

# ‘A Pattern for a King’s Inauguration’: The Coronation of James I in England

Sybil M. Jack

The significance of James I’s coronation and of his attitude to that ceremony has been overlooked in the process of rehabilitating his reputation as monarch. More attention should be paid to the fundamental beliefs that dominated his actions, in particular his sense of duty and of the binding nature of an oath. The coronation was central to his convictions, as it emphasized such aspects of rule as legitimacy, continuity, and divine sanction.<sup>1</sup> In many ways, coronation was the single most important event in any monarch’s life, as the consecration established his or her power and authority. The significance of this in a deeply religious age cannot be overestimated.<sup>2</sup> Coronation defined the office of a king and, as Schramm argues, it reaffirmed the ideals of government, such as justice. Conscience, directed by the coronation oath, required that James be a good ruler. He wrote that a good ruler should love his people like a father, and believed that his people, moved in turn by their consciences, should reciprocate. James’s letters from Scotland show a noticeable respect for the wishes of the people.<sup>3</sup> Many of his contemporaries remarked upon his faith in the love of his people, ‘which he is accustomed to call the true guard of princes’.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Nichols lists 33 tracts inspired by the Coronation: *Progresses of James VI and I*, 4 vols (London, 1828), I, p. i. Dr Elizabeth Clarke at the University of Warwick is conducting a project to produce a modern edition of Nichols. There have been two reprint editions (New York: Burt Fratches, 1964, and New York: AMS Press, 1968) There were numerous panegyrics. Sir Robert Ayton sent one in Latin from France, published much later in his *Delitiae Poetarum Scotorum* (Amsterdam, 1637); Sir John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae* (London, 1804), I, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> P. E. Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 1–95.

<sup>3</sup> *The Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI King of Scotland*, ed. David Dalrymple (Edinburgh, 1766), Letter 1 (to his ambassadors, the Earl of Marr and Edward Bruce), pp. 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. R. Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), p. 5.

## I

A standard account of the coronation suggests that the event was unduly delayed, and that James and Anna of Denmark were ‘crowned in a half-empty abbey while the rain poured down outside’. James has also been represented as behaving without adequate solemnity.<sup>5</sup> Yet as we shall see, James took the occasion very seriously indeed. There is growing recognition that the representation of his accession long accepted as orthodox was biased by the political purposes of his early biographers. Sir Anthony Weldon’s characterization of him, in an account published during the interregnum, as ‘the wisest fool in Christendom’,<sup>6</sup> was much repeated by later authors.<sup>7</sup> Recent scholarship has contradicted this view, so that Gordon Donaldson’s estimate of James as a man of ‘very remarkable political ability and sagacity’ is now widely accepted.<sup>8</sup> Jenny Wormald<sup>9</sup> and Maurice Lee<sup>10</sup> have demonstrated James’s skills as a perceptive ruler with a canny appreciation of the longer-term interests of all his kingdoms. Despite some shifts in his polemic, his long-term objective to be ‘a universal king’ and to achieve national unity by a policy of moderation remained unaltered throughout his life.

<sup>5</sup> S. J. Houston, *James I*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, 1995), p. 26; Ethel Carleton Williams, *Anne of Denmark: Wife of James VI of Scotland James I of England* (London: Longmans, 1970), pp. 84–85.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Jenny Wormald, ‘James VI and I: Two Kings or One?’, *History*, 68 (1983), 187–209 (pp. 190–91). See also *The Reign of James VI and I*, ed. A. G. R. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 1–22.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance G. Davies, ‘The Character of James VI and I’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 5 (1941–42), 33–63 (p. 63). Discussions of James’s possible homosexuality have maintained this approach: see D. Bergeron, *Royal Family, Royal Lovers: King James of England and Scotland* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991) and *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press 1999); Michael B. Young, *King James and the History of Homosexuality* (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1999); Stephen Coston, *King James VI of Scotland and I of England Unjustly Accused* (Konigswort, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: James V–James VII* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), pp. 214–15; Ashton, *James*, p.10; David Hume, *The History of Great Britain: The Reigns of James I and Charles I* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1970); Maurice Lee, *James I and Henry IV* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); D. H. Willson, *King James VI and I* (London: Pimlico, 1956). See Davies, ‘The Character of James VI and I’, pp. 33–63.

<sup>9</sup> Jenny Wormald, ‘James VI and I’, *History Today*, 52 (2002), 27–33.

<sup>10</sup> Maurice Lee, *Great Britain’s Solomon: James VI and I in his Three Kingdoms* (Urbana: Urbana University Press, 1990).

Recent accounts of James's reign stress his effective use of rhetoric and his enjoyment of argumentation. Nevertheless, this article seeks to illustrate that, in his approach to politics, he was also influenced by the still, small voice of conscience. Historians have paid insufficient attention to this motivation and to the nature of the personal satisfaction which James obtained from behaviour for which he was often criticized.<sup>11</sup> Kevin Sharpe, virtually alone, has interested himself directly in James's conscience. Sharpe shows how often in his writings James refers to conscience – the deity within us – both in a monarch and in any of his subjects.<sup>12</sup> The role James's conscience played in directing his actions is vital. Sharpe argues that James's agenda for both Church and State was given its coherence by his sense of duty and that this can be seen as the structure forming his thought. The following examination of James's views on coronation confirms Sharpe's insight and carries it further.

James's interest in reuniting Christendom, long regarded as an aberration, actually shows that he believed in the plain words of Scripture, that he saw salvation as the result of Christ's sacrifice and faith as a free gift of God nourished by prayer. To the end of his life, James truly believed that earthly peace was attainable, and conciliation between faiths not impossible. This for him was a matter of conscience and moral behaviour.<sup>13</sup> That vision was a consequence of the ethical principles underlying his attitude to his subjects and to his God. While his polemical writings

<sup>11</sup> Judith M. Richards, "The English Accession of James VI: "National Identity, Gender and the Personal Monarchy of England"", *English Historical Review* 117 (2002), 513–35; Irene Carrier, *James VI and I, King of Great Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Christopher Durston's brief biography, *James I* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 6–13, gives the traditional view of James's character; Roger Lockyer, *James VI and I* (London: Longmans, Addison Wesley, 1998), pp. 34–42; Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: The Life of James VI and I, the First Monarch of a United Great Britain* (New York: St Martins Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Sharpe, "Private Conscience and Public Duty in the Writings of James VI and I", in *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England*, eds John Morrill, Paul Slack, and David Woolf (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 77–100. He sees Aristotle rather than Plato as the key classical authority (Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England: Essays and Studies* 9 (1989), pp. 11–14).

<sup>13</sup> W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), who chronologically catalogues James's initiatives on this issue. See especially pp. 25–26, 31.

twist and turn with circumstances, the compositions he called ‘Meditations’ are less rhetorical in approach and reveal what lies below the politics. His ideas on the absolute and ordinary power of a Christian king, evident in his earlier writings, rely on parallels between the coronations of European monarchs and Christ’s humiliation by Pilate’s soldiers during the Passion.<sup>14</sup> Such powerful symbolic appropriation was common at the time.

James’s published views on monarchy could be expected to shape the regime in his new kingdom. But his conscience restrained him from going beyond what the terms of his coronation oath permitted. He constantly stressed his responsibility to maintain that oath and treated it as his guiding principle.<sup>15</sup> In *The Trew Law of Free Monarchy* (1598), he adopted continental theories of monarchy.<sup>16</sup> He also, however, expressed a keen awareness of his duty as a king answerable to God, and of his responsibilities to his people. These lay in accepting laws that limited his right to arbitrary government. Here was a man who apparently represented what a Christian prince should be, both in his Christianity and his learning. After all, he acknowledged that ‘the further a king is preferred by God above all other ranks & degrees of men, and the higher that his seat is above theirs, the greater is his obligation to his maker’.<sup>17</sup>

In *The Trew Law*, James claimed to be following Scripture, fundamental law, and the law of nature. He also stressed the idea of fatherhood as the basis for

<sup>14</sup> Francis Oakley, ‘James’s Political Theology: The Absolute and Ordinary Powers of the King’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29 (1968), 323–46; and ‘The “Hidden” and “Revealed” Will of James I: More Political Theology’, *Studia Gratiana*, 15 (1972), 363–75; James VI and I, *A Meditation upon the 27, 28, 29 Verses of the XVII chapter of Saint Matthew, OR A PATERNE FOR A KINGS INAUGURATION*, 1619, reprinted in *King James VI and I Selected Writings*, ed. Neil Rhodes, Jennifer Richards, and Joseph Marshall, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 360–78 (hereafter *Selected Writings*). All citations of James’s lesser works below come from this edition.

<sup>15</sup> Sharpe, ‘Private Conscience and Public Duty’, in *Public Duty and Private Conscience*, ed. Morrill, Slack and Woolf, p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> J. P. Sommerville, ‘James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics and Continental Theory’, in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. L. L. Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 55–70. Somerville argues that James aligns himself with continental theorists and virtually ignores English common law theorists.

<sup>17</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 278

supreme kingly power, anticipating Filmer's *Patriarcha*.<sup>18</sup> His more pragmatic work, *Basilikon Doron* (1599), which between March and May 1603 had gone through two English printings, gives further clues.<sup>19</sup> These reflections of an experienced king emphasized the importance of the coronation oath.<sup>20</sup>

Both books also outlined the moral rules that were to remain the basis of James's behaviour up to his death. His intention to be a philosopher-king accorded with his conscience and was public knowledge. His definition of such a person presumably owed much to Plato and *The Republic* (as also to his reading of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*).<sup>21</sup> It was no small ambition, for few of the 'imperfect kingdoms' he saw around him could give birth to a philosopher-king. James's sense of hierarchy is Platonic. If everyone was designed by nature for a particular purpose, he, James, was clearly intended for kingship. If the imperfections of the Scottish state made it unsuited to the necessary constitution of a perfectible society, the kingdom of England might be better suited to the purpose. As James wrote to Robert Cecil in 1602:

it is a far more barbarous and stiff-necked people that I rule over. St George surely rides upon a towardly riding horse where I am daily burstin in daunting a wild unruly colt.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha* (London, 1680), I, ch. 1, on Kings as fathers: 'the greatest liberty in the world – if it be duly considered – is for a people to live under a monarch.' In *Leviathan* Part III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952 edition, reprint, pp. 421–28), Thomas Hobbes argues that the civil sovereign if a Christian is head of the Church in his own dominions. See also Robert Eccleshall, *Order and Reason: The Political Theories of Absolute and Limited Monarchy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), especially p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> *Selected Writings*, pp. 221–22.

<sup>20</sup> Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) does not discuss James's works. See also Johann Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603–1640* (London: Longman, 1986); Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*: The Scottish Context and English Translation', in *The Mental World*, ed. Peck, pp. 36–54.

<sup>21</sup> The version I have used is the Penguin Classic, 2nd edition, translated and edited by Desmond Lee (1975). Roger Lockyer devotes his second chapter to James as a philosopher-king and lawgiver, *James VI and I*, pp. 34–42.

<sup>22</sup> *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. G. P. V. Akrigg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Letter 89, p. 201.

He believed that he had received the education required for a philosopher-king, that is, the essential knowledge of ‘the good’, as well as a sense of proportion: ‘good memory, willingness to learn, breadth of vision and grace’. He was also (he believed): ‘a friend of truth, justice, courage and self-control with no touch of meanness or pettiness’.<sup>23</sup> But how could he dedicate himself as a ruler to a second kingdom that had often been at war with his first, without betraying one or the other? The solution he found can be seen in his commitment from the start to amalgamating the two kingdoms into one, the Platonic idea of the state superseding the illusion of difference. His decision to include his Scottish subjects amongst those doing homage at the English coronation reflects this aim.

James’s theological views, and the theological controversy that he so much enjoyed, have attracted much attention. What his conscience as a Christian king dictated has been largely ignored. Although in the works written after 1603 he had advice from distinguished theorists,<sup>24</sup> James’s own arguments were foremost and fundamental. Sharpe rightly describes him as ‘the most literate and learned king to have occupied the English throne: a monarch who not only read all the classical texts of statecraft but one who believed the schoolmaster’s life was closest to that of kingship’.<sup>25</sup> His conscience, grounded in belief in the ultimate authority of Scripture, governed his actions; he listened respectfully to the sermons preached before him.<sup>26</sup> He also read and quoted from the major Greek and Roman classical texts.

<sup>23</sup> *The Republic*, p. 280.

<sup>24</sup> D. H. Willson, ‘James I and his Literary Assistants’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 8 (1944), 35–58.

<sup>25</sup> Kevin Sharpe, ‘The King’s Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England’, in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 117–38: 123.

<sup>26</sup> Lori Anne Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King’s Preachers and the Rhetoric of Conformity 1603–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); K. Fincham and P. Lake, ‘The Ecclesiastical Policy of James I’, *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985), 169–207.

## II

It was fortunate that the long-prepared proclamation of his accession passed peacefully.<sup>27</sup> James thereafter asserted that the English Crown was his by undoubted hereditary right. The process of transfer was complicated by his absence from the kingdom<sup>28</sup> but James had been in close contact with his supporters in the month before Elizabeth's death and all was in readiness.<sup>29</sup> He immediately renewed all the privy councillors' positions so that government could proceed uninterrupted in the interval before the coronation.<sup>30</sup> The people needed to know him. Although before leaving Edinburgh he sought to prevent the English nobles and gentry from flocking to see him, fearing trouble in the counties left bereft of leadership, during his slow progress south he willingly showed himself to the people. The panegyrics presented to him suggest that he was seen as more approachable than Elizabeth had been in her later years, more accessible and better able to rule.<sup>31</sup> James was quite clear about the value of processions to the monarch although he feared assassination attempts. According to his understanding of Xenophon, James clearly saw the whole procession south as part of the rituals of power, the theatre of kingship.<sup>32</sup> He was using ceremony, but in a very different way from Elizabeth.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, n.s., vol. 32, AD 1601–04, ed. John Roche Dasent (London: HMSO, 1907), pp. 493–94. His instructions to his ambassadors in 1601 imply that he had made careful arrangements at the most vulnerable points in the realm: *Secret Correspondence*, ed. Dalrymple, Letter 1, pp. 7–9.

<sup>28</sup> Wormald, 'James VI and I', p. 2, says it was abnormal for an heir to be out of the kingdom at the death of the reigning monarch.

<sup>29</sup> Alan Haynes, *Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, 1563–1612: Servant of Two Sovereigns* (London: P. Owen, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> Croft, *King James*, p. 51; *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. Akrigg, Letter 93, p. 208.

<sup>31</sup> Nichols, *Progresses of James VI and I*. This progress is covered in vol. 1, especially at pp. 37, 51, 138, 329–30, 331–34, 419. G. P. V. Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant: The Court of King James* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), pp. 15–23, gives a good brief account of his journey, based on Nichols. *Letters*, ed. Akrigg, Letter 94, p. 210. James Doelman, 'The Accession of King James I and English Religious Poetry', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 34.1 (Rice University, 1994), 19–31.

<sup>32</sup> Sergi Bertelli, *The King's Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, trans. R. Burr (Pennsylvania: Litchfield, 2001), is the most recent and radical of the works in which these matters are discussed.

<sup>33</sup> For a general argument about Elizabeth's use of ceremony, implicitly contrasted with that of James, see Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), pp. 11, 15, 26, 172–75.

The coronation was his primary goal in the months between his accession and 25 July, the date chosen for the ceremony. Although all had gone more smoothly than anyone had dared hope, until the coronation ceremony took place, James's grasp on the throne was not secure. The delay in holding that ceremony played into the hands of plotters.<sup>34</sup> Until the king was crowned, his royal office was not confirmed in him.<sup>35</sup> James had been anointed King of Scotland as an infant, over Knox's protests, in a ceremony intended to observe precedent as far as possible.<sup>36</sup> There is every reason to think that he took this anointing seriously, together with the oath that Morton had sworn on his behalf, to 'maintain the true religion of Jesus Christ, the preaching of his Holy Word and the due and right administration of the sacraments now received and practised within this Realm' and to 'preserve the rights of the Crown'.<sup>37</sup> This oath, surprisingly, is an exact translation of the oath Charles VIII of France had taken in 1484.<sup>38</sup> It is notable that James ordered that Anna of Denmark should be anointed at her coronation in 1590, defying the arguments of some of his Scottish clergy.<sup>39</sup> The extent to which James orchestrated his English coronation as an allegorical and symbolic representation of the due position of the monarch in relation to God and his subjects may have been masked by the necessary – and from James's viewpoint regrettable – postponement of the royal procession from the Tower through London to Westminster Abbey.

Nevertheless, all the evidence suggests that James regarded the promises he would take in his coronation oaths as a commitment to a sacred duty. The letter he wrote to Prince Henry in April 1603 about his position as heir to the English throne cannot be disregarded: 'Let not this news make you proud or insolent ...

<sup>34</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I, 1603–1610* (hereafter *CSP Dom*), ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1857), p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> *CSP Dom 1603–10*, p. 31.

<sup>36</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Kings* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1992), 3rd ed, pp. 183–84.

<sup>37</sup> E. P. Cooper, *Four Scottish Coronations*, special issue of the *Transactions of the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society and of the Glasgow Ecclesiological Society* (1902), p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Ordines Coronationis Franciae: Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), vol. II, ed. Richard A. Jackson, pp. 583–84.

<sup>39</sup> Cooper, *Four Scottish Coronations*, pp. 19–24; see a brief account, Carleton Williams, *Anne of Denmark*, pp. 29–32.



the augmentation that is hereby like to fall unto you is but in cares and heavy burdens.<sup>40</sup>

In *Basilikon Doron*, James had written that kingship is ‘*onus not honos*’ – a burden, not an honour, a phrase he frequently repeated.<sup>41</sup> Likewise he held that ‘the higher the dignity the greater any fault was aggravated and that it drew others to be guilty of the same sin.’<sup>42</sup> He had, it seems, a strong sense of guilt as well as a belief in the role of conscience as the regulator of intention. He seems burdened with a sense of duty and responsibility, and much influenced by classical notions of good government, the law of nations, and religious commitment.

While not unknown in Europe, a second coronation when a new kingdom was acquired did present certain problems to a conscientious monarch, as coronation ceremonies and rites were by no means identical across the Continent. Similarly, the Scottish oath imposed duties relating to the Scottish Church which were perhaps more extensive than those in its existing English counterpart. The 37th and 39th Articles of the Church of England (in their 1571 version) did, however, give the monarch roughly similar powers over ecclesiastics in England, possibly making the difference in the coronation oath more important.

The shift to Protestantism in England implied some necessary changes to the ritual, especially since Edward VI’s coronation had been severely curtailed to suit a child by Thomas Cranmer, an archbishop who considered it conveyed no authority, Mary had used the pre-Reformation rite, and Elizabeth had been crowned with most of the rite in Latin.<sup>43</sup> James, therefore, had some degree of latitude in deciding the form that his coronation service should take. This had

<sup>40</sup> *Letters*, ed. Akrigg, Letter 95, p. 211.

<sup>41</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 200.

<sup>42</sup> There are numerous editions of these works in both the Scots and English forms. For the Scots see *Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. J. Craigie (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society 1944–50), 2 vols, and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, ed. J. Craigie and A. Law (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), pp. 57–82. The English texts are in *The Political Works of James I*, ed. C. H. McIlwain (Cambridge, Massachusetts, reprint 1965), pp. 3–70. A more recent edition of both works can be found in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. xx, 229–49; see also Wormald, ‘*Basilikon Doron and The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*’, pp. 36–54.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 364–65.

always been subject to change over time. The version of the coronation ritual in the *Liber regalis* still kept at Westminster Abbey<sup>44</sup> was the fourth major revision since the Conquest, and a joint coronation for both king and queen was rare; in the last three hundred years there had only been three, all before the Reformation.<sup>45</sup> The changes might indicate shifts in what is presented as a consensual activity and few would remember the last coronation.<sup>46</sup> It is noteworthy, therefore, that James was extremely cautious in the changes made.<sup>47</sup> The ritual had to be translated from the Latin and the translated version shows James at his most careful, for it largely preserved Pre-Reformation rituals, although the Anglican Eucharist replaced the Mass.<sup>48</sup> Anna's reluctance to take communion in the Anglican rites complicated the issue. James's reasons for conservatism were probably complex, including a reluctance to risk accusations of anything that might cast doubt on the validity of the proceedings. He evidently required the wording to be as close to the Latin as possible, which may explain its apparent clumsiness.<sup>49</sup>

James appears not to have altered the order of the ritual; he was presented to the people before the anointing, not after, so that consent preceded consecration. The presentation had always been a crucial part of the English rite. Although the

<sup>44</sup> Westminster Abbey MS 38. All later quotations are from this source.

<sup>45</sup> The coronation of Elizabeth of York, Henry VII's queen, was postponed allegedly because she was pregnant. For one such coronation, see *The Coronation of Richard III: The Extant Documents* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983), ed. Anne F. Sutton and P. W. Hutton.

<sup>46</sup> Thus the King's champion, who before the Coronation of Richard II had appeared at the doors of the Abbey, was now relegated to the banqueting hall after all the ritual was completed. This altered the sense of his challenge. See Paul Strohm, 'Coronation as Legible Practice', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 13 (1996), 1–14.

<sup>47</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 54: 'Officializing strategies transmute private and particular interests into disinterested, collective [and] publicly avowable interests.'

<sup>48</sup> There is a version in Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 863, fols 203–65, which appears to be James's service, and in the *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 15th Report, p. 109, a copy is also reported as belonging to Lord Bray. There was a very late printed version: *The Ceremonies, Form of Prayer and Services used in Westminster Abbey at the Coronation of King James I* (London, 1685), but this has a polemical aspect that makes it perhaps unreliable in its fine detail.

<sup>49</sup> This service is not included in *English Coronation Records*, ed. Leopold G. Wickham Legg (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1901), the more polished Charles I version being preferred.

French and Scottish rites did not include anything similar, it is significant that James made no attempt to alter this practice. In *The Law of Trew Monarchies*, he had merely interpreted it as something less than election:

As to this contract alledged made at the coronation of a King, although I deny any such contract to bee made then, especially containing such a clause irritant as they alledge; yet I confesse, that a king at his coronation, or at the entry to his kingdome, willingly promiseth to his people, to discharge honorably and trewly the office giuen him by God ouer them.<sup>50</sup>

Here, James broke from his tutor, George Buchanan,<sup>51</sup> whose *De Iure apud Scotos* had permitted tyrannicide, to follow the continental monarchists Budé and Bodin, whose works were in his library by 1577. The law of nature, he claimed, made the king a natural father to all his lieges at his coronation. Thus, James retained anointing, which had always been seen as in the nature of an indelible sacrament, and accepted that an anointed king was neither layman nor cleric but a *persona mixta* (that is, someone with both aspects but with a real jurisdiction over both). The focus on the king as philosopher and priest that developed in the court culture in England after his accession, as at his Scottish court,<sup>52</sup> evidently derived in part from this power confirmed by the coronation.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> ‘And the proper office of a King towards his Subjects, agrees very well with the office of the head towards the body, and all members thereof: For from the head, being the seate of Iudgement, proceedeth the care and foresight of guiding, and preventing all euill that may come to the body or any part thereof. The head cares for the body, so doeth the King for his people. As the discourse and direction flowes from the head, [and the execution according] hereunto belongs to the rest of the members, euery one according to their office: so is it betwixt a wise Prince, and his people’ (*Selected Writings*, pp. 272–73). Compare Filmer in n. 18, above.

<sup>51</sup> George Buchanan, *De Iure Regno apud Scotos* (1579); there is a new edition of this: *A Critical Edition and Translation of George Buchanan’s De Iure Regno apud Scotos*, ed. and trans. R. A. Mason and M. S. Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

<sup>52</sup> Roderick J. Lyall, ‘James VI and the Sixteenth-Century Cultural Crisis’, in *The Reign of James VI*, ed. Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 55–70; and Michael Lynch, ‘Court Ceremony and Ritual during the Personal Reign of James VI’, in *ibid.*, pp. 71–92.

<sup>53</sup> See Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), especially p. 85; Roy Strong, *Art and Power* (Tiptree: Boydell Press, 1984), pp. 25, 27, 29, 72–73, 154. See also V. Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London: Routledge, 1995).

It might have been in James's power to modify the promise in the oath 'to hold the laws and customs of the realm and to his power keep them'. Henry VIII had thought of adding a clause 'not prejudicial to his crown or imperial jurisdiction', although it seems this emendation was not used.<sup>54</sup> James was apparently too cautious to consider any such modification. He had publicly claimed the coronation oath as binding,<sup>55</sup> saying that good princes, in the oath they swore at their coronation, openly confessed their duty to their subjects. *The Trew Law* stressed the sacredness of the oath by which a king undertakes to maintain established religion, existing good laws, and the ancient privileges and liberties of his subjects. Thus, the central importance of the coronation to the kingdom was established. A monarch, he declared, was ordained for the people and not the people for him; any dereliction would imperil his soul: 'And this oath in the Coronation is the clearest, ciuill, and fundamentall Law, whereby the Kings office is properly defined.'<sup>56</sup>

James's theoretical argument is doubtless heavily dependent on the theological and ecclesiastical debates he so enjoyed, but this fact hardly modified his reliance on the promptings of conscience in shaping a monarch's behaviour. His claim to be *persona mixta* in *Basilikon Doron* indicates the primacy of conscience. Divine right monarchy covered, and was compatible with, a variety of theoretical approaches; it did not imply arbitrary or even absolute government. James's views were softened by his belief that the crown was given to the king by the people to remind him that he reigned by their love and consent.<sup>57</sup> What he consistently opposed was any theory of legitimate resistance, particularly by individuals, and those who employed such theories to justify the deposition or assassination of anointed rulers.<sup>58</sup> All these ideas are inherent in his exegesis on the coronation oath.

<sup>54</sup> *English Coronation Records*, ed. Wickham Legg, pp. 241 and 240, includes a facsimile of the proposed text.

<sup>55</sup> Wormald, 'Basilikon Doron and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*', pp. 36–54.

<sup>56</sup> James VI, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, 1598, in *Selected Writings*, p. 270.

<sup>57</sup> Eccleshall's main argument in *Order and Reason* is that, although there are different views on the distinction between limited and absolute kingship, all of them traditional, they are not necessarily antagonistic. See especially pp. 1–46.

<sup>58</sup> This can be seen in his writings, including *The Oath of Allegiance* (1608) and his *Remonstrance ... for the Right of Kings* (1616). These two works were translated into Latin for continental consumption. Catholic monarchs had problems accepting the presentation copies he sent them as they were on the Index.

Traditionally, the delay in holding the coronation has been blamed on Anna's long-awaited arrival from Scotland. But it seems more likely that James insisted on being crowned on the 25 July, the day dedicated to the apostle for whom he was named, St James the Greater. He had certainly been planning for the ceremony at least as early as 10 April 1603, when his confidential friend, Lord Thomas Howard, was made lord chamberlain for the time being and given explicit responsibility, amongst other things, for the coronation. James was also ensuring that the image of the coronation should spread through the kingdom. On 17 April, he dealt with the coining of new money 'anent the coronation'.<sup>59</sup> The likeness to be displayed on these coins was of great importance, for from it people who might never see him in person would derive their image of their new monarch. James's intentions dictated his employment for this earliest coinage of the term 'Great Britain', and perhaps also his choice to be represented alone, and not with his queen.<sup>60</sup> In the meantime, he may have been using the ceremonial of Elizabeth's funeral on 28 April as a means of filling the vacuum, while waiting, as was traditional, for his predecessor's burial to take place before he made his own entry to his capital.<sup>61</sup>

James was also attempting to implement the union of the two kingdoms by fiat, before either realm could offer an opinion. On 19 May he proclaimed the Union of England and Scotland.<sup>62</sup> James was thereafter to use the terminology of Great Britain, although arguments over the union were later to see it fail to gain endorsement in either kingdom.<sup>63</sup> He claimed to be concerned that a king who held

<sup>59</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–1610*, pp. 3, 11.

<sup>60</sup> By early May he was worrying about the crown jewels. *CSP Dom. 1603–1610*, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> Jennifer Woodward, 'Images of a Dead Queen', *History Today*, 47 (1997), 18–23; see also Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England 1570–1625* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997).

<sup>62</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–1610*, p. 9. This was renewed by Proclamation in October 1604: *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973–1983), eds P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin, I, p. 95.

<sup>63</sup> See the references in Sybil Jack, 'National Identities within Britain and the Proposed Union 1603–1607', *Parergon*, n.s. 18.2 (2001), 75–102, and especially B. P. Levack, *The Formation of the British State, England, Scotland and the Union of 1603–1707* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987); B. R. Galloway, *The Union of England and Scotland, 1603–1608* (Edinburgh: J. Donald, 1986); Patterson, *Reunion of Christendom*, pp. 31–32; Alan Harding, *Medieval Law and the Foundations of the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 328–33.

more than one kingdom was bigamous.<sup>64</sup> How could such a ruler be committed to the land that had nurtured him, if it was not a single realm? Union must also have offered a way of fulfilling his duty to maintain two Churches whose creeds were in some ways dissimilar.

### III

Meanwhile, the physical arrangements also took time and they too had their symbolic value. James was anxious that the whole nobility of the realm attend his English coronation, confirming their acceptance of his legitimacy. His poorly attended Scottish coronation had been followed by years of civil war. His very legitimacy had been challenged, an insult he spent his life attempting to extirpate. But a good attendance was becoming more and more difficult to ensure or even permit. Plague – was it sent by God as a warning? – was daily increasing its grip on the capital. On 29 May the king was obliged to command gentlemen to depart the court and city on account of the plague. On 23 June the Triumph was adjourned for the same reason.<sup>65</sup> When this was eventually staged in March 1604, London's newly erected triumphal arches<sup>66</sup> had been modified to fit the emerging court culture and to stress the desirability of union (as also James's unimpeachable descent from Henry VII).

On 6 July another proclamation about regulating the people coming to the coronation had to be issued.<sup>67</sup> As John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton on 10 July, because of the plague the coronation would be 'so private' that he himself would not stay in town.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, however, the coronation proceeded in due

<sup>64</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 297.

<sup>65</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–10*, pp. 11, 16.

<sup>66</sup> D. M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558–1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), pp. 71–89. See also his revision of this in *Practicing Renaissance Scholarship: Plays, Pageants, Patrons and Politics* (Pittsburg: Dusquesne University Press, 2000), pp. 147–63.

<sup>67</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–10*, p. 20.

<sup>68</sup> *The Chamberlain Letters: A Selection of the Letters from John Chamberlain concerning Life in England from 1597–1626*, ed. E. McClure Thomson (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 56.

and formal order, although certain necessary arrangements were only finalized at the last minute. The commission for making knights of the Bath – who had to sit in vigil on the eve of the coronation – was not issued until 22 July, two days before the knights needed to be ready.<sup>69</sup>

James probably saw even the more mundane aspects of the coronation as significant to the ruler's role, symbolizing the relationship of ruler and subject. It was important that the great aristocrats of the realm should perform certain services at the coronation, underlining their loyalty to the crown. It was important to the aristocrats and others that they be seen to hold an honoured position in the ritual's hierarchy. The right to perform certain services pertaining to the coronation, to occupy a particular place in relation to the king and queen, was jealously guarded. The adjudication of these claims, some of which related to the postponed procession, were part of the symbolism of a monarch's commitment to his people, and so important to James.<sup>70</sup> It was determined that customary services usually performed en route would take place between Westminster Bridge and the Abbey. Uncertainty about what was happening probably delayed the sorting out of the claims themselves, which was no formality.<sup>71</sup> Getting them right was highly desirable if James were to establish good relations with his chief lords. He seems to have procrastinated and did not appoint the commission to hear and determine the claims until 7 July.<sup>72</sup> The claims were not put in until 18 July and the commission first met in the afternoon of 21 July in the court of King's Bench. Since many of the roles claimed were critical to the ritual, this must have caused a degree of confusion. Eventually, much was left unresolved until after the coronation while the actual services were performed *ad hoc vice* and James used his power to elevate those he most favoured.

The existing coronation ritual also specified which bishops and lords should take particular roles. Since these often related to titles that no longer existed, James had to decide who should perform them. While the bishop of Durham and the bishop of Bath might be there to support the king in his coronation 'being pontifically and royally arrayed', who should bear Saint Edward's Chalice before

<sup>69</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–1610*, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–1610*, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>71</sup> Such claims were desirable, partly as a matter of prestige, but also as a matter of perks and profits. They were often bitterly contested. No fewer than four people were fighting over the right to carry the first cypher of gilded silver to the king.

<sup>72</sup> National Archives C57/4 is the original roll, but there are various copies.

the king in his procession in ‘great regality and solemnity’ now the chancellor was no bishop? Who was to replace ‘the duke of York and his earls’ whose duties were to bear the crowns of the king and queen, since there was currently no such duke? Which two dukes or earls were to be considered ‘the most worthy in the realm who are closest to the king in blood’ who should carry the king’s sceptre with the cross and the rod of gold before him in procession? Who were the ‘most noble lords and worthiest of the realm’ who should bear a great pair of gilt spears in the procession? Claims regarding similar duties to the queen were even more problematic, as it was so long since they had been exercised.

At least James faced no such difficulty over the locale of the coronation. Westminster Abbey was a royal peculiar, a place of worship outside the normal structure of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and independent of episcopal rule, an exemption that Elizabeth I had ensured continued after its establishment as a secular college. This meant that James had full personal direction over what was to happen and direct access to the Abbey’s dean.<sup>73</sup> Fortunately, Dean Lancelot Andrewes’ religious inclination fitted James’s religious preferences. It was his job to be by the king’s side throughout the service, to prompt him if necessary, to open his garments for the anointing, to hold the oil in a little golden ladle at the anointing itself and finally to receive the custody of the regalia.<sup>74</sup> He claimed this duty of Instructor as a traditional coronation claim for which there was a handsome material return.<sup>75</sup>

In assigning bishops to conspicuous roles, James had a free hand to choose such men as Bancroft, who shared his views and was to be appointed next archbishop of Canterbury. The lay peers were less amenable, for they had their own hierarchy and existing claims.<sup>76</sup> Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford, was the greatest

<sup>73</sup> Westminster had once held all the regalia, although by the fourteenth century much of it was probably stored in the Tower. Elizabeth, however, had committed it in 1559 to the custody of the Dean, William Bill, and it thereafter passed from dean to dean: *English Coronation Records*, ed. Wickham Legg, pp. 242–44.

<sup>74</sup> Paul A. Welsby, *Lancelot Andrewes 1555–1626* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1958), pp. 80–81.

<sup>75</sup> This started with all the robes and coverings retained in the vestry and the materials for his robes, and ended with an ounce of gold from the Treasurer of the Chamber, 100 loaves of bread and a third of a tun of wine.

<sup>76</sup> So, for example, Sir John Leveson claimed to guard the napery, Henry Earl of Lincoln to carry the cross with the ball before the king and also to be carver.



pluralist. His role as chief chamberlain on the day of the king's coronation was particularly significant for its closeness to the monarch's person. His perquisites as great chamberlain included the bed the king slept in the night before, and the ewer and basin. A composition was made and he got £200 in lieu.<sup>77</sup> Dymocke's claim to be champion and throw down the gauntlet is particularly interesting, for he asserted rights stemming from Margaret, daughter of Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV — the Yorkist line of descent, not the Tudor, which may have particularly recommended itself to James, by underlining his direct line of descent from the Yorkists.<sup>78</sup>

Alongside these various concerns and assertions, the very expensive material preparations for the coronation went on. The various claims James could make on his subjects for aid did not nearly cover the costs.<sup>79</sup> Some things could be done from existing resources – on 16 June for instance, a warrant was issued for the breaking up of certain jewels to make a circlet for the queen to wear at her coronation<sup>80</sup> – but much could not. The *Liber regalis* set out the physical arrangements required for the ritual, starting with the king's seat in the Great Hall of Westminster. The Abbey Church had also to be prepared. A 'pulpit' (that is, in this context, a stage) with curtains on every side had to be erected close to the four high pillars between the quire and the altar with two thrones of estate, one higher for the king, another lower for the queen with two chairs before them. Two other chairs with kneelers were set below the altar. A traverse (curtained-off area) was set up in St Edward's chapel for the king to disrobe in after the ceremonies. In addition, of course, there was the throne that incorporated the stone of Scone, which had a particular symbolism for James. The great partition cross over the quire and six

<sup>77</sup> Some of de Vere's claims were disputed. Daniel le Cage claimed to be chamberlain to the queen and to have the bed and all its furniture and a clerk in the Exchequer to receive the queen's gold by virtue of the manor of Hornmead in Hereford held by grand serjeanty. The documentation of rights of this sort and the rights themselves had been carefully preserved. For instance, the earls of Shrewsbury claimed the right of dressing the king as holder of the manor of Farnham royal and when the king had demanded this manor in exchange for the manor of Wirkisop, the right was reserved to the family. All and any office was contested by the greatest in the land.

<sup>78</sup> The crown held this was only true if he had to fight and that otherwise he received the gold cup in which the toast was drunk.

<sup>79</sup> There were the 'mises' of Chester and the Welsh counties, and the compounding for knightships. See BL, MS Harleian 38, fol. 156.

<sup>80</sup> *CSP Dom. 1603–1610*, p. 14.

great wainscot pews and other seats had to be removed and the church perfumed with musk, civet, and rosewater.<sup>81</sup> When Sir John Fortescue made his account for the Great Wardrobe it came to £19,711-8-8 1/4<sup>82</sup> and although that was the major expenditure, there were various other accounts to be paid, such as money for the heralds. The king's duty to pay for everything was part of the visible symbolism of royalty providing for followers. This was also one of the means by which Xenophon's Cyrus had supposedly won reverence for his government.<sup>83</sup> James's own robes were extremely expensive, and of course represented the sacerdotal significance of Christian kingship.<sup>84</sup>

#### IV

On St James day, 25 July 1603, after 24 men had rung the Abbey bells for twenty-four hours, the ceremony at last took place. Archbishop Whitgift was supported by all the other bishops. A sufficient number of aristocrats and lords were present (although with reduced followings to minimize the danger of spreading the plague). The rite used fell into three parts: Election, Consecration, and Enthronement. Each aspect had its symbolic value. The king, having spent the night at Westminster, was bathed and dressed in specially designed clothes. Then he appeared before his nobles and servants in Westminster Hall, another 'public place', and was placed in the marble chair set on the King's Bench side by the nobles. The procession of the clergy arrived bringing the regalia, the cross, the paten, the sceptre, and the rod. These were given to the great lords who bore them before James as he walked under the canopy carried by the barons of the Cinque Ports upon new red cloth laid under his feet, to the 'pulpit' (or stage) in the abbey where the throne was erected.

At this point, the ceremony most notably diverged from the French and other continental rituals that made no reference to the will of the people. The Archbishop

<sup>81</sup> National Archives Exchequer, E351/3145, fol. 44.

<sup>82</sup> National Archives Exchequer, E351/3145, fol. 35.

<sup>83</sup> James did not go so far as to say that if his followers were gloriously attired for the procession to honour the Gods then 'Is it not adornment enough for me to have adorned you? If I can but do good to my friends, I shall look glorious enough, whatever robe I wear?'

<sup>84</sup> All the ritual gear such as robes and the royal crown imperial had to be provided. The lists of those given livery give us some idea of who attended the Coronation.

of Canterbury went to the four corners of the pulpit and while the king stood facing each in turn asked in a loud voice ‘if they will call this worshipful prince the right heir of the realm to have him as their king and become subjects unto him and submit themselves to obey his commandments’. James then went to the high altar and offered the first oblation, a cloth of gold, according to the coronation text, fulfilling the precept that says ‘look that ye appear neither void nor empty in the presence and sight of the Lord God’.<sup>85</sup> He prostrated himself before the altar upon cushions and cloths of silk and gold, until the archbishop said *Deus fidelium*. At this point the sermon was delivered.

James had selected as preacher Thomas Bilson, bishop of Winchester, a man very much after James’s own heart.<sup>86</sup> It is likely that James had vetted the sermon.<sup>87</sup> Bilson’s book, published against the Jesuits in 1585, agreed well with some of James’s own writings on monarchy. Here, Bilson had set out at tedious length the scriptural and patristic case for Erastianism.<sup>88</sup> He insisted that princes were ‘the superior powers subject to no superior judge to give a reason of their doings but onely to God’.<sup>89</sup> No words could have been sweeter to James’s ear. Bilson had long subscribed to the providential theory of divine intervention, telling Elizabeth in 1585 that: ‘the power which [God] hath given you and honor which he hath heaped on you should be employed to protect his truth and safeguard his church within your realm.’ He had gone on to claim in *The True Difference* that she wielded the symbols of her coronation – sceptre, sword, and crown – as a representation of a power both secular and clerical, confirmed to princes by God, not to be infringed or claimed by priests or popes.<sup>90</sup> In the Church, which was the whole congregation of the faithful, the people who must not rule but obey, bishops had a strictly defined

<sup>85</sup> The nearest biblical text seems to be the Vulgate version of Deuteronomy 16. 16–17: non apparebit ante Dominum vacuus sed offeret unusquisque secundum quod habuerit.

<sup>86</sup> Bilson was a scholar who was well versed in Hebrew as well as in Greek and Latin, and he was to be one of those with the final oversight of the translation of the Bible known as the King James Version.

<sup>87</sup> Lori Anne Ferrell discusses the whole issue in *Government by Polemic*.

<sup>88</sup> *The True Difference Between Christian Subiection and Unchristian Rebellion*, printed by Ioseph Barnes, printer to the University of Oxford, 1585, copy to be found in British Library, MS 1010c.17.

<sup>89</sup> *The True Difference*, p. 147.

<sup>90</sup> *The True Difference*, sigs. Aij–Aiiij. In 1593, he published another work called *The Perpetual Government of Christ’s Church*. This is an attack on Presbyterianism, which would not have harmed his reputation with James.

part. The power to command and to punish was reserved to kings.<sup>91</sup> If the prince commands against God, all men are bound to prefer the will of God, but by passive refusal, not rebellion. Otherwise, the prince is given a direct charge to provide for true religion as well as civil justice and punish not only breaches of the second table, but also offences against the first.<sup>92</sup> ‘The whole law was committed to the king as a king at his coronation,’<sup>93</sup> so the ‘publishing, preserving and executing’ of the first table was the ‘chiefest’ part of the prince’s charge.<sup>94</sup>

Selecting Bilson to preach the sermon at his coronation was therefore an obvious indication of James’s own conscientious beliefs. What he got was an exemplary sermon on ‘The powers that be are ordained of God’ (Romans 13. 1) addressed to ‘a religious and learned king who both by penne and practise these many years hath witnessed to the world how well acquainted he is with Christian and godly government’ and one he described as ‘matched with a most noble spouse of rare gifts, grace and virtue’ The presentation of the princely position is surprisingly nuanced. Bilson describes a monarch’s role as tripartite:

Their authority is derived from God, their dignity is allowed of God to partake with his homage; their duties enjoined them by God to preserve his heritage ... the first they have received from God, the second they must receive from men, the third they must yield to both.<sup>95</sup>

He gives a role to the people and indeed an opening for an idea of contract, while ranking royal duties as being as important as their rights. He argues that they have names and signs that are in common with Christ because they ‘do God’s

<sup>91</sup> *The True Difference*, part 2, p. 126., quoting Matthew 20 and Mark 10. In short, p.127: ‘Christ saith not, princes be tyrants, you shall deale more curteously than they do, but he saith, princes be lords and rulers over their people, by God’s ordinance you shal not do so’ (Luke 22).

<sup>92</sup> *The True Difference*, pp. 127–28.

<sup>93</sup> *The True Difference*, p. 129.

<sup>94</sup> *The True Difference* pp. 130–31: ‘God comforted his church by the mouth of Esay– thou shalt suck the breasts of princes, kings shall be thy foster fathers and Queens thy nurcing mothers’.

<sup>95</sup> *A sermon preached at Westminster before the King and Queen’s Maiesties at their Coronation on St Iames his day being the 28 [recte 25] of July 1603*, printed at London by VS for Clement Knight, 160, unpaginated, sig. A[5] .

Office on earth'.<sup>96</sup> He gave the regalia a precise symbolism. The sceptre represents righteousness, the oil gladness, and

to princes then, as partakers with Christ in the power, honor and justice of his kingdom here on Earth are allowed of God a sword in sign of power, a crown in shew of Glory, a scepter for a token of direction, a throne for a seat of justice and judgement and In unction as a pledge of outward protection and inward infusion of grace.<sup>97</sup>

Justice, he said, establishes the throne, and belongs to God and the laws the king is given to protect are also God's. The inward anointing, he claims, 'is the diffusion of heavenly wisdom and courage in the hartes of Princes'. The people are finally warned they must obey the king as God's vicegerent on earth and ignore the pope. Just as in his earlier work, Bilson warns that when princes cease to command for God or bend their swords against God, whose ministers they are, 'we must reverence their Power but refuse their willes.' He presents princes, however, as like God in that their subjects can yield them nothing that does not leave them still the king's debtor, and from this he goes on to the duty to pay tribute in goods and lands to support their affairs in peace and war. Wise kings, however, do not fleece their people, for God did not ordain them for themselves but for others, a phrase that directly repeats James.

This part of the coronation ceremony ended with James taking the critical oath to keep the law and customs of England, to keep the peace for Church and people, to cause the law, justice and discretion (mercy) to be executed, and to respect and defend the privileges of the commons. The second section of the consecration started with the singing of *Veni creator spiritus*. The king again lay before the altar until the litany and the preface were sung, indicating that kings are subject to God. Then he sat on his throne again. Finally, he returned to the altar and removed his clothes save for his shirt and his coat to be anointed in five places, representing the five wounds of Christ. After this, the dean dressed him in royal garments, his mantle of state and his hose, sandals for his feet, spurs, and a long tunic woven with images in gold on the front and back.

The third section of the enthronement started with the blessing of the sword. When James was girded with it, the Crown was blessed and put on his head by the

<sup>96</sup> *A Sermon, 28 July 1603*, sig. A [6].

<sup>97</sup> *A Sermon 28 July 1603*, sig. A [7].

archbishop, the ring was blessed and put on his finger, and he was also given the rod and sceptre and seated on St Edward's throne while the choir sang *Te deum laudamus*. The prelates and all the great men then did their homage (at which point James apparently condoned a familiar kiss from Phillip Herbert, his current favourite, which gave rise to adverse comment) and the communion service began. With this accomplished, the king changed his clothes and put on a different crown to return in procession bearing the sceptre to the palace and the banquet. The importance to the ritual of what the king ate must not be underplayed, for it represented spiritual food and the symbolism of each food was often discussed in medical, herbal and other texts relating to health. His title, proclaimed by the heralds, and henceforth inscribed on the title page of his collected works [1617], was 'The High and Mighty Prince James, Our sovereign Lord, by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, defender of the faith etc.' On a gold bezant struck in 1603 he is shown as emperor over several kingdoms whose crowns are beside him as he kneels before an altar in his coronation robes.<sup>98</sup>

## V

Far from treating it lightly, or forgetting it once it was safely accomplished, James returned to the significance of a coronation in 'A meditation upon the 27 28 29 verses of the XXVII Chapter of St Matthew', which he wrote for Charles's benefit and eventually published in 1620. This mature reflection reiterates views he had expressed earlier in his life. Here he showed how he interpreted royal Election:

Though all successiue Kings receiue their crounes from *GOD* onely, yet the people at their inauguration giue a publike acknowledgement of their willing subiection to his person and authority, submitting themselues to the will of *GOD*, who is the onely giuer of it; which is signified by the putting of the diademe or croune vpon his head.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> For a discussion of the Stuart title, see S. T. Bindoff, 'The Stuarts and their Styles' *English Historical Review*, 60 (1945), 192–216.

<sup>99</sup> James VI and I: *A Meditation upon the 27, 28 29 Verses of the XVII chapter of Saint Matthew, OR A PATERNE FOR A KINGS INAUGURATION*, in *Selected Writings*, pp. 368–69.

Meditating on Pilate's soldiers mocking Christ by putting the ornaments of a king upon him, James invoked a suggestive parallel:

Which appeared to me to be so punctually set doune, that my head hammered vpon it diuers times after, and specially the Crowne of thornes went neuer out of my mind, remembring the thorny cares, which a King (if he haue a care of his office) must be subject vnto, as (God knowes) I daily and nightly feele in mine owne person.<sup>100</sup>

A crown, James wrote, did not have 'the softness of a down pillow but was a thorny piece of stuff full of continual cares'. Christ, dressed in a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns, was the model for earthly kings; Christ's apparent humiliation was turned into glory by the Almighty: 'For it is ordinarie with God to bring light out of darkenesse, as hee did at the Creation'.<sup>101</sup>

These comparisons of human kingship with the sufferings of Christ have their parallel in the use made by the Catholic Church of the suffering of the Jesuits condemned as traitors, whose vii crucis were transformed into martyrdom.<sup>102</sup> So James's sufferings, although not leading to martyrdom, assume the characteristics of those endured by the Redeemer. James further draws a parallel between Christ's entry to Jerusalem and the monarch's traditional procession from the Tower through London.<sup>103</sup> He goes on to tease out the precise symbolic link he sees between Christ's and a monarch's coronation. Form, place, and person were all exactly observed. The place was the 'common Hall', for 'it was fitting that he should be invested in a place where all sorts of people may conuene and concurre to doe homage'. To declare Him a king, they took off His Prophet's garment and put a royal robe on Him. This parallels the coronation procedure. The robes are also to remind him to use care when sitting in judgement. The gold crown is lined with thorns, representing the anxious and intricate cares of providing good government

<sup>100</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 369.

<sup>101</sup> He goes on to argue that 'it is worthy the obseruation (for proouing of the lawfulness of Monarchies and how farre that sort of gouernement is to bee preferred to any other) that as *Christ* himselfe was the Sonne and right heire by lineall descent of King *Dauid*; so was he borne vnder the first *Romane* Emperour, that euer established the *Romane* Empire'. *Selected Writings*, pp. 363, 364–65.

<sup>102</sup> Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community 1535–1603* (Ashgate: St Andrews Studies in Reformation History, 2003), especially ch. 3.

<sup>103</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 376.

for the people. The reed put in Christ's hand represented the Kingly sceptre that symbolizes the King's authority:

[While] the crowne represents the loue and willing acknowledgement of his people, so the sceptre is put in his hand to declare his authoritie who is already found worthy to enjoy the same by his Coronation.<sup>104</sup>

Although Christ was not given the sword because he was there to suffer for our salvation, still James reflects that:

Temporall Kings must not likewise be barred the sword... for it is to be drawne for the punishment of the wicked in defence of the good: *for a King carries not his sword for naught.*<sup>105</sup>

James also observed that:

The setting of the crowne vpon his head must put him in mind, that he is euer to walke in the middest of his people, that their loue is his greatest safetie, and their prosperitie his greatest glory and worldly felicitie.<sup>106</sup>

To the end of his life, James was still struggling with the paradox he expressed to his first parliament, that a hereditary kingdom could not be denied the lawful successor, and his belief that it should be done with the willing applause of his subjects, that 'as the head is ordained for the body, and not the body for the head; so must a righteous king know himself to be ordained for his people, and not his people for him'.<sup>107</sup> He continued to be anxious that judgment should be just and moral:

<sup>104</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 370.

<sup>105</sup> *Selected Writings*, p. 378.

<sup>106</sup> 'And his Scepter made of a reede, must put him in minde to manage his authoritie boldly, and yet temperately, not stretching his royall Prerogatiue but where necessitie shall require it.' *Selected Writings*, p. 369.

<sup>107</sup> Speech to his first Parliament, 1604. *Selected Writings*, pp. 303–04; 'Two things a King hath specially to looke vnto at his inauguration; *first*, that his title to the crowne be iust, and *next* that he may possesse it with the loue of his people. For although a Monarchie or hereditary kingdome cannot iustly be denied to the lawfull successor, what euer the affections of the people be; yet it is a great signe of the blessing of *God*, when he enters in it with the willing applause of his subjects.'



to take great heed to his conscience, that his iudgement may be without blemish or staine of whatsoever corrupt affections. For iustice must be blinde.<sup>108</sup>

The power James saw a monarch exercising

to create, or destroy, make, or unmake at his pleasure, to give life, or send death, to judge all, and to be judged nor accountable to none... yet accountable to none but God only<sup>109</sup>

was probably more than he, as a sinful man, could readily bear. By the time he published the 'Meditation' in 1620 he was already ill and could doubtless see that his hopes for a reunion of Christendom were badly threatened by the war that his son-in-law had precipitated. The intricate weaving of his personal crown of thorns was ever more painful. Although there was one last conference on Christian unity in 1622, any optimism he might have once felt was crumbling.<sup>110</sup> The Christian kingship bestowed at his coronation was indeed more *onus* than *honos*.

*University of Sydney*

<sup>108</sup> In the Meditation, he says the purple dye of his robe, should put a king in memory 'not to prooue vnworthy of so ancient a croune and dignitie'.

<sup>109</sup> Speech to Parliament, March 21st 1609: *Selected Writings*, p. 327.

<sup>110</sup> Patterson, *Reunion of Christendom*, pp. 342–44.