–1773), King Chengqin (Chengqin wang 誠親王), the twenty-fourth son of the Kangxi 康熙 emperor (r. 1661–1722).⁵⁴ This set of documents is partially collected in the Tenri Central Library in Japan. “Seal of the Chief Official of Yangping Diocese” is a seal of the Heavenly Masters, said to have been originally carried by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 from the second century.⁵⁵ Names of officiating priests and seals

⁵⁴ Ōfuchi Ninji has reproduced one document from it titled *Shangqing sandong taiwei huangshu dongxuan tongling baolu* 上清三洞太微黃書洞玄通靈寶錄 (Precious Register that Connects to the Numinous of Cavern Mystery of Yellow Script of Great Tenuity of the Three Caverns of Highest Clarity). See Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Chūgokujin no shūkyō girei: Bukkyō Dōkyō minkan shinkō* 中国人的宗教儀禮：佛教道教民間信仰 (Tokyo: Fukutake Shoten, 1983), fig. 93. It is also discussed in Ding, “Zhengyi dahuang yuxiu yanshou jinglu chuyan,” 764–767, 800–801.

⁵⁵ Ren, *Daojiao zhangbiao fuyin wenhua yanjiu*, 251.

are also a necessary part of modern ordination certificates.⁵⁶ The absence of such information makes it questionable that the *Ordination Scroll* was transmitted to Empress Zhang during her ordination ceremony.

Another factor that leads to questions about the status of the *Ordination Scroll* as a ritual certificate is the peculiar depiction of Empress Zhang (fig.1): the image is painted on a sheet of paper that has been pasted on to the work. One possible explanation for why Empress Zhang's image was not painted directly onto the scroll may be that the *Ordination Scroll* was created as a model document to which the image of the empress was added. If this were the case, then it would add support to the argument that the scroll was not the version that was transmitted to Empress Zhang since it would be inappropriate to present a "template" to an empress as a ritual certificate. For a recipient as important as an empress who had painters at her disposal, her image should have been painted directly on to the scroll.

Lastly, the function of items transmitted in ordination ceremonies also raises doubt that the *Ordination Scroll* was a certificate given to Empress Zhang in ritual. While ordination documents are kept by an ordinand during his or her lifetime, these documents also carry authority that extends into the afterlife. They serve as proof of the ordinand's celestial status not only in the mundane world but also in death, ensuring the ordinand's unobstructed transcendence.⁵⁷ In order for the transmitted documents to be used in the afterlife, they have to be physically transformed. Early Daoist manuals stipulate that all transmitted items should be buried with the ordinand when he or she passes away.⁵⁸ For instance, the compendium of instructions *Zhengyi weiyi jing* 正一威儀經 (Scriptures of Dignified Liturgies of Orthodox Unity), probably from the late sixth century, states that:

⁵⁶ For twentieth-century examples, see Ōfuchi, *Chūgokujin no shūkyō girei*, 437–443.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this issue, see Ding Huang, "Zhengyi dahuang yuxiu yanshou jinglu chuyan (san)" 《正一大黃預修延壽經錄》初研(三) (Initial Study into Scripture and Register that Prolongs Longevity for Preparatory Cultivation of Great Yellow of Orthodox Unity, Part Three), *Daojiao xue tansuo* 道教學探索 (Investigation into the Study of Daoism) 10 (1997): 351–354.

⁵⁸ Zhang Zehong 張澤洪, *Daojiao shenxian xinyang yu jisi yishi* 道教神仙信仰與祭祀儀式 (Daoist Belief in Transcendents and the Ceremony of Offering Rituals) (Taipei: Wenxian chubanshe, 2003), 327.

Zhengyi talismans and registers, contracts and ringed swords, [should be] placed in a cloth bag and follow the body into the earth.

正一符籙、券契、環劍，布囊盛之，隨身入土。⁵⁹

A similar instruction is also expressed in the early Tang dynasty (618–907) manual *Fengdao kejie* 奉道科戒 (Codes and Precepts for Worshipping the Dao):

Zhengyi talismans, registers and various contracts [should be] put in a casket. Following the location of the deceased master in the mountains or in a tomb, a separate hole is made in which to place them.

正一符籙及諸券契函盛，隨亡師所在山谷或墓內，別作坎安置。⁶⁰

Thus, according to prescribed practice, the ordination document presented to Empress Zhang should have been physically destroyed upon her death. In other words, if protocol had been strictly followed, then the present *Ordination Scroll* could not have been the record that was transmitted to Empress Zhang in her ordination ceremony since it would not have come down to us. Empress Zhang's tomb, which she shares with the Hongzhi emperor, has not been excavated so one can only speculate upon whether such a document was ultimately buried with her.

Conclusion

Based upon the above reasons, it is doubtful that the *Ordination Scroll* was transmitted to Empress Zhang during her ordination ceremony together with scriptures and registers. However, the *Ordination Scroll* must have been an object valued in its own right, as can be deduced from its carefully painted appearance, with its touches of gold and other details, all of which clearly reflect the labor and attention that were

⁵⁹ DZ 791, *Zhengyi weiyi jing* 正一威儀經, 19a.

⁶⁰ DZ 1125, *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始, 5.3a.

invested into its production. Furthermore, the *Ordination Scroll* remains an important record of the appearance of ritual certificates for an imperial recipient from the Ming dynasty. Visually, it has connections to other kinds of Daoist and imperial images and documents. For instance, the depiction of a procession of celestial figures in the *Ordination Scroll* is derived from Heavenly Court images that were well-established by the Ming period. The size of the scroll, its painted border with dragon motifs, and its orderly format are comparable to imperial edicts and certain types of court paintings. The *Ordination Scroll* can also be linked to other Daoist registers and documents. In particular, there are notable similarities in format between the scroll and the *Investiture of a Local God*, also dated to the Ming. The visual format and basic textual content shared by the two scrolls suggest the possibility that similar features may have been more widely circulated. The dissemination of documents comparable to the *Ordination Scroll*, at least in terms of text, is further suggested by evidence from standard documents compiled in the Ming dynasty.

In conclusion, the *Ordination Scroll* is undoubtedly a remarkable object, but it was not an isolated creation. It is a high-end example of Daoist documents recording and certifying transmissions of scriptures and registers that not only shared similarities in textual format but probably also visual elements. By focusing on the visual aspects of the *Ordination Scroll*, this paper has attempted to draw attention to the importance of pictorial elements in Daoist ritual documents that may not be fully reflected in model documents that survive in compendiums. More research is needed to explore the relationship between images and text and the conventions of their use in a variety of Daoist ritual documents from different periods.

正一道教憑照中的圖像：以《張皇后授籙卷》(1493)為例

陸於平

摘要

美國聖地牙哥美術館收藏的二十七米長橫卷《張皇后授籙卷》(1493)是一件重要的明代(1368–1644)道教文物。作品中精緻的圖像以及長篇題字，記載了正一派四十七代天師張玄慶(?–1509)為明朝孝宗張皇后(1470–1541)授籙的情況。

本文以《張皇后授籙卷》的視覺特徵和整體格式為出發點，來探討作品與其他道教及宮廷圖像和文書的關係。首先，本文認為《張皇后授籙卷》的構圖應該跟朝元圖、帝王敕文、宮廷紀事畫以及道籙有關。然後，本文將《張皇后授籙卷》和另一件明代道教橫卷《道封地方神卷》進行比較。雖然兩件作品紀錄的儀式不同，但是它們在格式上有明顯相似的部分。此外，本文亦指出《張皇后授籙卷》的文字內容和格式，與明代周思德(1359–1451)《上清靈寶濟度大成金書》中稱為「仙簡」(即《張皇后授籙卷》的簡稱)的照帖相似。

根據以上例子，紀錄經籙傳授的道教文書除了文字上有格式的依據之外，圖像方面或許亦有樣式流傳，而《張皇后授籙卷》是圖文並茂的道教文書中的精美例子。最後，本文對於《張皇后授籙卷》是否張皇后在授籙儀式中所獲得的憑照提出疑問。原因包括張皇后圖像的描繪方式、橫卷中沒有天師授權的痕跡，以及道教科儀對授籙文書的處理要求。

關鍵詞：明代、正一派、張皇后、授籙卷、圖像