

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

正一道教憑照中的圖像：以《張皇后授籙卷》(1493)為例

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### 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