

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE CORONATION RITE
A Study Guide



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INTRODUCTION & OUTLINE

THIS study guide is designed to close a gap in the literature about the Coronation, to discuss in detail the theological questions which the rite raises, which are of particular significance to the Church of England, as the Established Church. It will begin with a summary of the history of the Rite, which is ancient.

Most liturgical scholars speak of four *Recensions*, or iterations, of the Coronation Order. E C Ratcliffe, one the foremost liturgists to have studied this in detail in the 20th c, considers there are six. Certainly, the so-called Fourth Recension has undergone refinement since its first use in 1327 at the Coronation of Edward III. The survey of the history of the service will lead into discussion of the Biblical background to the Coronation, and the theology of the Rite itself.

Ideas of Sacral Kingship in the Hebrew Scriptures are key to understanding the Theology of Kingship. The Biblical material is almost limitless, but we shall try to provide headlines from a sweep of Biblical and related texts. There will follow an exploration of anointing in the early Church and the development of Chrismation in the rites of Baptism and Ordination. This will lead to a discussion about the Crown itself as the lustrous symbol of the Oil of Unction. We shall use the term Sacring¹ interchangeably with Royal Anointing, as it holds within it the Christian sense of what is taking place at the heart of a Coronation. There is then a commentary on the 1953 Service. This is followed by a series of individual essays, which look at aspects of the history, the Regalia and Vesture, which are of interest theologically. The aim is to have in focus, at each point, the religious significance of what is described and observed.

It is often said that the English have no Constitution; we have a Coronation. This guide avoids detailed discussion of matters of governance and statecraft, which belong better in other spheres; however, issues of Church and State, throughout the history of this rite, have not been easy to disentangle. For an Established Church, however anachronistic such an entity might seem in a secular society for some, this should be a matter to celebrate. Where issues of governance and the accountability before God of the Head of State cannot be distinguished, the Church needs to know what it has to say. Not only does the Church of England have a place at the table, at the Coronation, it is the Church which provides that table, or altar, and the regalia which are set upon it.

William Gulliford March 2023

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, first use of Sacring 1291



Queen Elizabeth II receiving the homage of her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, as the foremost Royal Duke. She sits on her higher throne, surrounded by the Bishops of Durham and Bath & Wells, and the Great Officers of State. (Photo Royal Collection Trust)

A HISTORY OF THE CORONATION RITE IN ENGLAND

Roman and Saxon background to the Coronation by Glen Ruffle

THE Roman conquest of Britain brought a political connection to the European continent along with an enduring religious tie. In the footsteps of imperial power came missionaries with strong links to Rome, the sending Mother Church.

Despite the collapse of Rome, the dream lived on: buildings continued to hark back to the glory days of the *Pax Romana*, even when the legions had departed.

The Christian inheritance bequeathed by Rome lasted far longer than the Empire. And this ensured enduring memory of imperial rule, practice and style, and most significantly, the propagation of pagan patterns of worship, which echoed the inaugurations of the Imperators.

Coronation in Imperial Rome

When Augustus became the first true emperor of Rome, he welcomed notions of deification which accompanied his new status. Augustus was the adopted heir of Julius Caesar, who had swept to victory upon victory across the known world. The immediate legacy was a proliferation of statues and a cult of the Emperor. He was acclaimed a living god amongst his people.

This concept of the Emperor in Rome being a son of the gods (or god) was one with which that early Christians had to contend; the claim that Jesus was the Son

of God was a direct challenge to the emperor². A transition was in motion: from human being to all-knowing authority, requiring unquestioned obedience.

Rome in Christian hands

As the barbarian hordes encroached, so Church and State became ever more entangled and political power moved elsewhere. As Christianity's reach increased, the influence of the Pope in Western Europe only grew. The Pope was seen ever more explicitly as successor to St Peter, the one on whom Christ would build his church; and this, combined with the imperial backdrop of Rome, added a touch of perceived divine anointing to the papacy and the verdicts issuing from Rome.

Saxon Kings and their Coronations

The coronations of Saxon kings were influenced by that legacy. Just as the Papacy was carrying over aspects of social organisation and ceremonial ritual from imperial Rome, so this was adapted in the tribal societies that Roman missionaries were succeeding in converting.

Exaltation of the King as having a new authority and commissioning that emanated from the divine remained in the coronation, though the pagan concept of deification was recalibrated as Christian influence placed the sovereign under Christ.

And it is very suggestive that Bath Abbey – in the city of England with perhaps the most Roman influence – was chosen for the late Coronation of King Edgar in 973 by St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury³: Bath maximised connections with the now-romanticised memory of imperial power, *Pax Romana*, and the papal authority of God.

The First Recension

The four Anglo-Saxon *ordines* or *recensions*, Roy Strong describes as “perhaps the most complicated documents in the history of the English Coronation.”⁴ We can date Coronation rites on these shores back to AD 574, when Blessed Aidan, King of Dalriada, was blessed with the laying on of hands by St Columba⁵.

² Page 468, Craig Evans, *New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, CUP, 2012

³ <https://www.bathabbey.org/visiting/history/people-and-stories/>

⁴ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From 8th to 21st Centuries*, Harper Collins 2005, p. 22.

⁵ English Coronation Records Ed. Leopold C Wickham 1901 Archibald and Co, p. 1.

The Pontifical of Egbert of York (732-766)⁶ provides more detailed documentary evidence of the prayers used in Anglo Saxon England. Between the early 8th c and the late 10th c the evolution of the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon rites can be tracked in parallel.⁷ The text of the First Recension is found in this source.

The Second Recension & the Work of St Dunstan

The Coronation Order of Aethelred II (978-1016)⁸ is the basis of the Second Recension. The manuscript belongs to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and dates from the 11th c. It is probable that this was the rite used for the coronations of both Harold and William the Conqueror, and based on the rite drawn together by St Dunstan in 973 and first used at Bath Abbey for the Coronation of Edgar. Roy Strong's pragmatic handling of these texts in his *Magnum Opus Coronation* is both scholarly and helpful.⁹

⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷ Reginald Woolley *Coronation Rites* 1915 Cambridge University Press

Woolley (pp58-61) as part of his survey of these primal sources, observes:

The earliest form of the English rite is that which is found in the so-called Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York 732-766. Of this rite Dom Cabrol says that it is 'sans doute le plus ancien qui existe.'

As to the existence of a coronation rite among the Anglo-Saxons, we find two allusions to a religious ceremony in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle at the end of the eighth century. Thus under the year 785 we are told that Ecgferth, who was associated on the throne by his father Offa, was in that year 'hallowed as king' (to cyninge gehalgod). The same authority speaks of the consecration of Eardwulf on his accession to the Northumbrian throne in the year 795; 'he was then consecrated and raised to his throne' (geblestod 7 to his cinestole ahofen). Eardwulf who was of the old line of kings had been called to the throne after a usurpation.

Both these kings were, however, raised to the throne under peculiar circumstances, and we cannot therefore regard this evidence as proof that a coronation rite was definitely established in England by the end of the eighth century because of these isolated instances occurring in the two Saxon kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria, all the more so as in both cases it was the influence of the Church that set these kings on the throne. We are also told by Asser a story of the consecration of Alfred as king by Pope Leo IV at Rome, whither he had been sent by his father Ethelwulf. This story is embellished and repeated by other writers^[65], who add that Alfred retained the regalia and vestments used at this Roman coronation, and that they were preserved^[60] henceforward among the English regalia. But a fragment of a letter from Pope Leo to Ethelwulf disposes of this legend altogether, for in it he informs King Ethelwulf that he has invested his son Alfred with the insignia of a Roman consul. Asser makes no mention of any coronation of Alfred in England.

The Order of the Pontifical of Egbert must, **then**, be used with caution. All that we can say with respect to its date is that a comparison between it and the so-called Order of Ethelred, which is of the tenth century, shews that the former is an earlier compilation than the latter, and much simpler and less fixed in character.

⁸ English Coronation Records Ed. Leopold C Wickham 1901 Archibald and Co, p. 14.

⁹ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From 8th to 21st Centuries*, Harper Collins 2005. See particularly his reconstruction of the Second Recension, pp. 28-29.



St Dunstan depicted in the Luttrell Psalter 1325-1340 British Library MS 42130, f. 54

St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (960-988 c. 1021) was one of the foremost Saxon churchmen and politicians, whose legacy for the Sacring of England is of singular significance. What he achieved in relation to the Anointing rituals of English kings was the following:

1. Clarity over the progression and order of the ritual
2. Consolidation of the delivery of the regalia to the sovereign at the hands of the clergy only, underlining how secular power derives from God.
3. Establishment thereafter that the rite was the responsibility of the Archbishop of Canterbury alone.
4. The addition of new items of regalia which fashion the rite after the Consecration of a Bishop
5. The prostration of the King at the outset of the rite signals the annihilation of the initiate in preparation for a re-birth into a new status.
6. This rebirth is conditional upon the *promissio regis*, moved from the end of the rite to its very outset.

Dunstan's rite remains substantially unchanged, although certain modifications have been made. Notably the golden helmet of the earlier Saxon rite has been replaced with a crown since at least the Coronation of Edward the Confessor. The Saxon idea of election remains a key feature of the Rite, however the hereditary principle has overridden the election in practice.



The Coronation of King William the Conqueror 25 December 1066 as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry

The Cult of the Confessor



The depiction of St Edward the Confessor in the Bayeux Tapestry

Relics of Holy Confessors.

Saint Edward, king and confessor, for the memory of posterity and for the dignity of the royal coronation, caused to be preserved in this church all the royal ornaments with which he was crowned; namely his tunic, supertunica, armil, girdle and embroidered pall; a pair of buskins, a pair of gloves, a golden sceptre, one wooden rod gilt, another of iron.

Also an excellent golden crown, a golden comb, and a spoon.

Also for the coronation of the queen, a crown and two rods.

Also for the communion of the lord king, on the day of his coronation, one chalice of onyx stone with a foot, rivets, and a paten of the best gold; all of which are to be considered precious relics.¹⁰

The relics of St Edward served a double function. They were at once the foundational regalia for the Coronation Rite, following the Conquest, *and* sacred objects – secondary relics of the great saint and King of England, held in perpetuity by the Abbey Church he founded.

Two kings of the later Middle Ages venerated the Confessor, Henry III (1216-1272) and Richard II (1377-1399). Henry III's rebuilding of the Quire of the Abbey created the *mise-en-scène* we know today, making eventual provision for his own burial as near to the Confessor as possible, indeed in the latter's previous grave, next to the new shrine. Richard II's cult of Edward was almost obsessive.

The association of the Sacring with proximity to the Shrine, added a dimension to Sacral Kingship from soon after the Norman Conquest. For the Conqueror, the emphasis was more to shore up his own legitimacy in succeeding Edward, and to erase the traces of King Harold, whom he had usurped. But the holiness of the Abbey as the resting place of a sainted king, using regalia associated with the Confessor, certainly added a dimension to the anointing rituals and thereby to Edward's successors' special status. This association served only to increase the blessing they received, in the eyes of the hierarchy and the people.

William the Conqueror's choice of Christmas Day 1066 as his Coronation date answered Harold's choice of Epiphany in the January of the same year. Charlemagne had been crowned on Christmas Day, and the imagery of *re-birth* was by now a key part of the significance of the rite. The settling from 1066 onwards of the use of the Abbey as the Coronation locus underlines continuity with the last of the Saxons, and connection with a Royal Saint.

The Ordination Character of Anointing from Saxon times

The early mediaeval rites draw a direct connection between the rite of the consecration of a bishop, and the rite of the consecration of a king. It was undoubtedly this similarity that was the chief ground for the doctrine that an

¹⁰Leopold Wickham, Inventory of the Coronation Regalia, by the Monk Sporley c. 1450 see *English Coronation Records* Ed. 1901 - Archibald and Co, p. 191-2.

anointed king was *mixta persona*, a view that is still maintained by some. The closeness of the structure of the two rites is seen at a glance.

<i>Consecration of a bishop.</i>	<i>Consecration of a king.</i>
Oath of canonical obedience.	Oath to maintain Church and justice.
Litany.	Litany.
Laying on of hands.	
Veni Creator.	Veni Creator.
Collect.	Collects.
Preface and Consecration prayer.	Preface and Consecration prayer.
Anointing.	Anointing.
Delivery of Crozier, Ring, Mitre, and Gospel-book.	Delivery of Sword, Pallium, Crown, Ring, Sceptre and Rod.
Mass.	Mass.

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¹¹ Reginald Woolley, *Coronation Rites 1915*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 193-196.

The bishop, after the consecration prayer, is anointed on the head with chrism. The king, after the consecration prayer, is anointed on head, breast, etc., with chrism according to the English and French rites, with oil according to the Roman use. The Roman form used at the anointing of a bishop is:

Ungatur et consecretur caput tuum caelesti benedictione, ordine pontificali, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti; a Roman form at the anointing of a king runs *Ungo te in regem de oleo sanctificato in nomine*, etc. The hands of a bishop are anointed with the form *Ungantur manus istae de oleo sanctificato et chrismate sanctificationis sicut unxit Samuel David Regem et Prophetam, ita ungantur et consecrentur*; in the case of a king the general form runs *Ungantur manus istae de oleo sanctificato unde uncti fuerunt reges et prophetae et sicut unxit David in regem*, etc. The Ring is delivered to a bishop with the words *Accipe anulum discretionis et honoris fidei signum*, etc.; to a king with the words *Accipe regiae dignitatis anulum et per hunc in te catholicae fidei*[195] *cognosce signaculum*, etc. The Pastoral staff is delivered to a bishop with the words *Accipe baculum regiminis signum, ut imbecilles consolides, titubantes confirmes, pravos corrigas, rectos dirigas*, etc.; compare with this the form with which the Verge or Rod is delivered to the king, *Accipe virgam virtutis atque aequitatis, qua intelligas mulcere pios et terrere reprobos*, etc. Finally the bishop is seated ‘in capite sedium episcoporum’ and the king is enthroned.

These instances are sufficient to shew unmistakably that one rite influenced the other. But the stage at which the similarity is so noticeable is a late stage in the history of both rites, and at an earlier date when both were simpler, much of the later parallelism is not to be found. In the process of the great liturgical developments of the Middle Ages there was naturally an assimilation in the case of the consecration of persons, and there seems to have been a good deal of experimenting in the case of the rite of the consecration of a king, many pontificals containing orders with various peculiarities, which certainly were never used. On the other hand, there is also to be noticed a careful differentiation between the two rites, and this especially in the Roman orders. The

The Third Recension

The Third Recension is a crucial document in which the Church redrew the boundaries that differentiated the laity from the clergy.¹²

This version of the rite is found in seven manuscripts, and was developed between the Conquest and the Coronation of Edward II in 1308. From the early eleventh century, the Church revised its view of the use of Chrism and with it the connection between the Sacring and the Ordination of Bishops.

This period coincides with the difficulties experienced by successive Archbishops and the Kings they both crowned and served. The exiles of Lanfranc and Thomas Becket and the Interdict of England were instances of the considerable tensions between State and Church. Becket's murder in his Cathedral just after Christmas 1170 brought these discussions to a dramatic conclusion. And Roy Strong concludes "The Church emerged as victor."¹³

The growing symbolism around the Coronation of the Queen (Consort) in these years, reflects the enhancement of the nature of mediaeval queenship in this period.

Roman Rite was never elaborate and in process of time tended to a greater simplicity. Thus the investiture of a king with the Ring does not appear in it except for a very short time, and then from outside sources; in the same rite the unctions are only two in number, and there is a difference in the parts anointed in the case of a king,[196] he being anointed only between the shoulders and on the wrist. If, as is most likely, kings in the West were anointed on the head, this differentiation between the anointing of a bishop and a king seems deliberate on the part of the Roman Church. Moreover, while it is true that in England and France chrism was used for the unction of a king as for a bishop, in the Roman rite chrism was never so used in the case of a king, but only the 'oleum catechumenorum.'

¹² Coronation: From 8th to 21st Centuries Roy Strong 2005, Harper Collins. See particularly his reconstruction of the Second Recension, p. 46.

¹³ Ibid., p. 46.

The Fourth Recension and its Endurance



The Liber Regalis, Westminster Abbey

The *Westminster Missal* and the *Liber Regalis*¹⁴, both held by Westminster Abbey, contain the definitive texts of the later mediaeval rite, or The Fourth Recension. This liturgy has been in constant use since the Coronation of King Edward III (reign 1327-1377). The *Liber Regalis* was prepared for the Coronation of Anne of Bohemia, the wife of Richard II in 1399. Very significantly, this rite straddled the great changes of the mid-16th c. Throughout the Reformation period, all three coronations of the children of Henry VIII took place in Latin, and we surmise the shape of the Fourth Recension remained intact.

It is distinctive in the earlier uses of this rite that the candidate is anointed with two oils, that of Catechumens (known at the time as Unction) and Chrism. The first anointing is on: hands, breast, between the shoulders, on the shoulders, on both elbows and on the head in the form of the a cross. Then the recipient's head is anointed a second time with Chrism. The first oil is held in a silver phial and the second in one of gilt. After this the king is then vested by the Abbot. Following the mass, the king and his retinue proceed to the shrine of St Edward to be divested and robed in the robes of state.

¹⁴ Inventory of the Coronation Regalia, by the Monk Sporley c. 1450 see English Coronation Records Ed. Leopold C Wickham Legg 1901 Archibald and Co, p. 81-130.

Henry III and Westminster Abbey Renewed

The Fourth Recension's development coincided with the vision for the Coronation of Henry III. He rebuilt the Abbey as locus of a sumptuous and aggrandised rite. Roy Strong observes "Both the new Abbey and the transformation of Westminster were visual manifestations of [Henry's] mania for majesty on the grand scale."¹⁵



*The original retablo and the High Altar of Westminster Abbey
the depiction of the Virgin and the Beloved Disciple both bearing golden palms
speaks directly to the symbolism of the pavement (Photos Westminster Abbey)*



¹⁵ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From 8th to 21st Centuries*, 2005, p. 98.



An aerial view of the Cosmati pavement before the High Altar of the Abbey

The Cosmati Pavement

The Cosmati Pavement of 1260 and the soaring dimensions of the Quire, with the Coronation *Theatre* as the focus before the Shrine and High Altar, are masterpieces of high gothic. The flooring depicts “an image of the cosmos in terms of the Greek Platonic tradition in which geometry and pure number linked the tangible world of the senses and the divine world approached through the intellect.”¹⁶ Upon this pavement the king is anointed and then crowned. The imagery of the balance of the universe over which God reigns is symbolised on earth by the crowning of His regent and earthly deputy, the anointed sovereign. The recent examination by Margaret Barker of the Temple themes implied in the work of the Cosmati paviours is very important.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁷ Margaret Barker, *Wisdom in the Stones of Westminster Abbey* – Unpublished lecture for the Friends of Sophia, 2022 Conference in Wells.

The pavement is set in the part of the abbey that corresponds to the holy of holies of the temple, and the original *retable* behind the altar indicates the temple tradition by which to read it. The central panel shows Jesus, and on either side of him, his Mother and St John. *Both carry palm branches, telling the observer to read the pavement in that tradition.*

The basic structure of the pattern is two concentric squares, one twice the area of the other. These are temple proportions, the smaller square being the holy of holies and the larger the hall of the temple.

Within the small square are five circles, a pattern found elsewhere in Cosmati work, but here indicating the Great Lady in the midst of four – her ancient title ‘the fourfold One’. The spiral pattern that joins the four outer circles to the centre is the Spirit of the Living One, and the outer circles are the wheels within wheels of the chariot throne.

The central circle is the glittering pavement on which the throne was set [Vulgate Ezek.1.22: *aspectus crystalli horribilis*]. It is a curiously patterned piece, and, if it is the original stone, could have represented the unformed chaos over which the Great Lady and her divine Son were enthroned. It is surrounded by a circle of stones that are predominantly green - the green glow that surrounded the chariot throne – but with red flecks that suggest jasper.

The Later Middle Ages

The later Middle Ages saw magnificent celebrations and processions *outside* the Abbey developing parallel quasi-religious functions. So, the procession through the City to the Abbey can be in some measure Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Pageant arches and stations on the route attenuate and anticipate the significance of the liturgy-proper, as well as making it visible to the crowds otherwise unable to take part in the abbey church.

Despite 12th and 13th c ecclesiastical qualms, not least in Rome, about the use of Chrism in the Sacring, the English Rite maintained its use, and at the coronations of both Henry IV and Henry VI, eye-witnesses record their stupefaction at the robes and adornments of both candidates being those of clerics. Contemporary accounts from 1307-8 (Edward II's Coronation) suggest that the throne stood on a stage that was 13 feet high at least. Those below would look up, and those above looked down, on a splendid and dizzying spectacle of the King's throne in the theatre.



The Coronation of Henry IV 1399 (Photo Historic UK)

The Sixteenth Century

The one enthroned there was the human prince who became divine and was the Lord with his people. Basing their conclusions on entirely different factors, scholars have intuited that this newly built part of the Abbey was 'giving visual shape to an ideology of kingship'. 'The Gothic reconfiguration of Westminster Abbey created a powerful new image of monarchical power... 'Royal power was imaged as theocratic or sacred, based on the ancient notion of the king as 'God's vicar on earth'.¹⁷ This does not derive from Plato's *Timaeus*, but from the high priestly lore of Solomon's temple which preserved the secret of incarnation and the divine king.

For centuries Christian art had depicted Christ on the shining pavement of the chariot throne, surrounded by the four heavenly beings. Although the accounts in Luke and Acts do not mention the chariot at the Ascension, this is how it was depicted and so how Christians imagined the scene.

The Platonic picture of the universe with its nine spheres through which one **ascended** to the gods is here in effect inverted, restoring the older idea of **entering** into the divine presence. This was described as entering the holy of holies, and ascending into the divine presence by going deeper and deeper into the concentric palaces. The divine king was at the centre, as he was on the Cosmati pavement. The nine spheres are depicted on the pavement, but rearranged to show a different universe. The four wheels/living creatures in the inner square, and another four in the outer square, perhaps the fourfold throne names of the sacral king in his earthly kingdom: Wonderful Counsellor, Might God, Father of booty, Prince of Peace.

Unexpectedly, the religious turmoil of the 16th c had remarkably little effect on the Coronation itself, even though the Abbey was dissolved, re-established as a cathedral, re-founded as an abbey and re-dissolved and once again restored, in relatively short order between 1536 and 1558. “It is a frustrating fact that for none of these three Tudor coronations does there exist a text with rubrics as to what actually happened.”¹⁸

What we can gather is that there was no thought of abandoning the rite as incompatible with the Protestant Project. Even Unction was used for Edward and Elizabeth, albeit with protestations against it conferring any charism beyond what had that of baptism. Cranmer’s sermon at the Coronation of Edward VI underlined “The oil is but a ceremony; if it be wanting, that the king is yet a perfect monarch notwithstanding, and God’s anointed, as well as if he was not inoiled.” This “ceremony”, however empty its agents regarded it, continued.

The seeds of Elizabeth’s later *Settlement* are viewed from the outset of her reign, at her Coronation, where her stipulations for the Eucharistic ceremonial were only acceptable to one of the 26 Bishops, Oglethorpe, of Carlisle. The Bishop refused to accede to her wish that the host not be elevated at the consecration – so outward Catholic ceremonial took place, while the Queen absented herself for that part of the Eucharist. The records are scarcer than those of her brother’s, suggesting things took place that the Court wished to go unchronicled, upon which we can only speculate, but the rite remained intact.

Roy Strong puzzles over what we might term the Tudor religious paradox:

The Elizabethan theatre, that great populist innovation, put royalty on stage together with its ceremonial, and in so doing began to question its very premises. Shakespeare’s History plays, the product of the last decade of Elizabeth’s reign, brought a penetrating spotlight to bear on the fragility of kingship:

*Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord;
For every man that Bullingbrook hath press’d
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath heavenly pay
A glorious angel; then if angels fight,*

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 198.

Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.

(Richard II, III, ii, vv 54-62)

But this is seen as a delusion as Richard II is deposed and realises that he wears a 'hollow crown'.

I know

*'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farced title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world,
No, not all these, thrice gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave.*

(Henry V, IV I, vv 279-88)

...The history plays were written and performed as the cult of 'our gracious empress', based on secular and no longer on sacred ceremonial. It was her successors who had to face head-on all the questions which had been left unanswered about the significance of the Coronation in relation to kingship after 1603.¹⁹

The Royal Martyr and the House of Stuart

The Stuart solution was perhaps less in evidence in the choices made in the Coronation Rite itself, than in their choices relating to the style and substance of government, although, as we shall see below, the text of the Coronation Oath was changed by James VI and I in a way which in hindsight we can see demonstrated a Stuart mistaking of principles of English law-making.

The abrupt end to Sacral Kingship in 1649, summed up by the collective groan of the crowd, which attended King Charles I's beheading on 30th January 1649, did not bring the joy and celebration of freedom that perhaps some had expected.

The breaking-up and sale of the Crown Jewels under Oliver Cromwell required King Charles II to reassemble the Coronation regalia between 1660-1, before his own coronation. All but the anointing spoon had been lost (and that was most probably a eucharistic vessel rather than intended for the Chrismation). The old rite was restored alongside a different monarchy. The collective trauma caused

¹⁹ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From 8th to 21st Centuries*, 2005, p. 229-231

by the strictures of the *Interregnum* or *Commonwealth* period is hard to quantify, but can be interestingly surmised in the light of the burst of life which accompanied the Restoration in 1660. The nation’s experiment of a Kingdom deprived of Sacral Kingship had lasted 11 long years.

The Restoration



The Commonwealth’s disposal of King Edward’s regalia in 1649 remained a trauma at the heart of the Monarchy at the Restoration. The attempt to reconstruct what was lost, *facsimile*, underlines how deep later Stuart feeling was about the significance of the vesture and regalia that had been lost. Church historian Thomas Fuller’s account in 1655 of King Charles I’s Coronation was to endeavour to keep the memory of that occasion alive so that “something of state may be chosen out of grateful imitation.”²⁰ Fuller was writing in a time when the return of the Stuart dynasty seemed the most remote prospect, and so the sentiment for what had been seemingly irrevocably lost has a heart-rending quality.

²⁰ Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, ed. J.S. Brewer (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1845).



21

The publication of the *Eikon Basilike*, King Charles I's reflections on kingship, "written by his late Majesty King Charles I, of ever blessed memory, during his Captivity at Carisbrook Castle, Anno Dom. 1648"²², presented Charles I as a martyr from the moment of his execution. Following his Restoration, King Charles II made the anniversary of his father's execution a red-letter day of in the 1662 Prayer Book, of the same significance as a Feast of the Apostles. King Charles I was in a sense the first Saint (in all but name) of the Church of England, and most certainly its prime Martyr.

Charles I's final words on the scaffold²³ prepare the way for the iconography and propaganda which from exile and from the Restoration will memorialise Charles I's death:

That splendid but toilsome Crown
 Regardlessly I trample down:
 With joy I take this crown of thorn,
 Though sharp, yest easie to be born.
 That heavenlie Crown, already mine,
 I view with eies of Faith divine.²⁴

Charles' penultimate chapter in the *Eikon Basilike* is an exhortation to the Prince of Wales to follow his example and strive to be *Charles le Bon*, rather than

²¹ From the *Eikon Basilike*. This copy pictured is notable for the four lengths of wide, blue, silk ribbon attached to its binding, which have been thought to have been cut from the sash worn by Charles I to indicate his membership of the Order of the Garter. Inside the book, an inscription reads: "This Book was the Gift of Sr Oliver Flemming Master of the Ceremonies to King Charles the First, together with ye ribband strings which were the Garter his Majesty wore his George on". Held by the Royal Collection Trust.

²² Charles I, *Eikon Basilike: The Portraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings*, 1648 – James Young.

²³ He turned to Juxon and declared he "would go from a corruptible crown to an incorruptible crown"—claiming his perceived righteous place in Heaven. Charles gave Juxon his George, sash, and cloak—uttering one cryptic word: "remember".

²⁴ Words which accompany a contemporary woodcut, in which the Royal Martyr prepares for his death, at his feet, his royal crown, before him he holds the Crown of Thorns, he looks above to a celestial crown, as words in a Bible before him read "in verbo tua, spes mea".

Charles le Grand.²⁵ As a treatise on Christian Kingship, rather than a mere personal self-justification, it is a model of patient forbearance. The context of the Sacring, the proximity to Saint Edward's shrine, and the use of Coronation Regalia made in memory of Charles I, underscore sacrifice and the pursuit of holiness as the enterprise of Kings, deserving of their crown.

Development of the Rite following the Glorious Revolution until 1953

William and Mary were invited to take the Crown on renegotiated terms, following the overthrow of James II. We discuss immediately below the impact on the Coronation Oath of this new *status quo*. In terms of the Rite itself, the Eucharist was restored, and certain former elements too. Archbishop Sancroft excused himself from the Coronation of William and Mary, on the basis of his Coronation oath to Mary's father. Henry Compton, Bishop of London, and a keen supporter of William and Mary, took charge. F.E. Brightman commented on what the 1689 rite resembled, 'The general result of Compton's revision was that nothing of the ancient order remained in its place without change; and very little of it was left at all.'²⁶ This withering assessment of the 1689 revision could be seen as typical of scholarly consensus in the late Victorian period, regarding what had happened to the Fourth Recension. Between 1689 and the Coronation of Queen Victoria, the Rite had barely changed (although King William IV's Coronation had been a shadow of his brother George IV's in 1821). In the correspondence of Queen Victoria's last Archbishop of Canterbury there is discussion in a letter he wrote about whether or not he should wear a mitre at the next Coronation, and whether he should put it on at the moment of crowning. This rather underlined the still unfamiliar character of life after full-bottomed wigs for the Episcopate, not to mention the accustomisation needed to the renewed use of mitres.²⁷ King Edward VII's Coronation was the opportunity for the fruits of

²⁵ Charles I, *Eikon Basilike: The Portraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings*, 1648 – James Young Chapter 27 pp192-193

With God I would have you begin and end, who is King of Kings; the Sovereign disposer of the Kingdomes of the world, who pulleth downe one, and setteth up another. The best Government, and highest Sovereignty you can attain to is, to be subject to him, that the Scepter of his Word and Spirit may rule in your heart. The true glory of Princes consists in advancing Gods Glory in the maintenance of true Religion, and the Churches good: Also in the dispensation of civill Power, with Justice and Honour to the Publick Peace. Piety will make you prosperous; at least it will keep you from being miserable; nor is he much a loser, that loseth all, yet saveth his owne soule at last. To which Center of true Happinesse God, I trust, hath and will graciously direct all these black lines of Affliction, which he hath been pleased to draw on me, and by which he hath (I hope) drawn me nearer to himself. You have already tasted of that cup whereof I have liberally drank, which I look upon as Gods Physick, having that in healthfulnesse which it wants in pleasure. Above all, I would have you, as I hope you are already; well-grounded and settled in your Religion: The best profession of which, I have ever esteemed that of the Church of England, in which you have been educated; yet I would have your own Judgement and Reason now seal to that sacred bond which education hath written, that it may be judiciously your own Religion, and not other mens custome or tradition, which you professe.

²⁶ F.E. Brightman *Chronicle JTS* iv (1902-3) p. 152 quoted in Peter Hinchliff's article *Frederick Temple, Randall Davidson and the Coronation of Edward VII* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48 (1), 1997. Pp 71-99 p. 76

²⁷ Peter Hinchliff p.78 quoting Davidson Papers 522, fos 36,38

scholarship of many specialists to be put to sound use. Edward VII, a fun-loving and flamboyant younger prince, was not unschooled in Church History. He had been taught by Arthur Stanley, when the latter was the Oxford Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, whose gifts as a teacher were considerable. Peter Hinchliff opines that Stanley “was a firm believer in the ripping yarn school of history”²⁸, which seems to have appealed perfectly to Queen Victoria’s otherwise less than scholarly heir. A combination of King Edward’s unexpected openness to sensible revision, Archbishop (of York) Randall Davidson’s firm hand behind the scenes, and Frederick (Archbishop of Canterbury) Temple’s particular brand of pragmatic pre-Tractarian High Churchness, meant that “the 1902 revisers ‘were less indifferent to ancient usage than their predecessors had been.’”²⁹ This was the dawn of an age which saw moves for liturgical reform more generally. It should be no surprise that the Coronations of the 20th c should have been occasions for further scouring of the sources and thoughtful reform. King Edward’s Coronation was moderately refined; the scholarship continued. The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was a yet more studious return to the Second Recension, with the use of the Pre-Conquest collects and prayers. This careful attention to the sources was part of moving the Church of England into a more thorough liturgical self-consciousness, the significance of which cannot be overlooked, both in terms of the Coronation itself and wider revision of worship.



King Edward VII receiving the homage of the elderly Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, in 1902 (Photo Sydney Morning Herald)

The Coronation Oath



Queen Elizabeth II swears the Coronation Oath 1953 (Fairfax Media)

²⁸ Peter Hinchliff page 91.

²⁹ Peter Hinchliff page 71 quoting E.C Ratcliffe *The English Coronation Service* London 1936

From the time of the Rite prepared by St Dunstan monarchs have sworn an oath, as the prelude of the Coronation ceremonies. It is of note that it is administered by the Archbishop. This oath is both a promise and contract, in terms of governance, but it is also a binding (and sacramental) promise before God, integral to the other rites.

Three Kings of England have been held accountable for not obeying their Coronation Oaths. They are Edward II, Richard II, and Charles I. The reason in each case for their forced removal from office and respective ignominious end, was the breaking of this solemn undertaking. From 1308, the start of the reign of Edward II, it has been clear from the new fourth section of the Coronation Oath, that the laws inherited *and* the laws that will be made, by due process (namely Parliament and local burgesses), during the reign, must be recognised and obeyed by the King. The oath signals the contract of the King on this understanding. It is reminiscent of Old Testament views of Kingship under the Law and should be no surprise. Constitutional historians might suggest that kings who struggled with the limits on their function were those who fell foul of this ancient compact. The tweaking of the Coronation Oath by the first two Stuarts, James VI & I, and Charles I, presaged a divergence with Parliament on principles about which partly the Civil War was fought.

In the Coronation ceremony of 2 June 1953 Queen Elizabeth II swore her Coronation Oath. In the November before she had made and signed the Declaration prescribed by Act of Parliament. The Coronation Oath is below. Whether there will be parliamentary time before the Coronation of King Charles III in which to revise the Oath to configure it with current needs is a question which remains to be answered.

Madam, is your Majesty willing to take the Oath?

And the Queen answering,

I am willing.

The Archbishop shall minister these questions; and The Queen, having a book in her hands, shall answer each question severally as follows:

Archbishop. Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon, and of your Possessions and the other Territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, according to their respective laws and customs?

Queen. I solemnly promise so to do.

Archbishop. Will you to your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgements?

Queen. I will.

Archbishop. Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?

Queen. All this I promise to do.

Then the Queen arising out of her Chair, supported as before, the Sword of State being carried before her, shall go to the Altar, and make her solemn Oath in the sight of all the people to observe the premisses: laying her right hand upon the Holy Gospel in the great Bible (which was before carried in the procession and is now brought from the Altar by the Arch-bishop, and tendered to her as she kneels upon the steps), and saying these words:

The things which I have here before promised, I will perform and keep. So help me God.

Then the Queen shall kiss the Book and sign the Oath.

The Queen having thus taken her Oath shall return again to her Chair, and the Bible shall be delivered to the Dean of Westminster.

In terms of the history of the rite, the swearing itself is ancient, and conforms with earliest practice. From Saxon times it has been clear that the Monarch, however exalted and hallowed his or her position, is not above the Law.

There is Biblical ambivalence about the swearing of oaths. But the Church has seen sacraments as the occasion upon which solemn promises are to be undertaken, and then, by God's benediction, grace is conferred, by the power of the Holy Spirit. We see the immediate connections with Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Ordination inherent in this swearing of the Oath and the sending down of Divine Grace.

Politically, the wording of the Coronation Oath dates from the Coronation Oath Act of 1688, following the so-called Glorious Revolution at the end of the reign of James II. His daughter, Mary II and her husband, William III, were invited by Parliament to share the Crown. Parliament required that they, and their successors, in perpetuity, swear this same oath. It differed from what preceded it in substantial terms. No longer was the monarch the source of law, but the King

or Queen was to be subject to laws passed by Parliament. In 1688, the promise to “maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England...and the Bishops of the Church of England” replaced the 1660 promise to "Protect and Defend the Bishops and Churches under [my] Government.”

The Coronation Oath was supplemented by the Accession Oath under the 1689 Bill of Rights Act, whose tone underlined the principles of the new regime. Protestant Parliamentary authority held sway, and any threat of return of Papistical monarchy was expunged, by words of almost blood curdling ferocity. The 1689 Bill of Rights Act required the sovereign, to begin with at the Coronation and then later on accession, to swear that:

[I] do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any Transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever: and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saint, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any such dispensation from any person or authority or person whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons, or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the same or declare that it was null and void from the beginning.

In 1910 this Oath was amended. King George V, and his father before him, felt very strongly that such incendiary anti-Catholic rhetoric risked utterly alienating their Roman Catholic subjects, at a time of heightened unrest in Ireland.

The amendment was considerably tempered and now reads:

I [here insert the name of the Sovereign] do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the Throne of my Realm, uphold and maintain the said enactments to the best of my powers according to law.

The Coronation Oath, therefore, has been a loaded text. Behind it is a history of vehement opposition to Kingship beholden to external power and Roman Catholic doctrine. The good sense in 1910, to temper the sentiment in the Accession Oath, has, to a large degree, drawn the sting from this background of anti-Catholicism. This ecumenical age sees the coming together of peoples of

faith, and a mutuality amongst Christians, in social action and witness, which the King's role as *Defensor Fidei* stands for in a unique way.

Queen Elizabeth II said of the Church of England, in a speech in February 2012 at Lambeth Palace:

Its role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the Church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country. It certainly provides an identity and spiritual dimension for its own many adherents. But also, gently and assuredly, the Church of England has created an environment for other faith communities and indeed people of no faith to live freely. Woven into the fabric of this country, the Church has helped to build a better society – more and more in active co-operation for the common good with those of other faiths.



The Accession Council 10 September 2022 (Photo Royal Website)



The Proclamation at St James's Palace following the Accession Council (Photo: The Independent)



Queen Elizabeth II surrounded by the Bishop of Durham (Dr Michael Ramsey, left) and the Bishop of Bath & Wells, the Bishops of which Sees, by ancient tradition, attend the Sovereign throughout the ceremony. The Queen is seated on the higher throne, following her Sacring on the St Edward's Chair. The higher throne sits in the midst of the "theatre", the focal point of the quire and transepts. She is surrounded by the Great Officers of State, and receives the homage of the peerage, first the Lords Spiritual and then representatives of the Lords Temporal. She carries the Sceptre and the Rod of Mercy, and is vested in the Colobium Sindonis, the Supertunica and the Pallium. She wears the very heavy St Edward's crown, made in 1661 for Charles II.

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF SACRAL KINGSHIP AND ANOINTING



*Master of the Ingeborg Psalter, Samuel Anointing David from a Psalter: French (Noyon), c 1205
Los Angeles, J Paul Getty Museum MS 66, fol. 27*

Genesis Chapter I presents the unfolding of Creation, working up to the conception of Humanity, as the summit of God's work of creative blessing. Humanity is ordained with a priestly and kingly function. We see the theology of this echoed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures: God's image is imprinted upon Humanity.

Kingship in the Hebrew Scriptures is both central and marked by ambivalence.

On the one hand, one of the Deuteronomist's main refrains is regret that Israel had turned away from theocracy. The final verse of the Book of Judges says portentously "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes." Judges 21: 25.

This is tempered by other sources – for example the contrasting accounts of the same event, the anointing of Solomon. In I Kings 1: 38-40 Solomon is anointed.

There is a considerable amplification of this in the Priestly account. In I Chronicles 29: 23 we read: "Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord instead of David his father." For this editorial strand of the history of Israel, the enthronement on the Lord's throne was a *Theosis*, a divinisation, a royal birth.

More significantly, Deuteronomy's strictures regarding the institution of monarchy in Chapter 17 set out the Torah's primary view. Unmistakably, the King is placed firmly under the rule of the Law and is equal before it to all in Israel.

The choice of a King for Israel by Samuel (I Samuel chapters 8-12) is presented as the consequence of the recalcitrant wish of the people, to which God accedes with some degree of weary reluctance, as Israel seeks to rid itself of Philistine oppression under the rule of a warrior-King.

Together, the election and anointing of King Saul as King of Israel, encapsulate much. Samuel's actions are twofold. Samuel pours oil over Saul's head, and then kisses the anointed. Saul is given a list of instructions and told "The Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with [the prophets] and be turned into another man." (I Sam 10: 6).

The change enacted is absolute. Saul becomes a different and new man. He is inspired, and the presence of the Spirit in Saul will characterise God's blessing. The later departure of God's Spirit, after divine favour ceases, ushers in a malevolent spirit until Saul's death. The demise of King Saul is a catastrophe not entirely of his own making. It is in part God's judgement upon the royal project itself. The forty years of David's reign are recorded in 40 chapters of narrative. The remaining 400 years of the Israelite kings are recorded in 46 chapters of the Books of the Kings.

Ideas of Kingship in ancient Israel configure with research into other ancient Near Eastern kingdoms, where the monarch was both an embodiment of their nation and a divine figure.

Notably, in Babylon the King had to "grasp the hand of Marduk" at the annual New Year festival, acting as both king and high priest; there were parallels in the Assyrian and the Hittite monarchies.

The Davidic desire to establish both a lasting dynasty and a final resting place for the Ark of the Covenant is underlined by the use of the term "House". In II Samuel 7 David has founded his rule in Jerusalem and reigns from a permanent palace. Then David declares his intention to build a Temple for the Lord. And Nathan the Prophet announces that God will allow a permanent place of dwelling to be built, reminding David that YHWH has not been confined in this way until now: "I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought the Children of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling." (II Sam 7: 6).

David does not build the Temple; it will be the role of his successor Solomon to do so. By the construction of the Temple, in the reign of Solomon, the connection is made manifest between the monarchy and the cultic worship of God. Ian Bradley comments "It is no coincidence that it is the description of Solomon's

coronation, the fullest account in the Bible, that has formed the basis for the crowning of all English monarchs in Westminster Abbey.”³⁰

So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benai'ah the son of Jehoi'ada, and the Cher'ethites and the Pel'ethites, went down and caused Solomon to ride on King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent, and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!" And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise. (I Kings 1: 38-40).

It must be remembered that Solomon's anointing as successor to David is largely brought about by the machinations of his mother Bathsheba, and its consequences in the aftermath of David's death are bloody and violent for David's eldest son Adonijah, who is put to death almost immediately. By the end of Solomon's reign, all that Samuel had predicted about the wiles and excesses of kings (I Samuel 8: 10-18), from whom he wishes to protect Israel, has come to pass. For all Solomon's wisdom and magnificence, there were downsides, dangers and deviations.

Monarchy in the post-Solomonic, pre-Exilic age has varying heroes and villains. Its character is reflected upon by the Prophets, and in a particular way in the Wisdom Literature - with its strong associations with Egypt and its court.

The overarching Covenant Theology of the Hebrew Bible is expressed explicitly in II Kings 11: 17, when, after Joash's election, the high priest Jehoiada "made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people that they should be the Lord's people; and also between the king and his people."

The Psalter contains the most tantalisingly important pointers of the unique character of Sacral Kingship. The Hebrew Bible explicitly connects 73 of the Psalms with David himself, and the Septuagint 84.

There are certainly at least nine Royal Psalms through which we might picture the cultic role of the King in the Jerusalem Temple: 2, 101, 110 being clearly about enthronement; 21 and 72 relate to royal anniversaries or birthdays (divine begetting); 18 and 20 situate the sovereign in a critical situation of war or adversity; 45 relates to royal nuptials; 132 relates to a royal dwelling. Psalm 89 speaks of the anointing and election of David.

³⁰ Ian Bradley *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Dimension of Monarchy* 2002 DLT, p. 17.

The begetting of the Messiah, as Son of God, in the heart of the Temple, is a vestigial echo of early Temple ritual. Those inclined to view to the Deuteronomistic reforms of Josiah as a purging of early Temple practice maintain that the memory of these primitive rituals was preserved in parallel traditions. This will re-emerge in the Qumranic, Intertestamental and New Testament literature, and later Rabbinical writings. Notably the contents of Psalm 110 may refer to the King who becomes the MelchiZedek (sic) the chief high priest.

The earliest reference to a priest-king is to Melchizedek (Genesis 14: 17-20), Prince of Salem, and Priest of God most High, who brings bread and wine to Abram, and in turn to whom Abram offers a tithe. The name Melchi (King) Zedek (Righteousness) reveals the significance of this ancient fatherless character. This narrative is the primal Biblical indication of the weighty significance of sacral Kingship from earliest times.

Melchizedek's name, function and mysterious identity stand over the many Biblical understandings of Priesthood and Kingship.

I am indebted to Dr Margaret Barker for a helpful summary of her own work, below. Her persuasive thesis regarding the High Priestly role of the Hebrew Kings of First Temple Judaism who is begotten by the Primordial figure of Divine Wisdom in the Holy of Holies as Son and Servant is summarised thus:

Psalm 110 is the best example in the Psalter, attributed to David for the occasion when Solomon became king. Irrespective of the historical accuracy of the attribution, this is how the ritual was remembered. This psalm and Isaiah 52-53 are the most quoted texts in the NT.

The crucial verses of Psalm 110 are 3, 4 and 7, of which 3 has been badly damaged in transmission, possibly because it was not fully understood as it described a temple mystery. The damaged Hebrew can be elucidated by the Old Greek [LXX]. The damaged verse has not been found at Qumran, so we have no certain knowledge of the text in NT times.

The original of the verse seems to be 'On the day of your birth as a holy one [or among the holy ones] your mother offers you glorious garments. With oil I have begotten you as the Morning Star.' 'Dew' was a customary image for the holy oil, and 'I have begotten you' is clear from the Greek. The Hebrew letters, with different vowels, also say 'I have begotten you'. This is the King's birth by means of the oil, and he becomes MelchiZedek, v.4.

Verse 7, restoring what was probably a scribal error due to similar-looking letters, was originally: ‘He will drink of the stream in the holy of holies, therefore he has been raised up as the head/leader.’

The stream was the image used for holy wisdom, granted to the King so as to rule his people, as in 1 Kings 3.3-14.

The king’s role in ordering the creation is set out most clearly in Psalm 72, where his administering divine justice and establishing divine righteousness [divine order] affects both creation and human society.³¹

The figure of Wisdom (Proverbs 8 et al) is the Lady. She is known by many names, Wisdom, Queen, Living One and Spirit are but a few of them. She was the winged Spirit who fluttered over the creation (Genesis 1.2) and who spoke to Jesus, her Son, at his baptism, symbolised by the dove. She it is who begets the Messiah in the Temple. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah is the Kingly High Priest, and the four Servant Songs refer to the ritualised Atoning work of the King on behalf of the people.

Her children were her servants, and the Servant in Isaiah’s four poems was the king in his various roles as bearing his people’s pain and saving them with the vision he received. This is the meaning of the very obscure Isaiah 53.11: ‘By his knowledge shall the Righteous One, my Servant make many righteous’. This is not sham justice. The original meaning of ‘righteousness’ was to be in the right place in the divine plan, and so what the Servant ‘saw’ in his vision enabled him to restore things and people to their place in the divine plan.³²

The Psalms of enthronement of YHWH (Pss 89: 93; 99) suggest the deputising role played by the King who is both monarch and priest.

Eschatological aspects to the role of the King in the Psalter remain the cause of continued scholarly discussion. The hopes for restoration post-Exile might be being imagined in Psalm 72. The much later Psalms of Solomon (c. 61-57 BC) certainly look to a Son of David who will be raised up to save Jerusalem.

11QMelchizedek is one of the more important scrolls found in the library of the Qumran community. In this text a mysterious Melchizedek (מלכי צדק) takes centre stage in the drama of the end-times. Although fragmentary and only a small part

³¹ Margaret Barker, *The Hebrew Kings* 2023, unpublished paper.

³² Ibid.

of what was probably a much longer scroll, column 2 preserves a vital piece of evidence for the messianic hopes of expectant Jews at the turn of the eras.

There are echoes of this throughout the New Testament and Apocryphal literature, suggesting what many scholars suspect, a strong overlap of world views with the Qumran community.

In the New Testament the kingship of Christ is declared from before his birth. The Matthean and Lucan birth narratives contrast Christ's rule (from a manger – itself a word-play on Jerusalem) with Herod (Matthew) and Caesar Augustus (Luke). Our Lord's earthly lineage, through both his parents, is associated with both the Temple and the line of David. He is the Messianic Priest, King, Saviour and Lord. His Baptism (Matt 3; Mark 1; Luke 3 & Jn 1) is for all the Evangelists a Messianic anointing, with direct allusions to Psalm 2. Blind Bartimaeus recognises Jesus as Son of David, as Jesus goes from Jericho to Jerusalem (Mark 10: 46-52). This ends the Marcan cliff-hanger of the Messianic Secret: A blind beggar sees Jesus for who he is, as the Messiah moves finally towards Jerusalem. During Jesus's processional entry into the Holy City, on Palm Sunday, he is acclaimed by the crowds on earth, as Messiah, just as the Hosts of Heaven had heralded his birth at the outset (Luke 2: 14 // Luke 19: 38: Heaven calls to earth; earth replies to heaven) – the so-called Lucan Messianic antiphonal response. Jesus's anointing by Mary of Bethany (Mark 14: 3-9 and //s) is both an echo of his baptism, and the anointing of Jesus's "body beforehand for burying."

The nature of Christ's Kingship in the New Testament is an inexhaustible subject. N T Wright's life-time's work has visited this question constantly. His study, *How God became King*, summarises the questions of Kingship and Kingdom in relation to the Cross. Fundamental is Wright's insistence that God's reign on earth is to mirror or extend that in heaven. Notably, in relation to the directness of the Gospel of Mark and its structuring of the disclosure of Jesus's Messiahship (1:1; 8:29; 9:7 and 15.39), he says:

All the way through, [Christ's] sonship, which picks up the global royal commission of Psalm 2, is steadily redefined by the vocation to suffer. Mark never envisages a period where Jesus was simply doing kingdom-work without the shadow of the cross falling over the page. Hence the great irony (which Paul sums up in the words *Christos estauromenos*, 'the crucified Messiah', I Corinthians 1.23) that characterises Mark throughout... Jesus will come to this global sovereignty, it seems, only through suffering; and by 'through' suffering Mark seems to mean not just that he must pass through it to his goal, as a necessary dark tunnel before coming into the light,

but also that the suffering will somehow be effective in accomplishing his task and establishing his sovereignty.³³

Central to Jesus's mission is the proclamation of the Kingdom. He teaches his disciples to pray "Thy Kingdom come", presupposing that his first disciples grasped what this meant in the contemporary Jewish culture of the first century and how Jesus intended to challenge and develop that view. For Christians, it is axiomatic that Christ's Kingdom must never be confused with earthly rule and power, but it is always in relation to the kingdoms of this world that his is referred.

John Gray's Biblical study of the Reign of God summarises the significance of Christ's teaching about the Kingdom:

What Jesus proclaimed and authenticated, by what He did and what He was, was the interruption into history of the effective order of the Divine King with its power to transform..., to release new energies, as in the healing works of Our Lord, to break the domination of forces which held men bodily and spiritually in thrall, as in what Jesus's contemporaries understood as the casting out of devils, the implication of which was so pointedly stated in Jesus's declaration on the strong man despoiled in the famous Beelzebul controversy (Mk 3.23ff, cf Mt 12.25ff, Lk 11.17ff). The present impact of the reign of the Divine King in the Gospel cannot be overemphasised.... Jesus shares the eschatological prospect with Jewish apocalyptic of the last century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. but with immeasurably greater emphasis on the present reality of the Reign of God in hope and challenge.

³⁴

The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes up the Melchizedek theme, which shapes his work, and it has resonances in all of the Gospels. Key texts in Hebrews are: Hebrews 5: 6; 5: 10; 6: 20; 7: 11,15,21.³⁵

Our Lord's Last Supper is the ultimate taking of the bread and wine, like the Priest-King Melchizedek. In John's Gospel, the Supper is not a Paschal meal, instead Jesus prays his High Priestly prayer. His taking and blessing of bread has come much earlier, as the 5000 are fed (John 6) instead.

In all the Gospels, the imagery of Paschal sacrifice, and the context of either supper or crucifixion, underline the cultic resonances of Jesus's death, which is both a Paschal and Atoning sacrifice. He is both Priest and Victim in the offering. In John's Gospel, the Crucifixion is also the King's crowning. The presence of

³³ N T Wright, *How God became King* 2012 SPCK p. 237

³⁴ Gray, John *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God* (T&T Clark 1979) p.319

³⁵ See http://www.templestudiesgroup.com/Papers/Melchizedek_Barker.pdf.

angels in his tomb, and the role of the linen cloths (which replicate his swaddling at birth) are all highly suggestive of the function of the High Priest in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.³⁶

Christ's Messianic role is never in question, neither is his eternal Kingship. Jesus's reign is not of this world (Jn 18: 36), however much it threatens and exposes authority and power in this age. His rule is that of service and suffering; and both Peter (1 Peter 2; 13, 17) and Paul (Romans 13: 1-3) are at pains to underline the distinction between earthly rule and heavenly power.

For the faithful, a Christian King takes Jesus as the example "to be actuated by a sense of a sense of duty and a spirit of self-sacrifice, to be the suffering servant and always to remember the words of Mark 10; 43 'whoever will be great among you shall be your minister.'...Christian monarchs stand, like all Christians, as subjects of the Kingdom of God, and as witnesses to the kingship of the risen and ascended Jesus 'the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead and the ruler of the kings on earth.' (Revelation 1:5)".³⁷

In summary, the Biblical basis of ancient Israelite Kingship was to accomplish Atonement – the reconciliation of Creation. The Holy of Holies represented this at the heart of the Temple. Atonement came annually through the representative suffering of the Priest-King, resulting in the ultimate coherence of Creation, through God's forgiveness.

Our Lord's Nativity, Baptism, Passion, Cross, Death, Resurrection and Ascension are all interconnected hallmarks of the Kingship and Kingdom of God.

When Jesus prays *Our Father, who art in heaven*, Jesus's original hearers and later readers of the Gospels understand that the Kingdom of God is the ushering in of God's reign on earth, *as it is in heaven*. The prayer for the *coming of the Kingdom* will always challenge temporal rule.

This Kingdom is the testimony to God's creative and salvific purpose. Christian kingship is about service, sacrifice, suffering and death. The true diadem of Kingship is the Crown of Thorns. The rule of Christ has been a spur to Christian rulers, many of whom have endeavoured to live under God's law, and beneath a crown surmounted by the Cross. The reign of the late Queen was a key example of that. and our prayers for this reign are that this will remain true.

Charles Wesley encapsulates this well, reflecting on divine Love:

³⁶ See http://www.templestudiesgroup.com/Papers/JewsinJohn_Barker.pdf.

³⁷ Ian Bradley, *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Dimension of Monarchy* 2002 DLT, p. 45.

Finish then thy new creation:
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee
Changed from glory into glory
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.³⁸

Having discussed the Biblical themes of Sacral Kingship, we must now turn our attention to the Biblical and Sacramental foundations for anointing, as the heart of Christian Sacring.



Scale Model of Herod's Temple, the Israel Museum, Jerusalem – (Photo: The Israel Museum)

³⁸ Charles Wesley, Love divine, all loves excelling, 1747

Biblical References to Anointing

Anointing in the Old Testament functions to set apart, as especially holy, places and people of extraordinary significance. In Genesis 28: 18 the anointing of the stone set up as a pillar at Bethel is the first example. The parable of Judges 9: 7-15, the anointing of the bramble as King over the trees, suggests the pre-historical understanding of unction in relation to Kingship. The anointing of Saul (I Sam 10:1), David (I Sam 16: 13) and Solomon (I Kings 1: 39-40) are of clear significance, as is the earlier anointing of the Sanctuary in Exodus 30: 25-26 which, as for the anointing of Kings, has become foundational in the Church for the consecration of sacred space. The anointing by Elisha, at the injunction by Elijah, of the Kings Hazael and Jehu (I Kings 19: 15-16), underlines the ubiquity of this rite, even beyond Israel. David's anger against King Saul's assassin derives from temerity to kill the Lord's anointed ((II Sam 1: 14). The early Church's respect for the secular (even when inimical) authority reflects the divinely instituted character of secular rule – even when not anointed (Romans 13: 4).

The Rites of Anointing in the Early Church and their Association with Baptism and Identity

The Coronation rites, as anointings, effectual rebirths and quasi-ordinations, cling firmly to early Christian Baptismal practice, which is a study worthy of further investigation. A useful comparative study of early Eastern and Western Baptismal rites is made by Dr Bryan Spinks.³⁹

In the pre-Constantinian age, the practice of *Baptismal anointing* was by no means monolithic. Evidence for pre and post baptismal anointings are suggested by the fragmentary evidence. Spinks' surveys comments:

The different ritual patterns ...mirror secular bathing customs.... While interpreting the anointing as messianic is distinctly Christian, the idea of anointing for protection and healing, which we also find, simply spiritualised a commonly accepted secular understanding of the use of oil in bathing.... In terms of Theological understanding, we find the themes of forgiveness and cleansing, as well as rebirth, clothing and illumination, all accomplished by undergoing the ritual.⁴⁰

³⁹ Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism – From the New Testament to the Council of Trent 2006 – Ashgate.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.36.

In the West it was not until the Council of Trent that Catholicism consolidated one rite, by then the Reformation had taken place. In the Eastern and Oriental Churches varying practices remained.

Baptismal rites are the templates for the conferral of a new identity or, better, ontology at Ordination. Consecratory ordination rites mirror the development of baptismal orders. The blessing, by unction, of the candidate, enacts the outpouring of the Spirit, which confirms God's action and authoritative gift, in the rite.

This is the origin of the early mediaeval understanding of Coronation rituals being sacraments in their own right.

So, in exploring the origin of the *Coronation anointing*, we need to understand the character of Baptism as foundational. What is apparent is that baptism had associated with it the strong symbolism of rebirth, prefaced and often concluded by anointing. In some later Coronation rites, the King was anointed with the Oil of Catechumens. In the English rite, from the outset, and borrowing from France and Byzantium, the most sacred oil of Chrism has been employed.



The mosaic in the Orthodox Church in Ravenna



The Baptistery of the Lateran in Rome

The Oils – Chrism and Catechumens



The Ampulla and Spoon

As discussed, the precedent for the use of oil for consecration of sacred items and people is derived from Exodus 29: 7-8 and Leviticus 8: 10-12. Holy vessels, objects and priests are set apart by the pouring of the oil of anointing. Exodus 30: 25-26 adds the reference to specially prepared oil, for the dedication of the sanctuary itself.

The Church took on this practice by using the most holy oil of Chrism for the sealing of baptism, the sign of Confirmation, and Ordination, and the consecration of churches and altars.

Chrism is a blend of olive oil and balsam, the latter a particularly expensive and fragrant substance. Other fragrant oils supplement this basis, in different traditions. The oil itself is the outward sign of the sacrament it confers; it can only be prepared and consecrated by the Pope or Bishops on Maundy Thursday. In Greek Orthodoxy the preparation of Chrism takes place only once a decade, and up to 52 fragrances can be used.

In the later 12th c., the Roman authorities began to argue that the Oil of Chrism was too holy to be used at Coronations and it should be replaced by the Oil of Catechumens instead. The use of Chrism persisted in England once the Fourth Recension became established, but there was a lingering unease about what it spelled. 1302 saw the promulgation of Boniface VIII's encyclical *Unam Sanctam*, which claimed Papal supremacy above secular rule.

By the use of the oil of Chrism, Roy Strong observes:

Holy Church invoked the descent of the Holy Spirit on to the candidate for kingship, making him a new man, transmitting through anointing the divine grace by which alone he would be able to fulfil his royal ministerium as

defender of the Church. In this manner, Kingship became an office within the Church without bestowing on it any priestly status, or at least at the outset. Only as the rite of Coronation developed and spread would the theocratic priestly view of kingship threaten to shatter this relationship of Church and State.⁴¹

Chrismation

Reginald Woolley's 1915 study of the history of Coronation rites is helpful, if inconclusive, about the earliest use of Chrism in the anointing of kings in East and West. He is sure the earliest firmest sources speak of the anointing of Visigoth Kings in Spain in the 8th c. AD and certainly for the Coronation of Pepin by Boniface in the middle of the 8th c. Correspondence from the exiled Patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, to the Emperor Basil the Macedonian (867-886) speaks of the Chrismation of the Emperor, but liturgical sources of the period are not extant.

“A New Creation” – the Divine Destiny of the Baptised

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. **Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.** All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

II Corinthians 5:16-21 (Cf I Corinthians 15: 22; Gal 5: 1-6; Gal 6: 15;
Romans 6:1-11)

At the heart of the Christian kerygma is the radical doctrine of salvation through *metanoia*, which brings about the transformation of the faithful - in Christ, through baptism. Christians are transformed - from one degree of glory to another (II Cor 3: 18).

The “new creation” of humanity is the ultimate Christian Gospel.

The imagery and symbolism of the Coronation rite brings about the re-birth of the paradigmatic God-man.

⁴¹ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From 8th to 21st Centuries*, Harper Collins 2005, p 12.

As we have seen, in pre-Exilic Israel, the accession of the monarch bound the King to cultic service and secular rule. These were indivisible.

Memories of this remained into first century AD. The expectation of the coming of the Messiah held within it hopes for renewal of both secular and religious rule in Israel.

By the 10th c AD, the sacramental sign for which the King stands, is not only as ruler of their nation, King of their people. Like their Israelite predecessors, the King *becomes* the embodiment of the people. In the Sacring, the sacramental rite binds the monarch to their nation and dominions, so that they are indistinguishable from them. So, this borrows from the ancient precedent upon which it is based. Pre-Christian Saxon sensibility understood Kingship in these terms too.

Two distinctively Christian elements are added. First the sovereign is consecrated and set apart, in a way which is particular, and reminiscent of Ordination. Beyond that still, and in conformity with essential Christian doctrine, is that Baptism speaks of Christian destiny, as much as of immediate salvation. The dying and rising of the Baptismal candidate with and in Christ, is the outset of the journey of faith. This trajectory is not limited to the span of the candidate's earthly existence. Dying and rising with Christ patterns not just discipleship until death. The Christian promise of Resurrection is that we are bound to Our Lord, not just in dying, but in his rising too. That rising is the expectation of the Last Day, not just an earthly Resurrection, but a heavenly movement towards the right hand of God – in Christ.

The King's *anointing* is the moment of re-birth, the invisible and sacramental truth. The *Coronation* is the visible shining beginning of Ascension, as the natural outworking of Resurrection. The Ascension of the monarch to their higher throne, after the crowning, is the culmination of the Sacring process. It might need to be underlined at this point that following the Coronation, in the English rite, the King is led to a higher throne from the St Edward's Chair. In the 15th c, the height of the higher throne could be considerably higher than more recent services. Whatever its height, that higher throne sits at the centre of the Coronation Theatre, between the transepts of Westminster Abbey. It might not push the bounds too far to say this is a *realised eschatology*.

The Coronation Rite plays out the eschatological destiny of the Baptised.



The mosaic in the Arian Baptistery in Ravenna (Photo Arc Humanities Press)

Notes on the Oil of Anointing

1. An ancient French legend held that in 496 when Clovis, King of the Franks was converted, oil from heaven was provided for his anointing and from then he bore the title *Rex Christianissimus*. The Oil is known by its receptacle *The Sainte Ampoule*, one of the holiest relics in the collection in the *Sainte Chapelle*.
2. The Holy Oil of St Thomas of Canterbury, Legend and Reality
 - a. A mediaeval prophecy declared the hope of the return to the English kings of their lands in Normandy and Aquitaine.
 - b. It seems that at the accession of King Edward II in 1307, his brother-in-law, Jean II, Duke of Brabant, presented Edward with Oil, said to have been given by the Blessed Virgin Mary to St Thomas of Canterbury whilst in exile in Sens.
 - c. Jean of Brabant was informed by the bearers of the that the Oil to him that it had been held at St Cyprian's Monastery in Poitiers, until such time as it would be needed for anointing of a King who would restore English dominions in France. The means by which this happened is, to say the least, the material of legend.
 - d. The King's Council would not permit the use of this Oil at the Coronation, and the Oil was stored with the Royal Regalia, unused.
 - e. In 1316 during famine and unrest, Edward regretted not having been anointed with the Oil presented, and sought permission from Pope John XXII in Avignon to be re-anointed. The Pope prevaricated and

- then concluded that he might be, but not by a Bishop. The hoped-for anointing did not take place.
- f. In 1399 Richard II came across the Ampulla containing this very holy oil which was contained in an attachable reliquary, and he bore it into battle in Ireland. It came into the possession of Archbishop Arundell, who refused to use the oil for Richard, stating “so noble a sacrament was another’s due.”
 - g. The Oil was then used for Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI.
 - h. It suited Bolingbroke, Henry IV, to be anointed with this Oil, to detract from his usurpation of Richard II’s throne. The legendary account seems to have been greatly embellished, although it is very likely the Oil found by Richard II did date from the time of Edward II; the precise provenance of this Oil is hard to trace. The parallel with the *Sainte Ampouille* legend is noteworthy.
3. From the origin, the Fourth Recension’s rubrics allow for the use of two oils, Catechumens on the body and Chrism on the crown of the head, until later three anointings with Chrism only, becomes the norm.
 4. Leopold Wickham gives a helpful summary of the developments in anointing xxxvi – xl.⁴²
 5. Egbert’s pontifical suggests the participation of more than one Bishop (as for the consecration of a Bishop).
 6. It seems from the records that the later Plantagenets and all the Tudors knelt for the anointing.
 7. We know that Charles I received the Oil seated.
 8. The presence of Garter Knights holding a canopy of cloth of gold has been the norm for some time to allow the Sacring to be partially veiled, as of such holiness.
 9. In 1553 Mary I requested of her cousin, the Holy Roman Emperor, Chrism from France, to be sure that her own anointing was valid.
 10. The use of Chrism only descends directly from Stuart Coronations.
 11. The Coronation Spoon is all that is left of the earliest Regalia.
 12. It is assumed that the use of the Regalia’s gloves comes from the idea that areas of the body which have been chrismated should then be covered.
 13. It has been the custom of most Coronations in modern times to consecrate the Oil on the day of the Coronation either on the High Altar or at St Edward’s Shrine.
 14. The Oils used in a blend with olive oil for the Chrism for Queen Victoria were provided by her Apothecary Squire and Co, and the bottles of lavender and rosemary oil are still held.

⁴² Leopold Wickham: *English Coronation Records* Archibald Constable and Co. 1901 (Reproduced by Alpha Editions)

15. The Oil used for King Edward VII was also used for King George V and comprised sesame oil, essence of roses, orange blossom, jasmine, cinnamon, and flowers of benzoin, with musk, civet and ambergris.
16. The Dean of Westminster made provision for the Oil to be consecrated by one of the Canons if a Bishop, which happened in 1902, when Canon James Welldon, a former Bishop of Calcutta, had this special privilege.⁴³



*The Coronation Regalia, held in the Jewel House of HM Tower of London
Photo The Royal Collection Trust*

The Biblical Symbolism of the Crown itself

The Crown as an object is an outward and material sign of the inner truth of anointing. The Crown symbolises and envelops the indelible balm. The diadem manifests a divine glory inherent in the Sacring.

The Crown's origins are twofold and almost intimately bound together: they are at once the headdress of the High Priest and the diadem of kingly rule. The kingly diadem, echoed in Our Lord's Crown of Thorns, may itself be an allusion to Aaron's turban. It is also one of the Passion's echoes of the ritual humiliation of the priestly representative of the people in the Atonement rites. We must remember that in the days before the High Priest played this part, the King had this liturgical role of atoning *persona*.

⁴³ Westminster Abbey Muniments, Peter Hinchliff adds "Whether the blessing conferred by a former headmaster of Harrow in any way compared with that of the miraculous oil given to St Thomas of Canterbury is not a matter for this article." See Peter Hinchliff *Frederick Temple, Randall Davidson and the Coronation of Edward VII* Journal of Ecclesiastical History (JEH 48 (1) 1997 p. 98.

We hear also of the crowns of the elders and saints in Revelation who are amongst those who have been through the great tribulation – the means by which they have attained their crowns.

What is no surprise about the references to crowns, particularly in the New Testament, is the association of their wearing with suffering, more than with majesty. The following references help us establish a Biblical foundation for the crowning itself which begins with priesthood:

Exodus 29: 5-6 And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the coat and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastpiece, and gird him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod; and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown upon the turban.

Leviticus 8: 9 And [Moses] set the turban upon [Aaron's] head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

II Kings 11: 12 Then he brought out the king's son [Jo'ash the son of Ahazi'ah], and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they proclaimed him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, "Long live the king!"

Psalm 132: 18 His enemies I will clothe with shame, but upon himself his crown will shed its lustre."

Song of Solomon 3: 11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
and behold King Solomon,
with the crown with which his mother crowned him
on the day of his wedding,
on the day of the gladness of his heart.

Isaiah 62: 3 You [Jerusalem] shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Zechariah 6: 11-12 Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehoz'adak, the high priest; and say to him, `Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall grow up in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.

Mark 15: 17-20 And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

John 19: 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"

I Corinthians 9: 24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I

do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

II Tim 4: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

James 1: 12 Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.

I Peter 5: 4 And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

Revelation 4: 10-11 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, "Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created." (cf 2: 10; 3: 11; 4: 4; 4: 9; 6: 2; 12: 3; 14:14)

The Scripture Readings in the Coronation Rite

Leviticus 26: 6-9

And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

I Peter 2: 13-19

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

Matthew 22: 15-22

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

The lections for the Coronation have remained largely unchanged from the first recorded rites. The earliest has as the First Lesson Leviticus 26: 6-9, which thereafter was replaced in the next Recension by I Peter 2: 13-19. The Gospel has been Matthew 22: 15-22 without variation.

It might be noted that I Peter 2: 13-19 and Matthew 22: 15-22 are also the set readings for the Accession Service (from now on to be celebrated, during the reign of King Charles III, on 8 September annually, in commemoration implicitly of the death of his mother, and explicitly his Accession).

The reading from Leviticus 26: 6-9 is God's promise of blessing to Israel in response to its strict obedience to the Levitical code. Keeping the Sabbath, reverence of the Sanctuary and observation of the Law will all mean peace in the land. Israel's enemies will be overcome and there is assurance that, however small, the people will always vanquish overpowering odds. The reading concludes: the covenant will be established, just as the nation will increase fruitfully. Any nation renewing its hope at the outset of a new reign would welcome seeing itself as if a New Israel, recommitting itself to its promises and hearing God's blessing of peace and future prosperity.

From the time of the *Liber Regalis*, and the Coronation of Edward III, the first reading has been I Peter 2: 13-19 or sometimes finishing at verse 17 "Honour the king." The tone of this reading, alongside Matthew's account of Jesus's injunction to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's", reads strangely today. Hearing this apparent double-whammy of requirement to submit to temporal rule might seem coercive in the modern age.

First, we might need to underline that these two New Testament texts issue from a time fraught with primitive Christian suffering and persecution. Peter and Matthew were victims themselves of the savage treatment of leading Christians

in the first century. These readings are more subtle than a quiescent acceptance of the validity of secular authority, come what may.

Quite what the relationship between these two texts at the time of their composition was is hard to say, but they seem to share an underlying grasp that Jesus's call to *Render to Caesar*, in Matthew 22: 15 ff (and parallels Mark 12: 13-17; Luke 20: 19-26) has more than a dose of irony implied in it. There have been scholars who have proposed that Jesus was linked, through the surnames of two of the Twelve, with first century anti-Roman insurgency. Judas Iscariot may have been one of the notorious *sicarii* – first century brigands, known for their indiscriminate knife attacks. Simon the Zealot was almost certainly connected with another brand of active freedom-fighting. How far we can suggest Jesus was directly associated with either terrorist cell, when his message of peace and non-violence characterised his ministry (and note particularly Jesus's arrest), is hard to say, but there was ferment on every front at the time of Our Lord's ministry.

We know that a Roman denarius in the first century bore the Latin inscription *Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti Filius Augustus Pontifex Maximus* (Tiberius Caesar, august son of the divine Augustus, high priest).

In Matthew's account, Jesus is goaded by the Herodians to declare either for the freedom movement generally, or the loathed *status quo* of cooperation with the Romans, in their hated "head tax". In answer, Jesus does not declare as particularly cooperative with Rome. His unwillingness to stand against the payment of taxes may reflect the general position of Christians in the later 1st c. (cf Romans 13: 1-7; I Peter 2: 13-17 & Matthew 17: 24-27). Possibly, in this exchange, Matthew was more interested in Jesus's adroitness in avoiding being trapped by his hostile questioners, the Herodians – of all people! Likewise, perhaps Matthew's aim is to underline most firmly that Jesus's challenge is to concentrate properly on the things of God, rather than anything of Caesar's.

Tertullian raises our sights further:

Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's." What will be "the things which are God's? "Such things as are like Caesar's denarius - that is to say, His image and similitude. That, therefore, which he commands to be "rendered unto God," the Creator, is man, who has been stamped with His image, likeness, name, and substance. Let Marcion's god look after his own mint. Christ bids the denarius of man's imprint to be rendered to His Caesar (His Caesar, I say), not the Caesar of a strange god. The truth however must be confessed, this god has not a

denarius to call his own! In every question the just and proper rule is that the meaning of the answer ought to be adapted to the proposed inquiry. ⁴⁴

Jesus's "Caesar" is God. Tertullian can see Jesus rendering to his Father, humanity, which bears the truly Divine image. All human rule must sit under the ultimate rule of God.

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

THE Coronation is the dedication of the Sovereign before God. It signals the sacrificial role he or she will play in the service of the nation. The word "sacrifice" immediately underlines the fact that this rite takes us into realms not purely of this world. In what follows during the service the Sovereign becomes one with his or her people through its solemn ceremonies. Arthur Bryant described the late Queen's Coronation in 1953 as "the birthday of the nation."⁴⁵ For others it is like a marriage. Aspects of both significant rites of passage resonate.

Properly described, the Coronation is a *series* of ancient rituals, some of which trace a direct line to the anointing of King Solomon. Most others date from before the Norman Conquest.

In the 10th c. St Dunstan drew together and established, with Papal authority, a rite which derived directly from the Byzantine Empire, self-consciously modelled on Old Testament precedent. Only the Holy Roman Emperors, the Kings of France and the Kings of England were recipients of the great honour of anointing *and* crowning. And the English Coronation Rite is the only one of its kind which remains in the Christian world.

St Edward the Confessor founded Westminster Abbey as a Royal Church, and to be the place in which the Rite would take place thereafter; which it is. His subsequent canonisation in 1161 added to the mystery and holiness of the English Rite. And a residual fascination and cult of sainted Kings remains an interesting feature of the mystery associated with it.

The Anointing of the monarch is not merely a signing. This hallowing has been seen as both a sacrament and an ordination, using gestures and vestments which support this. The one important distinction being the lack of laying-on of hands. In the Sacring, the recipient's old self is annihilated, they are anointed and re-born, and take on a new identity. It is both a setting-apart of the candidate, and an outward sign of the ultimate destiny of all the baptised.

⁴⁴ Tertullian 38: 7-9

⁴⁵ *The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Approved Souvenir Programme*, p. 8.

The shape of the Rite is that of a Baptism within a Eucharist. Paralleling the rites of Baptism, the old self is lost and the new is utterly identified with Christ. It remains hard to give precise terminology to The Coronation's ecclesial status, not least since the Papacy endeavoured to restrict Chrismation in the early 13th c and disassociate the Rite with the consecration of Bishops. Nevertheless, this is a ritual of the greatest holiness. The Coronation Rite is a treasure the English nation has preserved, despite many opportunities to do away with it. The Reformation had no significant impact on its sequence of ceremonies. The Interregnum was proof of what had been lost, and the Sacring was brought back with full pomp at the Restoration, even if the character of the nation's monarchy had changed in the meanwhile.

The Scriptural passages used in the rite itself might be seen to be pointing to a degree of quiescence with Temporal rule. Certainly, this could be how *Caesar*, and the Principalities, might wish the texts to be read and heard. However, the readings have as their first century *sitz in leben* the struggle of a persecuted and threatened Church contending against the Powers of their own day. It is the duty of the Christian minister to stand firmly against mere compliance with the secular order. The context of the King's Coronation being war in Europe, and the compliance of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy of 2023 with the president of Russia remains bewildering and shocking, if sadly a recapitulation of former patterns of unquestioning support of Russian Orthodoxy of the Russian State. Might this be a lesson to any Established Church.

It is a Eucharistic rite, and on only two occasions was it not able to be, the Coronations of King John (in the time of the Interdict) and King James II – neither an auspicious precedent. It is a rite governed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, successor to St Dunstan. The Rite reflects the polity of the Church of England as the Established Church. Ahead of the Coronation, Archbishop Fisher spoke in 1953 of the Anointing as the “spiritual climax” and the Coronation as the “spectacular climax”⁴⁶ of what would take place. These were significant descriptions at the birth of the televisual age. The former was not relayed to the millions who watched, the latter remains the abiding memory of that moment.

Today the Church of England is seen by other faiths as the protector and guarantor of matters of religion in the public sphere. The Church of England sees itself as *part* of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and therefore, in relation to all Christian traditions, striving for the unity of the Church of God, as it proclaims the inheritance of the Christian faith in each generation.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

The Coronation is a Christian celebration of a unique kind, but one to which all faiths should be welcome, and in which other Christians might take part, as happened in 1953. Then, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland presented the Queen with the Bible. This was the first time the Church of England gave a role to anyone from outside it, since the Union of the Crowns.

The Rite sits under the ultimate rule of God. The readings can be interpreted differently by different hearers and stakeholders. In the set Gospel, rendering to Caesar that which is Caesar's might imply quietist acceptance of any secular rule for an unquestioning (and un-Christian) ruler. Likewise, for those inclined to hesitation about temporal power, it might imply licence to resist it. Jesus's other-worldly understanding of the Kingdom which he ushers in, confounds all understandings of power and dominion. This is the fundamental Christian witness in this world before secular authority. It is most powerfully seen in Our Lord's encounters before Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate, where the question *Who is Lord and Judge here?* is most acutely posed by the encounters. The Gospel set for one thousand years at the Sacring rings as uncomfortably now as it did on first hearing at a Christian ruler's inauguration. The Church's task is to bless with all solemnity those who come in sincerity seeking sacring, but to hold accountable too, those who have received it.

Properly, only the two Archbishops, the King and Queen and the four supporting bishops (of Durham and Bath & Wells on either side of the King, and two other Bishops next to the Queen Consort) should receive communion.

Reborn, the monarch departs from the Shrine of St Edward, in the Imperial robes, beneath the cross, crest of the Imperial State Crown. He proceeds through the Abbey, and the streets of London, to be acclaimed by the people.

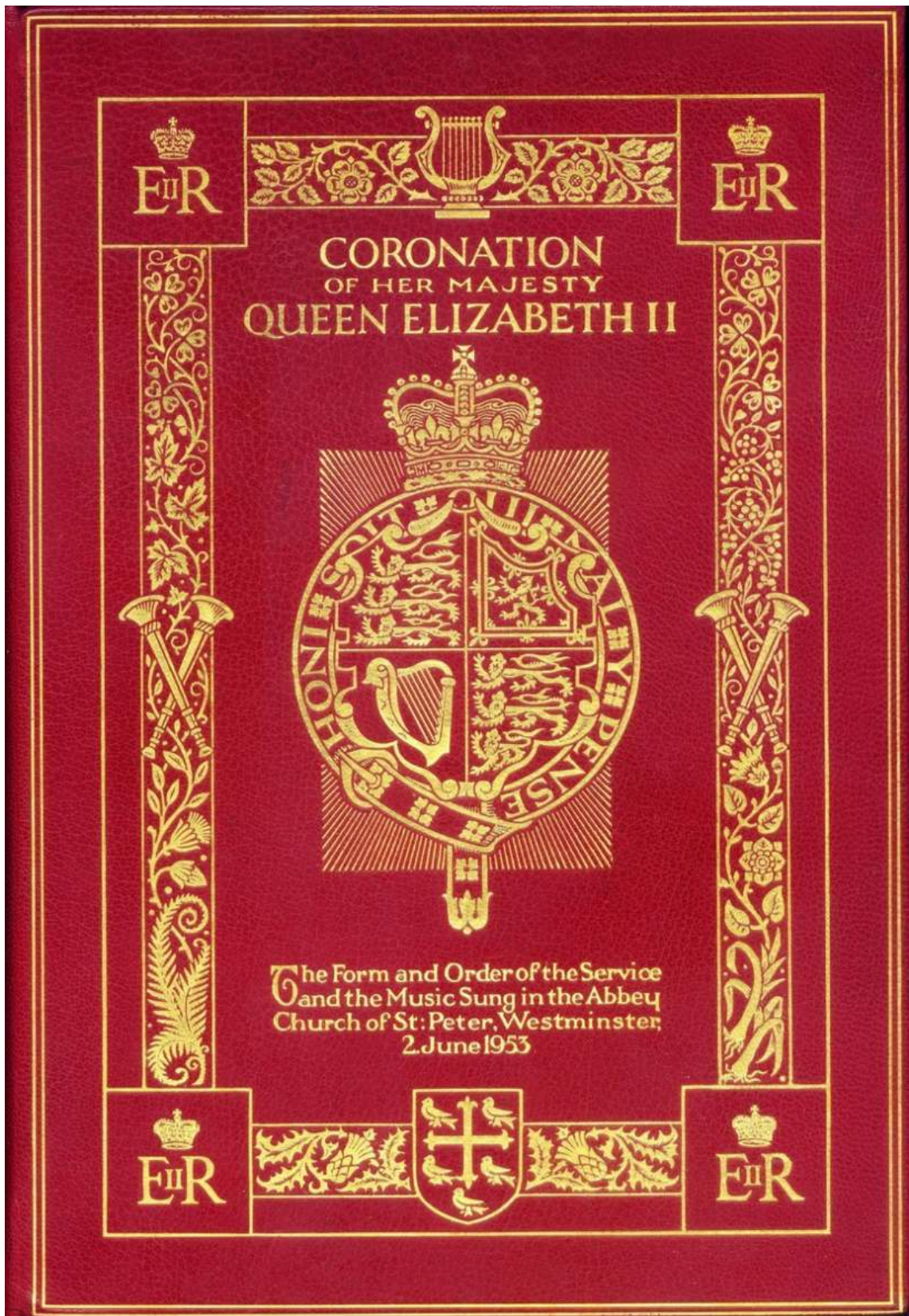


Photo: National Trust Collections

SUMMARY OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE RITE OF 1953
WITH THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY AND OBSERVATION

<p style="text-align: center;">I. THE PREPARATION</p> <p>The singing of the Litany</p>	<p>This has very ancient precedent and should be retained; it has been sung in different places since the Coronation of Queen Victoria. The position at the last Coronation, before the start of the service proper, was a very sensible one.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">II. THE ENTRANCE INTO THE CHURCH</p> <p>The singing of Psalm 122 (vv 1-3, 6, 7)</p>	<p>This is very ancient and should be retained. As a Psalm of Ascent, with ancient associations with Pilgrimage to the Temple from the time of Solomon, it says everything about the cultic character of what is taking place.</p> <p>The music of CHH Parry’s anthem has been sung since 1911.</p> <p>The arrival of the Sovereign in his or her red robes has the double significance of his or her membership of the peerage, from which they are chosen, and the robes of the martyr.</p> <p>Many of the items used in the service not already on the altar are carried in the procession.</p> <p>This might be the point at which to suggest the prostration of the King, either to take place here or at the Veni Creator -see VII</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">III. THE RECOGNITION</p> <p><i>The Archbishop, together with the Lord Chancellor, Lord Great Chamberlain, Lord High Constable, and Earl Marshal (Garter King of Arms preceding them), shall then go to the East side of the Theatre, and after shall go to the other three sides in this order, South, West, and North, and at every of the four sides the Archbishop shall with a loud voice speak to the People: and the Queen in the meanwhile, standing up by King Edward’s Chair, shall turn and show herself unto the People at every of the four sides of the Theatre as the Archbishop is at every of them, the Archbishop saying:</i></p> <p>Sirs, I here present unto you Queen ELIZABETH, your undoubted Queen: Wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage and service, Are you willing to do the same? <i>The People signify their willingness and joy, by loud and repeated acclamations, all with one voice crying out,</i> GOD SAVE QUEEN ELIZABETH.</p>	<p>This is a strong echo of the Saxon practice of election. It is noteworthy that it is the Archbishop who leads the Great Officers of State.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IV. THE OATH</p> <p>a. Promise to govern “the peoples of the United Kingdom, and your possessions and other territories according to their respective laws and customs?”</p>	<p>(see page 21 for detailed discussion of the Oath)</p> <p>The Sovereign is asked if he or she is willing to take the oath. The Archbishop administers the oath in two parts, first to govern the state and second to protect the Church.</p>

<p>b. Promise to maintain in the UK “the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law? And maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline and government thereof, as by law established? And to preserve to the Bishops and Clergy their rights and privileges?”</p> <p>c. The oath is sworn, the Bible kissed on the Bible and the document signed.</p>	<p>The Oath was rewritten in 1689 and then again in 1910.</p>
<p>V. THE PRESENTING OF THE BIBLE</p> <p><i>When the Queen is again seated, the Archbishop shall go to her Chair; and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, receiving the Bible from the Dean of Westminster, shall bring it to the Queen and present it to her, the Archbishop saying these words:</i></p> <p>Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.</p> <p><i>And the Moderator shall continue:</i> Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.</p> <p><i>Then shall the Queen deliver back the Bible to the Moderator, who shall bring it to the Dean of Westminster, to be reverently placed again upon the Altar. This done, the Archbishop shall return to the Altar</i></p>	<p>This was the first time since the Union of the Crowns a non-Anglican took an active and speaking part in the service.</p> <p>The reliance on the Bible, as Law, Wisdom and “the oracles of God” places the strongest emphasis on godliness as integral to Kingship.</p> <p>There is utter reliance in public life on Biblical values, and continuity with the Christian past.</p>
<p>VI. THE BEGINNING OF THE COMMUNION SERVICE</p> <p>The Introit Psalm 84: 9-10</p> <p>The Collect for Purity</p> <p>The Coronation Collect</p> <p>Epistle I Peter 2: 13</p> <p>Gradual Psalm 141: 2 Let my prayer come up as incense</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 22: 15-22 Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s</p> <p>The Nicene Creed</p> <p>No sermon</p>	<p>We might call this the Ministry of the Word or Synaxis</p> <p>In the Liber Regalis it was Psalm 89 “Look upon the face of thine anointed, one day in thy courts is better than a thousand.</p> <p>(see page 45 for discussion of the readings) Peter’s requirement to Christians to follow secular authority</p> <p>Memory of the use of incense</p> <p>Obvious choice</p> <p>Not the Apostles’ Creed</p> <p>One is not needed: too long! Let the teaching precede [proceed?].</p>

<p>VII. THE ANOINTING</p> <p>Veni Creator – choir</p> <p>Blessing of the Ampulla</p> <p>The singing of Zadok the Priest, during which the monarch disrobes, and proceeds to St Edward’s Chair</p> <p>The King is anointed on hands, breast and head. The anointing of Solomon is recalled in the prayers.</p> <p><i>This prayer being ended, the Queen shall arise and sit down again in King Edward’s Chair, while the Knights of the Garter bear away the pall; whereupon the Queen arising, the Dean of Westminster, assisted by the Mistress of the Robes, shall put upon her Majesty the Colobium Sindonis and the Supertunica or Close Pall of cloth of gold, together with a Girdle of the same. Then shall the Queen again sit down; and after her, the people also.</i></p>	<p>(see pp 36-41)</p> <p>Used since the time of Dunstan in 973.</p> <p>Overlap with confirmations and ordinations</p> <p>Invocation of the Holy Spirit</p> <p>The disrobing is the divesting of magnificence and loss of self, it is a death. The linen robe worn during the Anointing is reminiscent of that the linen of the High Priest, entering the Holy of Holies.</p> <p>The anointing is screened by a canopy. The long history of anointing with its various iterations has settled with just these three anointings with Chrism for the Monarch and two for the Consort.</p> <p>The vesting in the Colobium Sindonis (alb) and the Supertunica (dalmatic/tunicle) are, as at baptism, the robing of the “new creation”. They are the signs most redolent of sacral kingship. Historically they remained in the Abbey because of their holiness. More recently they have been housed in the Tower, but they are ecclesial vestments before they are royal robes.</p>
<p>VIII. THE PRESENTING OF THE SPURS AND SWORD AND THE OBLATION OF THE SAID SWORD</p> <p><i>The Spurs shall be brought from the Altar by the Dean of Westminster, and delivered to the Lord Great Chamberlain; who, kneeling down, shall present them to the Queen, who forthwith sends them back to the Altar.</i></p> <p><i>Then the Lord who carries the Sword of State, delivering to the Lord Chamberlain the said Sword (which is thereupon deposited in Saint Edward’s Chapel) shall receive from the Lord Chamberlain, in lieu thereof, another Sword in a scabbard which he shall deliver to the Archbishop: and the Archbishop shall lay it on the Altar and say:</i></p> <p>Hear our prayers, O LORD, we beseech thee, and so direct and support thy servant Queen ELIZABETH, that she may not bear the Sword in vain; but may use it as the minister of God for the terror and punishment of evildoers, and for the protection and encouragement of those that do well, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.</p> <p><i>Then shall the Archbishop take the Sword from off the Altar, and (the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Winchester and other Bishops assisting and going along with him) shall deliver it into the Queen’s hands; and, the Queen holding it, the Archbishop shall say: (see opposite)</i></p>	<p>These ancient items of Regalia, from a time when kingship meant leadership in battle, are hallowed and given a spiritual character, it is noteworthy that martial items are the first to be offered.</p> <p>The oblation or <i>redemption</i> of the sword, elevates its purpose above the power to destroy, and connects it with justice, protection and restoration.</p> <p>Receive this kingly Sword, brought now from the Altar of God, and delivered to you by the hands of us the Bishops and servants of God, though unworthy. With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, help and defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order: that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue; and so faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ in this life, that you may reign for ever with him in the life which is to come. Amen.</p>

<p>IX. THE INVESTITURE WITH THE ARMILLS, THE STOLE ROYAL, AND THE ROBE ROYAL AND THE DELIVERY OF THE ORB</p> <p><i>Then the Queen arising, the Robe Royal or Pall of cloth of gold with the Stole Royal shall be delivered by the Groom of the Robes to the Dean of Westminster, and by him, assisted by the Mistress of the Robes, put upon the Queen, standing; the Lord Great Chamberlain fastening the clasps. Then shall the Queen sit down, and the Archbishop shall say:</i></p> <p>Receive this Imperial Robe, and the Lord your God endue you with knowledge and wisdom, with majesty and with power from on high: the Lord clothe you with the robe of righteousness, and with the garments of salvation. Amen.</p> <p>The Delivery of the Orb <i>Then shall the Orb with the Cross be brought from the Altar by the Dean of Westminster and delivered into the Queen's right hand by the Archbishop, saying:</i> Receive this Orb set under the Cross, and remember that the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ our Redeemer. <i>Then shall the Queen deliver the Orb to the Dean of Westminster, to be by him laid on the Altar.</i></p>	<p>More recent additions to the vesture are the Armills, or bracelets and stole royal.</p> <p>The Armills were made for and presented by the countries of the Commonwealth for Queen Elizabeth II. They had fallen out of use and were reinstated. The Stole Royal was also made for the Queen's Coronation in 1953. It is possible the Stole and Armills are the same item but understood differently. The Armills are understood to bind the Sovereign to his or her people, but Woolley suggests they are a later Western version of the Byzantine priestly stole.</p> <p>The Orb (interestingly, round before the world was known to be round) is an ancient form of sceptre, underlining Divine rule over all the world. It sits under the cross. It has imperial connotations. At the Sovereign's exit he or she is once more invested with the Orb, although during the homage he or she holds the two sceptres, which are of Saxon origin.</p> <p>The investiture with this regalia is all immediately attendant upon the anointing and are part of the "new creation."</p> <p>Roy Strong considers that the investiture with the Orb and its return is redundant. It could be that the sovereign is invested with it on exiting the Shrine at The Recess (XVII).</p>
<p>X. THE INVESTITURE PER ANNULAM ET PER SCEPTRUM ET BACULUM</p>	<p>The giving of the Ring and the two Sceptres, or Rod and Sceptre. The Ring is reminiscent of both marriage and the appurtenance of office of a Bishop; the twin Rods date from Saxon times and underline justice and mercy and divine rule. There are clear allusions to the Rod and Staff of Sacral Kingship in the Old Testament (Psalm 23).</p>
<p>XI. THE PUTTING ON OF THE CROWN</p> <p>The congregation shouts "God save the King."</p> <p>The Archbishop says: God crown you with a crown of glory and righteousness, that having a right faith and manifold fruit of good works, you may obtain the crown of an everlasting kingdom by the gift of him whose kingdom endureth for ever. Amen.</p> <p><i>Then shall the choir sing:</i> Be strong and of a good courage: keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.</p>	<p>This is the final investiture: the Crown sits on top of the balm of Chrismation; it is the shining and spectacular climax of the Sacring. It manifests the truth of the King's rebirth. The jewels radiate the light of this new incarnation and blessing. Our attention is drawn to its lustre; it is named after St Edward, whose original Crown it replaced, it is placed on the head of the Sovereign when seated in the Chair that bears his name, and but yards from his Shrine. It is the outward sign of the sacramental reality it represents.</p> <p>The shout of "God save the King!" is an echo of Solomon's anointing, an acclamation and a prayer.</p>
<p>XII. THE BENEDICTION</p>	<p>The Archbishop blesses the newly crowned King and turns to the assembly and enjoins all to take care of God's anointed servant.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">XIII. THE ENTHRONING</p> <p><i>Then shall the Queen go to her Throne, and be lifted up into it by the Archbishops and Bishops, and other Peers of the Kingdom; and being enthroned, or placed therein, all the Great Officers, those that bear the Swords and the Sceptres, and the Nobles who carried the other Regalia, shall stand round about the steps of the Throne; and the Archbishop standing before the Queen, shall say:</i></p>	<p>The enthroning on a higher throne has its origins in the raising up of the Saxon Kings on a shield, borne aloft by the officers around the King. This is the Ascension of the God-Man. The Anointing and Coronation are devotional and take place before the altar. The Assembly is aware of their taking place, but most in the Abbey cannot see either, and the Anointing takes place beneath a canopy. The enthronement is designed to be visible; several Plantagenets had very high thrones indeed. The move is from a chair [once a bench] to a throne. All in the Abbey can see this and, without hyperbole, it could be said to be a moment of <i>realised eschatology</i>.</p> <p>From it he will receive the homage and fealty of his subjects. The regalia which surround the throne borne by the Great Officers of State (who have stood there in their turn over 1000 years, by office or inheritance) bear the regalia of state [?]</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">XIV. THE HOMAGE</p> <p>I, Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury [and so every one of the rest, I N. Bishop of N., repeating the rest audibly after the Archbishop] will be faithful and true, and faith and truth will bear unto you, our Sovereign Lord, King of this Realm and Defender of the Faith, and unto your heirs and successors according to law. So help me God.</p> <p>I, N. Duke, or Earl, etc., of N. do become your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks. So help me God.</p> <p><i>This done, the Senior Peer shall rise, and, all the Peers of his degree rising also, he shall touch the Crown upon her Majesty's head, as promising by that ceremony for himself and his Order to be ever ready to support it with all their power; and then shall he kiss the Queen's right hand.</i></p> <p><i>When the Homage is ended, the drums shall beat, and the trumpets sound, and all the people shout, crying out:</i> God save Queen ELIZABETH. Long live Queen ELIZABETH. May the Queen live for ever.</p> <p><i>Then shall the Archbishop leave the Queen in her Throne and go to the Altar.</i></p>	<p>In their turn and in their order of precedence, representatives of the nation pay homage as liege-men of life and limb. Members of the peerage, from amongst whom the Sovereign is drawn, take their turn after the Royal Dukes.</p> <p>Unpopular as it may be to observe, there is order in heaven and earth.</p> <p>This was an addition in the late 13th c.</p> <p>Choral music, spanning the history of the choral tradition is sung by the choirs of the Abbey, St Paul's and the Chapel Royal. (See page 69).</p> <p>The acclamation is directly taken from that of Solomon I Kings 1: 38ff</p>

<p>XV. THE COMMUNION</p> <p><i>In the mean while the Queen shall descend from her Throne, supported and attended as before, and go to the steps of the Altar, where, delivering her Crown and her Sceptre and Rod to the Lord Great Chamberlain or other appointed Officers to hold, she shall kneel down. The hymn ended and the people kneeling, first the Queen shall offer Bread and Wine for the Communion, which being brought out of Saint Edward's Chapel, and delivered into her hands (the Bread upon the Paten by the Bishop that read the Epistle, and the Wine in the Chalice by the Bishop that read the Gospel), shall be received from the Queen by the Archbishop, and reverently placed upon the Altar, and decently covered with a fair linen cloth, the Archbishop first saying this prayer:</i></p> <p>Bless, O Lord, we beseech thee, these thy gifts, and sanctify them unto this holy use, that by them we may be made partakers of the Body and Blood of thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, and fed unto everlasting life of soul and body: And that thy servant Queen ELIZABETH may be enabled to the discharge of her weighty office, whereunto of thy great goodness thou hast called and appointed her. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.</p>	<p>The Eucharistic rite continues with an offertory hymn (an innovation in 1953, giving the congregation an active part) and offertory prayers, including the BCP Prayer for the Church Militant, the Confession, the Comfortable Words. The Sursum Corda and the Eucharistic Prayer.</p> <p>They all replace the Roman Canon in the Liber Regalis.</p> <p>The offertory prayers were added in 1953 to echo those of the Liber and represent the 20th c interest in returning to ancient sources.</p> <p>The offering of gold and a linen cloth is of ancient precedent. It recalls the offering of the Magi, which is evoked annually at Epiphany in the Chapel Royal, it recognises the costs of the event, and the provision of linen recognises Protestant sensibilities around the fair and due order of the rite, while also echoing the robes of the High Priest.</p> <p>Only the principal Bishops receive with the King and Queen. The Communion concludes with the Gloria and Post Communion</p>
<p>XVI. THE TE DEUM</p>	<p>An ancient canticle of special rejoicing which signals the union of heaven and earth in praising God, first placed here for the Coronation of Edward VII, with the aim of keeping the timing of the service under control.</p>
<p>XVII. THE RECESS</p>	<p>The removal of the party first to the Shrine underlines the significance of St Edward. The divesting of the sacral garments and Regalia, which by tradition remained in the Abbey, is reminiscent of the divesting of the High Priest on leaving the Holy of Holies. The donning of purple robes by the King denotes his Imperial status and he proceeds with the Orb and Sceptre and the Imperial Crown. See comment about the Orb in relation to XV.</p>

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EUCHARIST

FROM its origins in the West the Coronation Rite has been within the Eucharist. Before the Second Vatican Council, it was normal at all rites conducted within the Eucharist, for only the principal celebrants and recipients of whichever sacrament was being celebrated, to receive Communion. From the Reformation it has been the custom that this should be the case also for the Coronation. Given the very particular nature of the Rite, and the complexity around communicating the congregation expected in the Abbey, for the King's Coronation on 6 May 2023, this well-established precedent should continue to be followed without fear, favour or scruple.

The Eucharistic context may be alienating for those who are unfamiliar with the sacramental life of the Church. Given that this is a Church event of a very particular kind, no apology need be made. I would underline a point made at the outset, that providing this rite is taught, explained and rejoiced in by its hosts, it must remain integral.

It might be added that the only two occasions on which the Eucharist was not celebrated were for the Coronations of King John, who was under Papal interdict, and King James II, who had converted to Roman Catholicism and whose reign threatened to bring the country to Civil War once more.

The 1662 Eucharistic prayer used since the time of William II and Mary II is the most commendable usage, and has the advantage of brevity.



*The solid gold Chalice and Patten used at the Coronation, from the Royal Collection.
(Photo Royal Collection)*

ILLUSTRATIONS AND COMMENTARY ON THE CENTRAL ITEMS OF VESTURE AND REGALIA

Here follows a brief excursus on the Vesture and the Regalia. (*All photos Royal Collection Trust*).

The Vesture

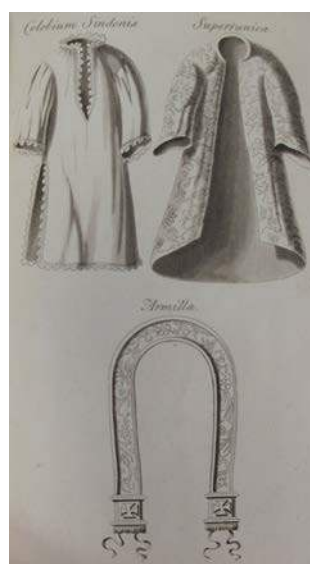
The Gloves. Much like the gloves of a Bishop worn when presiding at the Eucharist, the King's gloves underline that the hands that wear them are anointed, and they handle holy things.

The Colobium Sindonis, a linen robe (Colobium implying that it is sleeveless), is Greek in origin, Sindonis, again from the Greek means 'of linen' and is of the shape of an alb, the Eastern χιτών. This vestment, which had sleeves up to the time of James II, is now sleeveless, and is also now divided at the side so that it can be put on the sovereign, without being put over his head, and fastened on the shoulder. It echoes the baptismal garment, and the robe of the saints in heaven and the High Priestly linen vestments.

The Supertunica reminds us that a bishop traditionally wears, or wore, a tunicle *and* dalmatic under the chasuble at Mass. These are episcopal robes, with the robes of the lesser orders beneath. The Supertunica has been divided down the middle for convenience in putting on. This vestment is the Eastern *Sakkos*.



The Gloves

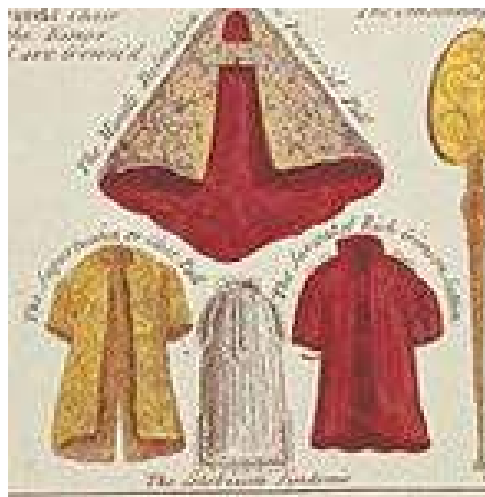


The Colobium Sindonis, Supertunica and Armills of James II

The Armill, or Armills. There is some confusion in the development of this ornament, for it is sometimes used in the plural, and perhaps in that case of the

royal Bracelets, which were discarded, and reintroduced for the Queen's Coronation in 1953 as a gift from the Commonwealth. The origin is partly priestly vesture and, before that, Byzantine court dress.

The Imperial Mantle, Pallium or Pall is more like a cope than anything else. It is the Eastern *chlamys*. It is one of the most obviously priestly vestments worn by the Sovereign during the Coronation ceremonies. The one worn by the Queen in 1953 was made for the Coronation of King George IV in 1821. It has a golden clasp in the form of an eagle.



The Stole Royal Made in 1953 by the Worshipful Company of Girdlers for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It is one of the most potent symbols of Sacral Kingship.

The Regalia

The St Edward's Crown 1661



Woolley comments that by origin it was called by the Anglo-Saxons the Stemma or Galeus, sufficiently shewing the provenance of this ornament. The Roman imperial Crown seems to have been much after the shape of the Eastern Stemma. The English Crown is a fairly narrow band surmounted by a cross. The St Edward's crown is extremely heavy and following the Communion is replaced by the Imperial State Crown.

The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross (with additions) 1661



Known as the 'First Star of Africa', Cullinan I is the largest colourless cut diamond in the world. In 1911 the Crown Jeweller, Garrard, mounted it in the Sovereign's Sceptre which had been made for Charles II's Coronation in 1661. The diamond is so large that the sceptre had to be reinforced to take its weight. Nevertheless, the structure which holds the diamond is hinged, so the stone can be removed and worn separately if desired.

The Rod of Equity and Mercy 1661



The Rod represents the Sovereign's spiritual role, with the dove symbolising the Holy Ghost. Traditionally it has been known as 'the Rod of Equity and Mercy'. During the coronation service the new sovereign is first anointed with holy oil, then robed in coronation robes, and then invested with a number of ornaments symbolising the spiritual nature of kingship. These include the Spurs,

Swords and Armills, followed by the Orb, a Ring and the Sceptres. The Sovereign is presented with two sceptres - one surmounted by a cross representing temporal power and this one, surmounted by a dove. After the investiture the sovereign is crowned.

The Orb 1661



The Orb is generally held to be another form of the Sceptre, but is more probably an elaborated form of the Greek *Akakia*. The Orb was given at first without any form, but in the English use, a form has been introduced comparatively lately. It represents the sovereign's power. It symbolises the Christian world with its cross mounted on a globe, and the bands of jewels dividing it up into three sections represent the three continents known in medieval times. It is mounted with clusters of emeralds, rubies and sapphires, surrounded by rose-cut diamonds, and single rows of pearls. A cross on the top is set with rose-cut diamonds, with a sapphire in the centre on one side and an emerald on the other, and with pearls at the angles and at the end of each arm. During the Coronation service, the Orb is placed in the right hand of the monarch when invested with the symbols of sovereignty. It is then placed on the Altar before the moment of crowning. There is some confusion in the Rite over this, and it could just be handed to the Sovereign on departing from the Shrine of St Edward without its prior presentation. It is interesting that long before it was commonly accepted that the world was round it was a representation of the world under God's power.

The Ring 1821



As previous rings had been made for each sovereign, so this was made for William IV in 1821. It was left to Queen Victoria by Queen Adelaide, who in turn left it to remain with the Crown Jewels. It has been worn by all monarchs since Edward VII. It may be compared with both a wedding ring and a bishop's ring.

The Swords of State



The use of Swords is primitive in the Coronation Rite. They have symbolic overtones of knightly customs and the age of chivalry. As with many aspects of the Coronation, the deliberate merging of sacred and secular, spiritual and temporal, makes them objects of particular interest. They are weapons of destruction which by their use in this setting become sacred. Their use, in modern secular terms, reflects the sovereign's role as Head of the British Armed Forces. But they are far more symbolic than that. Three are carried before the monarch into the Abbey: the **blunt Sword of Mercy** (also known as Curtana), the **Sword of Spiritual Justice**, and the **Sword of Temporal Justice**. These three therefore speak directly of Christian Kingly rule, in elevated and spiritual terms, distancing their bellicose function from that which they represent. These three swords are believed to have been supplied at the time of James I between 1610 and 1620, probably by a member of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers, using blades created in the 1580s by Italian bladesmiths Giandonato and Andrea Ferrara. They were deposited with St Edward's regalia at the Abbey by Charles II. Before that point, new swords had been made for each coronation since the 15th century. Sold in the Civil War, these items were returned at the Restoration, and their use was first recorded at the Coronation of James II in 1685. **The Jewelled Sword of**

Offering was made in 1821 for the Coronation of George IV and is handed to the Sovereign after the anointing and before the Crowning, it is then returned – the official term in the rite is redeemed. The *redemption* of a potentially lethal weapon, which at once is a sign of the cross, a sign of leadership with an allusion to mercy, could be seen to sacralise the activity of secular rule. These several swords are potent reminders that leadership involves invidious choices. The dependence upon God for guidance and accountability assist the sovereign to know they are not alone. The *redemption* of this symbol of office is both a comfort and a cost.

The Spurs 1661 with 1821 additions



Gold spurs were first included among the English coronation ornaments in 1189, at the Coronation of Richard I (the Lionheart). They symbolised knighthood, and their use in the coronation ritual derives directly from the ceremony of creating a knight. These spurs were made in 1661 for Charles II but were altered in 1820 for George IV, when new textiles replaced the earlier buckles and straps. Traditionally the spurs were fastened to the sovereign's feet, but since the Restoration they have simply been held to the ankles of kings, or in the case of queens regnant, presented and then placed on the altar. After the investiture, the Sovereign is crowned. There is no direct reference to spurs for use when riding, in the Bible, although Psalm 32: 9 says “Be not like horse or mule.... which must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not keep you.” The spurs are reminiscent of the chivalric age, symbolising now, perhaps, the Sovereign’s constitutional rights: to be consulted; to encourage; and to warn.

The Armills 1953



These were made and presented by the countries of the Commonwealth in 1953. They are of solid gold. They replaced Armills made in 1661 for Charles II. Worn as bracelets, they bind the Sovereign to his or her people. Woolley suggests they should be seen as a cloth vestment comparable with a stole or maniple, rather than jewellery.

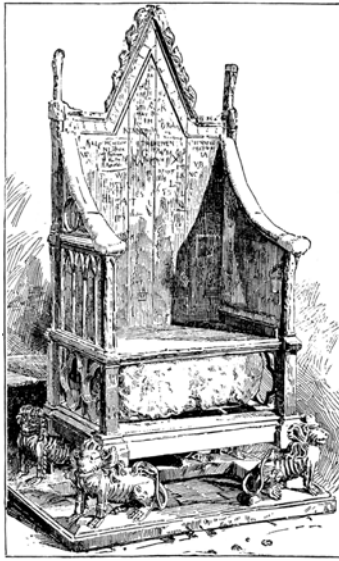
THE CORONATION OF THE CONSORT



*The Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth 1936.
The King is seated in his higher throne, the Queen having been crowned – Photo Daily Mail*

IT is 87 years since the last coronation of a Queen Consort. There have been precedents for the Queen Consort's coronation not taking place, when present; on the other hand, to see the Consort crowned will be a splendid addition to the proceedings. The decision that the Queen be crowned was published in January 2023. It will be a solemn and appropriate dedication of the Queen's role in support of the King, and the opportunity for her to be surrounded by prayerful support. There is recent precedent for the Coronation of the Consort being by the Archbishop of York, which may be welcomed by the clergy and people of the Northern Province and might be considered. The Court of Claims ahead of King Edward VII's Coronation in 1902 underlined the fact that the right to crown the Queen remains a prerogative of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Queen is anointed twice, on breast and head.

THE STONE OF SCONE



St Edward's Chair with the Stone of Destiny in place

BEYOND matters of Anglo-Scottish relations and the depths of feeling about the treatment of the Scots by King Edward I, there is a rather lovely Biblical allusion to the Stone of Scone.

Reference has already been made to the anointing of the Pillar at Bethel in Genesis 28: 12-17 (see page 35). The Pillar at Bethel has a direct, if possibly apocryphal, association with the Stone of Destiny. Jacob had a vision of angels climbing on a ladder to heaven. In Genesis 35: 11 Jacob is instructed once again to go to Bethel, where he sets up a pillar anew and blesses it. God promises Jacob “a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you.” Some accounts identify this stone as the place beside which Abimelech was crowned king of Israel and Josiah made his covenant with the Lord to keep his commandments and statutes.

There are various accounts, all of which provide an aetiology for the Kingdom of Scotland in the next chapter of the Stone's life. One tells of how in 580 BC when the Babylonians were invading, Jeremiah and Zedekiah's daughter Tea, the last survivor of the Davidic line, smuggled the stone from its place at Bethel into Egypt, where they fled. From Egypt Tea fled to Spain and thence to Ireland, where she married King Eochaid, and took the name *Scota*. In the stone's Irish period it acquired the name *Lia Fail*, and it sat at Tara, the holy hill on which the High Kings of Ireland were crowned. It is possible that Columba took a portion of it to Scotland, to Dal Raita in Argyllshire, and then it moved in AD 840 to Scone, the capital of the Kingdom of the Picts and Scots founded by Kenneth Mac Ailpin. Kings of Scotland were crowned thereupon until 1292, when Edward I of England seized it and subjugated the Kings of Scotland to vassal status.

However, geologists suggest that the composition of the stone is that of the sandstone local to Scone.

Dean Stanley of Westminster (Dean from 1863-1881) commenting on the significance of the Stone, when it resided permanently in the Abbey, suggests, perhaps a little condescendingly:

It carries back our thoughts to races and customs now almost extinct, a link which unites the throne of England to the traditions of Tara and Iona and connects the charm of our complex civilisation with forces of our mother earth – the sticks and stones of savage nature.⁴⁷

ECUMENICAL ASPECTS OF THE CORONATION

THE active participation of the Moderator of the General Assembly of Church of Scotland in 1953, and since then representatives of the Roman Catholic and Free Churches, at Royal Weddings and Jubilees, and not least at the late Queen’s funeral in September 2022, suggest the importance of the sending of invitations to ecumenical representatives for the Coronation of King Charles III.

Likewise, the presence of interfaith guests, *qua* guests, will be important and is to be welcomed.

THE CORONATION AND THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

RACE DAVIE’s study *European identity, European unity, and the Christian tradition*⁴⁸, points to the value of what she terms a “weak” established Church in a time of “remorseless” secularisation. In discussing the role of mainstream majority Churches in contemporary Europe, she draws an interesting comparison between France and the United Kingdom, with reference to the Church of England in particular. In discussing *laïcité*, the French *modus operandi* in public life regarding the role of religion, she takes as a recent case study the response by the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron in 2018 to an invitation by the French Catholic Bishop’s Conference. His attendance at a meeting with the Bishops sparked very dramatically- divided opinion in French society. It was the first time a President had spoken at such an event. The context for this meeting was “the growing concerns of the French bishops regarding a wide range of

⁴⁷ Ian Bradley, *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Dimension of Monarchy* 2002 DLT, p. 81.

⁴⁸ ‘European identity, European unity, and the Christian tradition’, in Grebe, M. and Worthern, J. (eds) *After Brexit: European Unity and the Unity of European Churches*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019: 99-110.

issues: bioethics, immigration and the growing religious tensions all too evident in France.”⁴⁹

She concludes:

The Church of England is deploying its established status in innovative ways not only to sustain the identity of its members, but also to permit a constructive conversation about faith (of all kinds) at the centre of English society. The French Catholic Church is emerging from a markedly more conflictual past to find its place in late modern French society, invited to do this – paradoxically – by the President of the Republic himself.⁵⁰

The sense of the Church of England as a *weak* agent is perhaps uncomfortable for the clergy of the Church of England, but in looking back at British society since the last Coronation, we might easily agree there is no other word for what the contemporary Church is, in terms of its profile and membership.

In a rite which has many symbols of power and strength, borne and brandished (nothing has been said about the historic role of the King’s Champion at the Coronation); a “weak” Church in times of strongly opposing political crosscurrents, being the host of this ritual, is interestingly contrary. St Paul speaks of power being made perfect in weakness (II Corinthians 12: 9), and this is a way of summarising the character of the Incarnation itself.

To recognise contemporary weakness, the Church cannot shy away from the power it has held historically, and the influence it still holds, notably its representation in the House of Lords. Acts of reparation for historic involvement through investment in the slave trade are particularly topical. However, much of that apparent power is fragile and anachronistic. The Church of today is under threat from hard-line secularising forces. For some within and without, the Church could be seen to be disintegrating, as regular church attendance plummets. So, there are complex issues of weakness and status with which the Church of England has to grapple. Knowing what power is, what its ultimate source is, and what the significance of hosting this rite is, in terms of secular society, requires considerable reflection and self-evaluation on the part of the whole of the Church of England.

⁴⁹ Ibid 108

⁵⁰ Ibid 109

MUSIC AND THE CORONATION

A SCHOLARLY study has been conducted by Matthias Range: *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations: From James I to Elizabeth II* (Cambridge 2012).

There are several points of general theological and liturgical interest which merit further consideration.

The early music of the rite was a development of the Roman Missal, in plainchant, with propers drawing mainly from the Royal Psalms.

The Renaissance saw the flowering of sublime polyphonic choral music, notably in the Royal Foundations of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey. Mary Tudor's heart is buried in the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace, and the Tudor sensibilities towards music are an important factor in the survival of English choral tradition at the end of the Reformation. Elizabeth's love of beautiful and dignified worship in her own private chapel, composed by Roman Catholics Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, underlines her own toleration of difference, and natural musical conservatism. Diarmaid McCulloch has explored very interestingly how the cathedral choral tradition was an effective brake on the further Protestant Reformation. This brake was a key part of the Elizabethan Settlement, and the Stuart iteration of Anglicanism:

Cathedrals became a subversion of what was otherwise in essence a fairly typical Reformed Protestant church, providing an example of the 'beauty of holiness' which went on to create a second identity for the Church of England that has endured right up to the present day. The C of E has evolved willy-nilly towards a theological schizophrenia, in which self-consciously 'Catholic' and 'Protestant' identities are paradoxical but indestructible strands of a double helix.⁵¹

The once-in-a-generation opportunity to showcase the skills of some of the country's finest composers and performers, has meant the Coronation was an ecclesio-musical focal point. Arguably the renewal of the Choral Tradition, in successive reigns, has given fresh impulse to the creative energies of the nation's most talented musicians.

This has been a gift to world culture, a self-renewing and ever-expanding legacy, and a spiritual underpinning of one of the key moments in national life. Sadly, it is only with the consolidation of secularism, in the time since the last Queen was

⁵¹ Diarmaid MacCulloch *Young Man's Nostalgia* London Review of Books 31 July 2014 review of *Byrd* by Kerry McCarthy Oxford 2014.

crowned, that the idea of Coronation music and the setting for which it was composed, have become so completely disassociated. So, for the modern mind, the medium and the message are seen as different. In previous generations, the sacred music attendant upon the Sacring was integral, as ornament and as an expression of corporate prayer, conducted on behalf of the assembly by the very best practitioners. Words of the hymn *Angel-voices ever singing* come to mind, as Francis Pott speaks of “hearts and minds and hands and voices” combining “in our choicest psalmody.”⁵²

Handel’s Coronation Anthems composed in 1727 for the Coronation of George II are a suite of unrivalled compositions, the most famous of which is *Zadok the Priest*; this remains a cornerstone of the repertoire.

The greeting of the King or Queen as the Scholars of Westminster School cry “Vivat”, during Parry’s 1902 Coronation anthem *I was glad*, has a spine-tingling effect, which defies complete explanation, other than to underline the unique character of what is taking place.

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II included a range of music reflecting the post-Second World War need for celebration and hope:

MUSIC PLAYED AT THE CORONATION
OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY 2
June 1953

* indicates first performance

Orchestral music played before the service:

Chaconne from ‘King Arthur’: Henry Purcell (arranged Herbage)

Trumpet Tune: Purcell

March: Crown Imperial: William Walton

Fantasia on the Alleluia hymn: Gordon Jacob

Jupiter: Gustav Holst

Epic March: John Ireland

Regalia procession:

O most merciful: Charles Wood

Regalia procession:

Litany for 5 voices: Thomas Tallis

March: Pomp and Circumstance no 2: Edward Elgar

Idyll ‘Banks of Green Willow’: George Butterworth

Processional *: Arthur Bliss

Greensleeves: *arr.* Ralph Vaughan Williams

Nimrod: Elgar

March: Orb and Sceptre *: Walton

⁵² *Angel- voices ever singing* Francis Pott 1832-1909.

Music for the Royal Fireworks: Overture & Minuet: George Frideric Handel

Music during the service:

Fanfare I Anthem 'I was glad': Charles Hubert Hastings Parry

Fanfares II, III, IV, V

Introit: Behold, O God our Defender*: Herbert Howells

Gradual: Let my prayer come up *: William Harris

The Creed (from Communion Service in G minor): Vaughan Williams

Come, Holy Ghost: VIII Mode Melody: *arr.* Ernest Bullock

Zadok the Priest: Handel

Confortare *: George Dyson

Rejoice in the Lord: John Redford

O clap your hands together: Orlando Gibbons

I will not leave you comfortless: William Byrd

O Lord our Governour *: Healey Willan

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace: Samuel Sebastian Wesley

Homage Fanfare VII founded on Scots tune 'Montrose'

Hymn: All people that on earth do dwell: *arr.* Vaughan Williams

Versicles & Responses,

Sanctus: Vaughan Williams

O taste and see *: Vaughan Williams

Gloria in Excelsis: Charles Villiers Stanford

Threefold Amen: Orlando Gibbons

Te Deum *: Walton Fanfare VIII and God save the Queen: *arr.* Gordon Jacob
(Fanfares I to VII composed by Sir Ernest Bullock)

Orchestral music after the service

March: Pomp and Circumstance no.1: Elgar Coronation

March *: Arnold Bax

March: Pomp and Circumstance no.4: Elgar

DEVOTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE SACRING

AFTER the death of Queen Elizabeth II, former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Williams of Oystermouth wrote, in a tribute in the *Church Times*, words which recognise how remarkably the late Queen lived up to the solemn undertaking she had made at her Sacring. They point to the unique way it prepared her for her life of service:

The coronation service has this much in common with ordination: It singles out someone to occupy a position whose point is to manifest something about the whole community's life—and to do so first by just being there, holding the ideals and aspirations of the community (and also carrying its projections). It is the rationale of the theological tradition that tells us that priesthood is not about an individual's successful or meritorious performance but about fidelity to a position, for the sake of the community's

peace and well-being. It does not exempt priests from censure and judgement where needed, nor does it confer on them an unchallengeable right to win every argument. That is not the point. They are there so that we can gather around something other than our preferences and anxieties and prejudices; around a gift of “kinship” in which we can stand together before God.

And this is what the royal anointing means at its most important level—a gift of the Holy Spirit to hold a fragile human person in faithfulness to this place where community can gather for restoration and renewal. There is no doubt at all that this was exactly what Queen Elizabeth believed about her role. It was a vocation for which she had been blessed and graced, and the anointing was at the heart of it. Sometimes at Windsor Castle she would show visitors her small book of daily devotions from the weeks leading up to the coronation itself—prayers and meditations that had been written for her by the then archbishop of Canterbury. It was obvious that these meditations had sunk in deeply, and that she still shaped her life according to what was laid out there.



In January 2018 Queen Elizabeth II discussed with Alasdair Bruce the significance of the Coronation ceremonies for her and father, King Georg VI in a BBC documentary. It was a documentary made in partnership with the Royal Collection (Photo BBC)

DATES OF THE KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND

SAXON KINGS

EGBERT 827 – 839
AETHELWULF 839 – 858
AETHELBALD 858 – 860
AETHELBERT 860 – 866
AETHELRED I 866 – 871
ALFRED THE GREAT 871–899 *son of AETHELWULF*
EDWARD (The Elder) 899 – 924
ATHELSTAN 924 – 939
EDMUND 939 – 946
EADRED 946 – 955
EADWIG 955 – 959
EDGAR 959 – 975
EDWARD THE MARTYR 975 – 978
AETHELRED II THE UNREADY 978 – 1016
EDMUND II IRONSIDE 1016 – 1016
CANUTE (CNUT THE GREAT) THE DANE
1016 – 1035
HAROLD I 1035 – 1040
HARTHACANUTE 1040 – 1042
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR 1042-1066
HAROLD II 1066

NORMAN KINGS

WILLIAM I (The Conqueror) 1066- 1087
WILLIAM II (Rufus) 1087-1100
HENRY I 1100-1135
STEPHEN 1135-1154

PLANTAGENET KINGS

HENRY II 1154-1189
RICHARD I (The Lionheart) 1189 – 1199
JOHN 1199 -1216
HENRY III 1216 -1272
EDWARD I 1272 – 1307
EDWARD II 1307 – deposed 1327
EDWARD III 1327 – 1377
RICHARD II 1377 – *deposed 1399*

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

HENRY IV 1399 – 1413
HENRY V 1413 – 1422
HENRY VI 1422 – *deposed 1461 Beginning of the Wars of the Roses*

HOUSE OF YORK

EDWARD IV 1461- 1483
EDWARD V 1483 – 1483
RICHARD III 1483 – 1485 *End of the Wars of the Roses*

THE TUDORS

HENRY VII 1485 – 1509
HENRY VIII 1509 – 1547
EDWARD VI 1547 – 1553
MARY I (Bloody Mary) 1553 – 1558
ELIZABETH I 1558-1603

THE STUARTS

JAMES I and VI of Scotland 1603 -1625
CHARLES I 1625 – 1649 *English Civil War*

THE COMMONWEALTH *declared 19 May 1649*

OLIVER CROMWELL, Lord Protector 1653 – 1658
RICHARD CROMWELL, Lord Protector 1658 – 1659

THE RESTORATION

CHARLES II 1660 – 1685
JAMES II and VII of Scotland 1685 – 1688
WILLIAM III 1689 – 1702 and MARY II 1689 – 1694
ANNE 1702 – 1714

THE HANOVERIANS

GEORGE I 1714 -1727
GEORGE II 1727 – 1760
GEORGE III 1760 – 1820
GEORGE IV 1820 – 1830
WILLIAM IV 1830 – 1837
VICTORIA 1837 – 1901

HOUSE OF SAXE-COBURG AND GOTHA

EDWARD VII 1901 – 1910

HOUSE OF WINDSOR *Name changed in 1917*

GEORGE V 1910 – 1936
EDWARD VIII June 1936 – *abdicated December 1936*
GEORGE VI 1936 – 1952
ELIZABETH II 1952 – 2022
CHARLES III 2022 –

THE GREAT OFFICERS OF STATE

The Lord High Steward – to be appointed
The Lord High Chancellor – Jan 2023 - The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
The Lord High Treasurer – to be appointed
The Lord President of the Council – The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal – The Rt Hon the Lord True – Leader of the House of Lords
The Lord Great Chamberlain -The 7th Baron Carrington Rupert Carington (sic)
The Lord High Constable – to be appointed
The Hereditary Earl Marshal – The Rt Hon the Duke of Norfolk
The Lord High Admiral – to be appointed

DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE CORONATION

- 574 Blessed Aidan, King of Dalriada was blessed with the laying on of hands by St Columba.
732-766 The Pontifical of Egbert of York.
855 Traditionally held date for the anointing of King Alfred in Rome by Pope Leo IV when he was five
925 Coronation of King Athelstan at Kingston the dating of **The First Recension**.
Up to 7 Saxon Kings were crowned at Kingston, with certainty about 3
959 First Coronation of King Edgar, most probably at Kingston.
960s Foundation of Westminster Abbey by St Dunstan.
973 Coronation of King Edgar by Dunstan at Bath Abbey by Dunstan - **The Second Recension**.
1042 The Confessor begins rebuilding the Abbey.
1043 3 April Coronation of King Edward the Confessor at Winchester – seat of the West Saxons.
1066 6 January Coronation of King Harold II at Westminster Abbey.
1066 25 December Coronation of William the Conqueror **The Third Recension**
1161 7 February King Edward is canonised as “Confessor”.
1189 Coronation of Richard I a bat appeared circling the King’s throne.
1245 Construction of remodelled Gothic church by Henry III begins.
1268 Cosmati Pavement installed.
1269 13 October the new building is consecrated.
1301 Construction by Edward I, of the Coronation Chair, to hold the Stone of Scone or Destiny.
1327 Coronation of Edward III, probable use of the prototype of **The Fourth Recension**.
1382 1382 Liber Regalis for Richard II’s wife, Anne of Bohemia, based on earlier use.
1399 Coronation Henry IV, his head was said be crawling with lice.
1533 1 June Coronation of Anne Boleyn, the first following the break with Rome.
1603 25 July 1603 Coronation of James I & VI – the first in English.
1661 23 April Coronation of Charles II new regalia (Charles II was crowned in Scone 1 January 1651).
1685 23 April Coronation of James II: no Eucharist was celebrated.
1689 11 April Coronation of William III and Mary II – the king’s purse was stolen with his offertory gift.
1712 Queen Anne was the last English monarch to preside over a service “Touching for the King’s Evil” to cure Scrofula. King Charles II is estimated to have “touched” 60,000 people with it. The last monarch to have done so was Charles X of France. It was believed that the Anointing gave Kings the curing powers for this condition.
1761 22 September Coronation of George III and Queen Charlotte – people had lunch during the sermon and the Duke of Newcastle used the Queen’s stool during the service.
1831 8 September Coronation of William IV “the half Crown-ation”.
1838 28 June the ring of England was so tight, the Queen had to use ice after the service to remove it.
1902 9 August had to be delayed because the King had appendicitis when it was planned; Archbishop Temple stumbled as he paid homage; the King wondered if the Archbishop would survive the service.
1937 12 May the date planned for that of King Edward VIII was instead that of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth; the Archbishop placed the King Edward’s Crown on the wrong way around.

PRAYERS PROVIDED FOR USE BY THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BEFORE THE 1953 CORONATION

In 1953 churches were encouraged to use the following prayers on one of the Sundays leading up to the Coronation. These prayers express eloquently what was understood at the time by the sequence of the rites and regalia used. The inclusion of prayers for Christian ministers underlines that Archbishop Fisher saw the rite as a form of ordination and wished to make this explicit.

FOR HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ON THE OCCASION OF HER CORONATION

Let us pray for Her Majesty the Queen, following in order the chief moments of the Coronation Service.

1. Remember the Presentation of the Bible.

O GOD, who hast set forth in thy Holy Scriptures the only Rule by which Christians may live and Princes reign: Grant that our Queen ELIZABETH, being devoutly mindful of thy Law and Gospel, may ever find therein revealed true wisdom, the royal Law, and the lively Oracles of God; through Jesus Christ thine only Son our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen*

2. Remember the Anointing of the Queen.

V Send her help from the Sanctuary;
R And strengthen her out of thy Holy Place.

O LORD and heavenly Father, the exalter of the humble, the strength of thy chosen, who by anointing with oil didst of old make and consecrate kings, priests, and prophets, to teach and govern thy people Israel: Bless and sanctify thy chosen servant ELIZABETH, at this time to be anointed with oil and consecrated Queen; strengthen her, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter; confirm and stablish her with thy free and princely Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and government, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and fill her, O Lord, with the Spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

Or

O GOD the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who art anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows: By thy holy Anointing pour down upon the head and heart of thy servant ELIZABETH the blessing of the Holy Ghost, and prosper the work of her hands, that by the assistance of thy heavenly grace she may preserve the people committed to her charge in wealth, peace, and godliness; and after a long and glorious course of ruling a temporal kingdom wisely, justly, and religiously, she may at last be made partaker of an eternal kingdom; where, with the Father and the same Holy Ghost, thou livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen*.

3. Remember the Delivery of the Sword

Hear our prayers, O Lord, we beseech thee, and so direct and support thy servant Queen ELIZABETH, that she may not bear in vain the sword, brought from the altar of God and delivered to her, but may use it as the minister of God, to do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

4. Remember the Delivery of the Orb

Almighty GOD, whose beloved Son, to redeem the world, did reign from the cross: Grant that thy servant Queen ELIZABETH, receiving the orb set under the cross, may ever be mindful that the whole world is subject to his power and empire, who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. *Amen.*

5. Remember the Investiture with the Ring

O CHRIST, the Head of the Church and Prince of the kings of the earth: Look mercifully upon thy servant ELIZABETH, now to receive the ring of kingly dignity, the seal of Catholick Faith; and grant that as she is to be consecrated Head and Prince of her peoples, so she may continue steadfastly the Defender of thy Religion all her days, so that, being rich in faith and blessed in all good works, she may finally be brought to the glory of thine eternal kingdom; where with the Father and the Holy Ghost thou livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

6. Remember her Crowning

O GOD, the crown of the faithful: Bless, we beseech thee, and sanctify this thy servant ELIZABETH our Queen, upon whose head thou dost at this time set the crown for a sign of royal majesty, that she may be filled by thine abundant grace with all princely virtues; through the King eternal, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

7. Remember her Inthronization

V Grant thou her heart's desire;
R And perform all her petitions.

O GOD whose greatness may not be uttered, the author of the world, creator of mankind, governor of empires, and establisher of all kingdoms: bless, we beseech thee, thy servant our sovereign lady, queen ELIZABETH, with the richest blessings of thy grace; establish her in the throne of her kingdom by thy mighty aid and protection; be unto her a strong tower of defence in the time of adversity; let her reign be prosperous and her days many; let peace and love and holiness, truth, and all Christian virtues flourish in her time; let her people obey her with all duty and reverence; and let her so duly obey thee here on earth that she may hereafter reign with thee for ever in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR THE QUEEN

O THOU who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Look mercifully upon thy servant ELIZABETH, whom thou hast set to be Queen over this Realm and Commonwealth; provide her with all she may need for her ministry among us, strengthen her to meet every demand which her high office may make upon her, bless her in her home and family; and grant that, being obedient to thine example, attentive to thy word, and responsive to thy grace, she may enjoy true happiness here on earth and in the world to come the vision of thy glory; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

FOR THE QUEEN AND FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY

O LORD our God, who upholdest and governest all things by the word of thy power; Receive our humble prayers for our Sovereign Lady ELIZABETH, set over us by thy grace and providence to be our Queen; and, together with her, bless, we beseech thee, Queen *Elizabeth* the Queen Mother, *Philip* Duke of Edinburgh, *Charles* Duke of Cornwall, and all the Royal Family; that they, ever trusting in thy goodness, protected by thy power, and crowned with thy gracious and endless favour, may long continue before thee in peace and safety, joy and honour, and after death may obtain everlasting life

and glory; by the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY

Let us pray for the Royal Family.

Almighty GOD, the fountain of all goodness, we humbly beseech thee to bless *Elizabeth*, the Queen Mother, *Philip* Duke of Edinburgh, *Charles* Duke of Cornwall, and all the Royal Family: Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR THE QUEEN AND ALL IN AUTHORITY UNDER HER

Let us pray for all those in positions of authority and trust under the Queen's Majesty.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the fountain of all goodness, we humbly beseech thee to bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen ELIZABETH, the Parliaments in all her dominions, and all who are set in authority under her; that they may order all things in wisdom, righteousness and peace, to the honour of thy holy Name, and the good of thy Church and people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR CIVIC AUTHORITIES.

Let us pray for those in authority in this *borough* (*city, county, corporation, or as need requires*).

ALMIGHTY GOD, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift: Send down, we beseech thee, upon all those who hold office in this *borough* the Spirit of justice and integrity, of wisdom and charity; that seeking their own good in the well-being of those committed to their charge, they may ever advance the kingdom upon earth and promote the true welfare of thy people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR UNITY

Let us pray for unity in both Church and State.

V Give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit;
R In the bond of peace.

O GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one hope for our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR THE MINISTRY

Let us pray for them that are at this time admitted to Holy Orders.

V Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
R And let thy saints sing with joyfulness.

O LORD Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge

the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

FOR THE INCREASE OF THE SACRED MINISTRY.

Let us pray for the increase of the Sacred Ministry.

V Pray ye the Lord of the harvest;
R That he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, look mercifully upon the world, which thou hast redeemed by the blood of thy dear Son, and incline the hearts of many to offer themselves for the sacred ministry of thy Church; so that by their labours thy light may shine in the darkness, and the coming of thy kingdom may be hastened by the perfecting of thine elect; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray for all members of the Church.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all estates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may truly and godly serve thee; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Times Leader 2 June 1953

Today's sublime ceremonial is in form, and in common view, a dedication of the state to God's service, through prayers and benedictions of the Church. That is a noble conception, and of itself makes every man and woman in this land a partaker in the mystery of the Queen's anointing. But also the Queen stands for the soul and body of the Commonwealth. In her is incarnate on her coronation day the whole of society, of which the state is no more than a political manifestation. She represents the life of her people.... as men and women, and not in their limited capacity as Lords and Commons and electors. It is the glory of the social monarchy that it sets the human above the institutional.

CONCLUSION

THE imagery and symbolism of the Coronation Rite are dense. Any dissection risks reducing rather than exalting the subject; and the mystery is in danger of being diluted with over-explanation. However, this age is beset by scepticism and hard-bitten resistance to truth expressed through beauty, and so explanations are necessary to open hearts and minds to profound Christian truths.

The greatest power of this rite, for the faithful subject, is in the allusion to ultimate Christian destiny.

Because this treasure has been delivered into the hands of the clergy of the Church of England, it seems right that they be given the opportunity to understand what they handle on behalf of a nation.

The Sacring's origins are the sequence of pre-Christian Saxon election traditions. The rites were elaborated and hallowed by the Church following the conversion of Saxon kings. Ideas of the homage of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal were an attenuation at the height of the Feudal age. The referencing of ceremonies in the Jerusalem Temple, where Sacral Kingship was at the heart of its life, are manifold. This is a rite in which the candidate is annihilated, sacrificed and re-born.

Through anointing the King becomes one with his people whom he will serve. The allusions to priestly service are strong and have persisted for 1000 years in this Kingdom, despite deep-seated Protestant sensibilities and even experiments with republicanism. Not letting the Anointing (with Chrism) disappear from this rite, even when suggestions of *hocus pocus* were rumoured, demonstrates that adherence to all that the Coronation symbolised was more important than its disappearance.

Where Church ritual ends, and State ceremonial begins, is hard to define. The homage given by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in their turn, underlines that the heavenly order *and* the order of precedence are yet to be fully disentangled. This may be unpopular to contemplate, but it is part of a ritual which will not dissolve. On the other hand, and perhaps just as uncomfortably, the Eucharistic Scripture readings, which set the scene for the rite, are charged with ambivalence about *that which is Caesar's*. Tertullian helps us to see that Our Lord's Caesar was only his Father; and humanity is only "minted" with God's "image, likeness, name, and substance." Any other view would be idolatrous.

The Coronation “Theatre” of Westminster Abbey, created by Henry III, cries out to be used in its fullness, and very particularly the Cosmati Pavement. The symbolism of its geometry, and the Abbey’s solemn architecture, all speak of the balance of heavenly and earthly realms, and point to their connection and intersection in the person of the King.

The King becomes *persona mixta*. His high calling speaks of self-loss, sacrifice and death. The sequence of robes worn – red, linen, gold upon gold, imperial purple – tells of human destiny in Christ. It is the character of our baptism that we die, and that in Christ we shall be made alive and reign with and in him, at the right hand of God in glory. No secular creed can preach such radical transformation: from glory to glory.

The prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the congregation sings the *Veni Creator*, brings the assembly to its knees. It may be worth considering that the King should himself lie prostrate before the altar as it is sung, or possibly during the Litany at the start, but that would be more complicated practically.

The drama of this ritual has been strongly supported by beautiful music over centuries, largely inspired by the Psalter, which holds the ancient memory of Sacral Kingship’s origins in the Temple. Part of the persistence and conservative nature of the Rite may be found in the desire to retain the musical splendours of the Coronation. The setting of Royal Psalms and other Old Testament texts has meant themes of Sacral Kingship subliminally have had an impact on English culture more widely.

It is not surprising that in mediaeval England it was thought that anointed kings could heal skin diseases. It is not surprising, either, that Richard II thought that the Holy Oil would protect him from harm in battle.

But this Rite is no talisman.

To what extent the ritual is an ordination has been the subject of considerable discussion. The strong allusions to ordination are inescapable. The persistence of the use of the Oil of Chrism in the English rite is perhaps a happy accident, but also a suggestion of how there was no letting go of the extreme holiness of what is taking place. If not a fully sacerdotal ordination in the West, in the Fourth Recension, the Rite developed in parallel with ordination rites. Perhaps it might be termed a “Royal Ordination.” The creating of a new Person thereby is important to recognise. Dr Anders Bergquist has coined the term *Prosopic Ecclesiology* to speak of the significance of Episcopal governance, from the time of the Fathers of the Church. The King, as representative Person of the nation, parallels that personal *prosopic* presidency over Church affairs of the bishop.

It might be said that Liturgy is Theology in three dimensions. The Coronation is one of the ultimate expressions of Christian hope for all the baptised, enacted as a form of realised eschatology.

The setting of the Coronation within the Eucharist, where it has always been, underlines that this is a rite of the Christian Church, an offering to God of prayerfulness and oblation. Its setting does not seek to exclude or discriminate but marks out the particular calling of the recipient of the Rite.

Lord Chartres, as Bishop of London and Dean of the Chapels Royal, in 2013 at the Diamond Jubilee of the late Queen's Coronation, gave a lecture in Westminster Abbey. He said:

I believe that we are living at a time when, having lost the attributes of rulership, monarchy once again embodies transcendent themes of the kind vital to the preservation and good health of the community. We may have outgrown the divine right of kings, but we should certainly not surrender our divine rites.⁵³

This call for retention of the integrity of the 1953 rite is persuasive.

Reginald Woolley concludes in 1915

Officially then the Church denied the name of Sacrament to the royal consecration, allowing it the rank of a Sacramental only. In practice the repetition of the rite which so often occurred, and in the case of the Roman Emperor was normally performed three times, proves sufficiently that it was not an ordination conferring character. Historically considered the rite proves itself to be in origin a special benediction elaborated and developed almost out of recognition as such.⁵⁴

I remain unconvinced by this caution and trust that what we see in this rite is a sanctification of king and people of the profoundest significance, which speaks of a time when sacraments shall cease, and all the orders of heaven and earth will indeed be "One with the Trinity in Unity"⁵⁵. So much for what the rite is not. This Sacring is the heralding of a new dawn, with all the hope and joy that a Royal Accession spells. It speaks through symbols and actions which have resonances in almost pre-historic times, and certainly ancient Israel. The Judaeo-Christian character of what is proclaimed means there are inferences beyond the simply

⁵³ Richard Chartres, *Vivat Regina* Lecture Westminster Abbey 7 June 2013

⁵⁴ Reginald M Woolley, *Coronation Rites 1915*, Cambridge University Press, p. 196.

⁵⁵ William Turton, *O Thou, who at thy Eucharist didst pray*.

Christian. However, it speaks particularly of the radical Christian doctrine of the incorporation of all the baptised into Christ. The early English term Sacring helpfully encapsulates the fact that this is more than a blessing. It is a consecration, and an acted-out drama of humanity's ultimate destiny, in Christ, at the right hand of God.

What is part of the Coronation's *esse*, and what is necessarily of its age, have been questions hierarchs and the key protagonists have debated at the start of every reign. For the clergy of the Church of England in 2023, knowing how to understand what has remained from our inheritance, and what is changing, is part of our role as sentinels, so that we might make sense of this both for all whom we serve. The notion of Sacral Kingship must not be lost in a secular age. It is there, by the grace of God, to be the means of transforming it.

God save the King!



Queen Elizabeth II, still supported by the Bishops, of Durham (to her right) and Bath & Wells, and wearing the Imperial State Crown, and clad in a robe of purple with the train carried by her Maids of Honour [the daughters of Dukes, Marquesses and Earls], leaves the Abbey.

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The Pallium (or Pall) under which is worn The Supertunica and The Stole Royal – (Royal Collection Trust)

⁵⁶ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From 8th to 21st*, Harper 2005, pp. 469-490.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE OF 1953



*St Edward's Chair faces the altar, the Higher Throne sits in the midst of the Theatre
National Archives*



*The Entrance of Queen Elizabeth II in her Parliamentary robes
(the red of which suggests martyrdom) Royal Website*



The Recognition (Photo Rex)



The Queen signs the Coronation Oath at the High Altar (Photo ITV News)



The Queen's Anointing (Photo Royal Collection Trust)



The Oblation and Redemption of the Jewelled Sword following the vesting with Colobium Sindonis and Supertunica and before the vesting with the Stole Royal and the Pallium (Getty)



The moment following the Crowning (Photo Royal Collection Trust)



*The homage of the Lords Spiritual,
with the Queen having been “lifted” into her throne, surrounded by the Great Officers of State
(Royal website)*



The Queen leaves the Abbey in her Imperial Purple and Imperial Crown



Photograph by Bela Zola / Getty

*Queen Elizabeth II and Duke of Edinburgh in the Royal State Coach,
following the Coronation in 1953.*

The Queen is wearing the Imperial State Crown, which is worn from the end of the service.



The Queen with her Maids of Honour and the Duchess of Grafton, Mistress of the Robes



In the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace with the Royal Family and Crowned Heads of Europe



The Queen's Immediate Family

AFTERWORD

NOW, after all this, I can say that, besides the pleasure of the sight of these glorious things, I may now shut my eyes against any other objects, nor for the future trouble myself to see things of state and show, as being sure never to see the like again in this world.

Tuesday 23 April 1661 Samuel Pepys

TODAY's sublime ceremonial is in form, and in common view, a dedication of the state to God's service, through prayers and benedictions of the Church. That is a noble conception, and of itself makes every man and woman in this land a partaker in the mystery of the Queen's anointing. But also the Queen stands for the soul and body of the Commonwealth. In her is incarnate on her coronation day the whole of society, of which the state is no more than a political manifestation. She represents the life of her people.... as men and women, and not in their limited capacity as Lords and Commons and electors. It is the glory of the social monarchy that it sets the human above the institutional.

The Times Leader 2 June 1953

BLESSED art thou, Sovereign God, by the power of thy Spirit, bless and sanctify this oil that as thou didst anoint thy Priests, Kings, Prophets and Martyrs, so this oil may, by thy blessing be to King Charles a sign of joy and gladness; a sign of abundant grace, and of the Spirit's indwelling power. Blessed by God, our strength and our Salvation, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, now and for ever. Amen.

The Prayer of Blessing of the Chrism Oil prayed by the Archbishop of Jerusalem in the Aedicule of the of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre 3 March 2023