

**Legitimacy from Antiquity:  
Qing Imperial Ceramic Vessels  
for State Ritual**

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Submitted by

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## Candidate's Statement

I certify that this dissertation '*Legitimacy from Antiquity: Qing Imperial Ceramic Vessels for State Ritual*' has not previously been submitted in whole or in part for a degree, or as part of the requirements for a degree to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the dissertation results from original research performed by me between 2009 and 2014 and that it has been written by me. The help and assistance I have received in the course of my research are acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are acknowledged within the dissertation.

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This dissertation is the culmination of many years' study and research. Consequently, it is to be expected that many, many people have played parts in encouraging me along the way. The seed was sown more than twenty five years ago by the late J. Hepburn Myrtle, when he introduced to me the small group of Qing imperial ceramic ritual vessels on exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. He also gave me the transcript of a lecture delivered in London some thirty years earlier by Margaret Medley, which described the little then known in the West about this intriguing group of Chinese ceramics.

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## Abstract

“Legitimacy from Antiquity: Qing imperial ceramic vessels for state ritual” investigates a little known aspect of material culture in modern Chinese history: namely, the ceramic ritual vessels adopted by the Manchu imperium in 1748 for sacrifices at altars and temples in Beijing dedicated to the state religion of China and used by successive emperors until the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911. The dissertation examines the vessel forms in detail and provides the historical, religious and social contexts in which they appeared, all necessary for a better understanding of this long neglected, yet important group of objects.

The research is founded on the contents of the *Illustrated Compendium of Ceremonial Paraphernalia for State Rituals* Huangchao liqi tushi 皇朝禮器圖式, more simply the *Illustrated Regulations*, an imperially endorsed encyclopaedia begun in 1748 and printed in 1766 as part of a program of rectification and refurbishment of state ritual instigated by the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1795). This dissertation describes ritual paraphernalia focussing upon the *deng* 登, *dou* 豆, *fu* 簠, *gui* 簋, *jue* 爵, *xing* 錐, *zhan* 盞 and *zun* 尊 ceramic vessels. The descriptions of these vessels in the *Illustrated Regulations* are translated here for the first time, helping to inform the investigation in its aim to trace the origins and evolution of these Qing vessels. The documentary descriptions are compared to surviving vessels.

The report reveals the physical characteristics of Qing dynasty imperial ceramic ritual vessels used by the Qianlong emperor and his successors, and how and where they were employed. It helps show how the vessels demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of ancient Chinese culture on the part of the Manchu imperium. Furthermore, the dissertation establishes criteria for a modern identification of Qing imperial ceramic vessels for state ritual and provides a list of surviving vessels held in both public and private collections around the world.

By setting out the forms and functions of these rare Qing imperial ceramic vessels for state ritual, this dissertation contributes to the study of Chinese ceramics. It demonstrates the vessels’ role in Chinese ritual history as *miranda*, strengthening Qing claims of legitimacy, and indicates the high degree of Sinification of the Manchu court which sponsored their introduction. In so doing, it also contributes to ongoing discussion concerning the Sinification of the Qing.



Fig. 0.1. Qing Imperial Vessels for State Ritual – A Study Collection

- Top-left: **Dou/Deng** (Altar of the Moon, Qianlong)
  - Top-centre: **Zun** (Temple of Imperial Ancestors, Qianlong)
  - Top-right: **Dou/Deng** (Altar of the Sun, Qianlong)
  - Mid-left: **Deng** (Temple of Prayers for Good Harvests, Guangxu)
  - Mid-centre: **Bronze Jue** (Temple of Confucius, Qianlong)
  - Mid-right: **Xing** (cover missing) (Altar of Earth, Tongzhi)
  - Bottom-left: **Fu** (Temple of Prayers for Good Harvests (Daoguang)
  - Bottom-centre: **Dou** (Temple of Prayers for Good Harvests, Jiaqing)
  - Bottom-right: **Gui** (Altar of Earth, Guangxu)
- Source: Photograph by Iain Clark



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## Chronology of Dynasties in China

Dynasty	Time
Xia 夏	21 <sup>st</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> century BCE
Shang 商	16 <sup>th</sup> – c.1050 BCE
<b>Zhou 周</b>	<b>c.1050 - 221 BCE</b>
Western 西周	c.1050 – 771 BCE
Eastern 東周	770 – 256 BCE
Springs and Autumns 春秋	770 – 476 BCE
Warring States 戰國	475 - 221 BCE
Qin 秦	221 - 206 BCE
<b>Han 漢</b>	<b>206 BCE - 220 CE</b>
Western 西漢	206 BCE - 9 CE
Eastern 東漢	25 - 220
Wei 魏	386 - 557
Northern Zhou 北周	557 - 581
Sui 隋	581 – 618
Tang 唐	618 – 907
Liao 遼	907 - 1125
<b>Song 宋</b>	<b>960 - 1279</b>
<b>Northern Song 北宋</b>	<b>960 – 1127</b>
Taizu 太祖	960 – 976
Taizong 太宗	976 – 997
Zhenzong 真宗	997 - 1022
Renzong 仁宗	1022 - 1063
Yingzong 英宗	1063 - 1067
Shenzong 神宗	1067 - 1085
Zhezong 哲宗	1085 - 1100
Huizong 徽宗	1100 – 1125
Qinzong 欽宗	1126 – 1127

**Chronology of Dynasties in China (continued)**

<b>Southern Song 南宋</b>	<b>1127 – 1279</b>
Gaozong 高宗	1127 – 1162
Xiaozong 孝宗	1162 – 1189
Guangzong 光宗	1189 – 1194
Ningzong 寧宗	1194 – 1224
Lizong 理宗	1224 – 1264
Duzong 度宗	1264 – 1274
Gongzong 恭宗	1275 – 1276
Duanzong 端宗	1276 – 1278
Jin 金	1115 – 1234
Yuan 元	1279 – 1368
<b>Ming 明</b>	<b>1368 – 1644</b>
Hongwu 洪武	1368 - 1398
Jianwen 建文	1398 – 1402
Yongle 永樂	1402 – 1424
Hongxi 洪熙	1424 – 1425
Xuande 宣德	1425 – 1435
Zhengtong 正統	1435 – 1449
Jingtai 景泰	1449 – 1457
Chenghua 成化	1464 – 1487
Hongzhi 弘治	1487 – 1505
Zhengde 正德	1505 – 1521
Jiajing 嘉靖	1521 – 1567
Longqing 隆慶	1567 – 1572
Wanli 萬曆	1572 – 1620
Taichang 泰昌	1620
Tianqi 天啟	1620 – 1627
Chongzhen 崇禎	1627 – 1644

**Chronology of Dynasties in China (continued)**

<b>Qing (Aisin Gioro) 清</b>	<b>1636 – 1911</b>
Tianming 天命	1616 – 1626
Tiancong 天聰	1626 – 1636
Shunzhi 順治	1644 – 1661
Kangxi 康熙	1662 - 1722
Yongzheng 雍正	1723 - 1735
Qianlong 乾隆	1736 - 1795
Jiaqing 嘉慶	1796 - 1820
Daoguang 道光	1821 - 1850
Xianfeng 咸豐	1851 - 1861
Tongzhi 同治	1862 - 1874
Guangxu 光緒	1875 - 1908
Xuantong 宣統	1909 - 1912
Republic of China 中華民國	1912 – 1915
<b>Empire of China 中華帝國</b>	<b>1915 – 1916</b>
Hongxian 洪憲	1915 – 1916

This chronology omits the names of many kingdoms in times when parallel states existed. Only the largest, best known or most enduring names have been included.