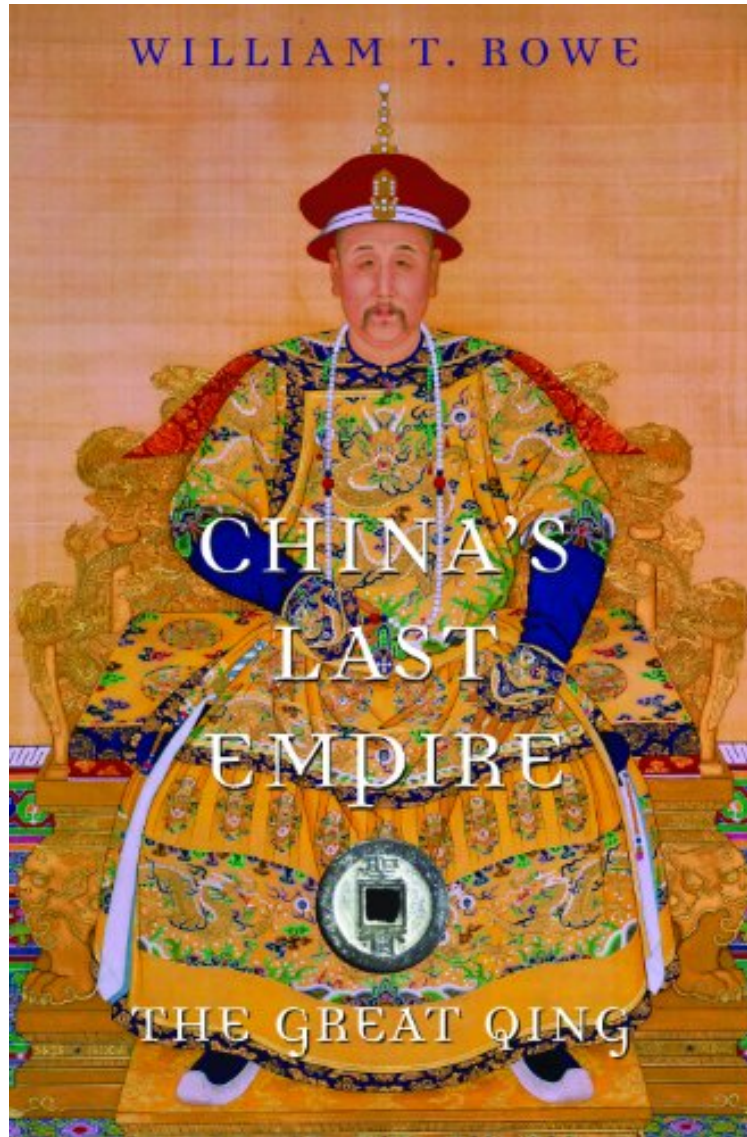


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## China's Last Empire: The Great Qing (History of Imperial China)

*William T. Rowe*

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**William T. Rowe : China's Last Empire: The Great Qing (History of Imperial China)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised China's Last Empire: The Great Qing (History of Imperial China):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Slightly Below Par By dmiguer This is sadly the last book in Harvard's "History of Imperial China" series, edited by Timothy Brook. It is sad there are no further empires following the Qing, so that this saga could continue. Although the series featured several different authors, it has held together as a whole stylistically and artistically. Most of the previous features are well represented in this present volume. Timothy

Rowe in large does a good job in under 300 pages encapsulating the past and current historiography of the Qing. In the 20th century seen as a failed state, stagnant and insular, the Qing are re-envisioned as an expansionist multi-ethnic corporation in the new millennium. Rowe takes us through the Ming conquest narrative, the "golden age", the Taiping rebellion, and the imperialist and republican challenges. There are thematic chapters on the government and economy interspersed within the chronology. Noticeably absent are the chapters on religion, family and literature that figured prominently in previous volumes. This is unfortunate as these chapters transformed the series from standard textbooks into something more holistic. This last installment is nonetheless well written and up to date. If it is not quite up to the breadth of the prior books, it is still worth reading if you've come this far and don't otherwise know how the story ends. Incidentally, if you consider together all six volumes of roughly 350 pages each you have a combined work of over 2000 pages. This is not an inconsequential contribution to recent surveys available. 28 of 28 people found the following review helpful. The finest kind of survey. By G. Glick. Once in a long time, comes a history that departs from the unpalatable choice of over-specialized/detailed research topic versus unoriginal/padded general overview. William Rowe's survey volume on the Qing Dynasty is happily one such volume. Rowe has not only thoroughly digested the ever-accumulating [and now fairly massive] specialized research on the period, but also fashioned a new conception of the dynasty that deserves the attention both general readers and specialists. As a past history major, I am usually quite cynical about those who talk of history as a "building block process" in which the specialists lay the bricks and the generalists make the buildings. But in this case, Rowe has built a fine structure that also does honor to those whose contributions he utilizes. This is now the finest general volume on the Qing and is not to be missed. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. beautifully illustrated. By Customer. Well written, beautifully illustrated.... Will revisit it many times.

In a brisk revisionist history, William Rowe challenges the standard narrative of Qing China as a decadent, inward-looking state that failed to keep pace with the modern West. This original, thought-provoking history of China's last empire is a must-read for understanding the challenges facing China today.

In a fine, well-written study, Rowe brings the latest scholarship in Qing history to a wide audience. This book reflects a lifetime of reading in the field, and is written in the fluent manner of an accomplished and very successful author. Responsible and judicious, it makes an important contribution to our understanding of Chinese history. (R. Kent Guy, University of Washington) Here is a new narrative for Chinese history. It is based on the path-breaking scholarship of a small body of principally American scholars who have shown that after the non-Han Manchus conquered the Ming in 1644, traditional China was gradually replaced by something very different. This meant that the previous explanations, emanating from the Harvard school, led by the persuasive John King Fairbank, which emphasized a succession of essentially unchanging dynasties, must be abandoned... In short, as Professor Rowe sets out in this important book, "the inward-looking and hermetic Celestial Empire" has vanished and something far more interesting has come convincingly before us. (Jonathan Mirsky Times Literary Supplement 2009-12-04) A very fine book, drawing on the best new scholarship on this pivotal period in Chinese history. (K. E. Stapleton Choice 2010-03-01) This series on China, brilliantly overseen by Timothy Brook, is a credit to Harvard University Press. Above all, it encourages us to think of China in different ways. (Jonathan Mirsky Literary 2010-11-01) About the Author William T. Rowe is John and Diane Cooke Professor of Chinese History at Johns Hopkins University. Timothy Brook is Professor of History and Republic of China Chair at the University of British Columbia.