

# The Coronation Liturgy

Simon Kershaw : 16 March 2023



Sir George Hayter (1792-1871) The Coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey, 28 June 1838 Signed and dated 1839  
<https://www.rct.uk/collection/405409/the-coronation-of-queen-victoria-in-westminster-abbey-28-june-1838>

# The Coronation Liturgy

- History
- Structure
- Personnel
- Steps of the Liturgy

## Coronation History

- Pre-973
- Coronation of Edgar in 973
- Five Revisions or “recensions”
- Current text dates to 1689 for William III and Mary II
- Minor revisions for each subsequent Coronation

See <https://oremus.org/coronation> for the text of all English / British coronations since 1689

## Five Recensions

1. 3 manuscripts – earliest is Leofric Missal (written c.900)
  - Might represent coronation of kings of West Sussex, 856; might be Egbert in 839; could be as early as close of 8th century
2. At least 5 versions
  - Used in 973, and later perhaps until 1101
  - Might have been used in 901 (Edward the Elder) or 925 (Athelstan)
3. Might have been used in December 1066 (William I) or earlier; almost certainly in use by 1135 (Stephen)
4. Definitely in use in 1308 (Edward II); might have been used in 1274 (Edward I); exemplified by *Liber Regalis*
5. Revision for 1689 (William III and Mary II)
  - Revised by Henry Compton, Bishop of London

Summarised from: Roy Strong, *Coronation*, HarperCollins, 2005

## Coronation Structure (1953)

- The Coronation rite has since 973 been set within the Eucharist
- Since 1603 (James I) this has been the Book of Common Prayer order
- Preliminary parts at the very start
- Main ritual after the creed (and sermon)

Except for James II who as a Roman Catholic did not wish to receive Communion in the Church of England

## Coronation Structure (1953)

Five main parts to the Coronation

1. The **Recognition**
2. The **Oath**, followed by the Presentation of the Bible
3. The **Anointing**
4. The **Investiture**, culminating in the Crowning
5. The **Enthronement**, followed by the Homage

Homage sometimes seen as a separate, sixth, element. In origin it was a separate feudal ceremony.

## Coronation Personnel

- The Archbishop of Canterbury presides, assisted by
- The Dean of Westminster
  
- The Bishop of Durham and the Bishop of Bath and Wells
  - support the monarch
- Two other bishops
  - support the Queen consort
  
- In 1953: the Moderator of the Church of Scotland
  - presented the Bible

The King and Queen

Two bishops read the Epistle and Gospel

Historically two bishops led the singing of the Litany

And a bishop preached the sermon

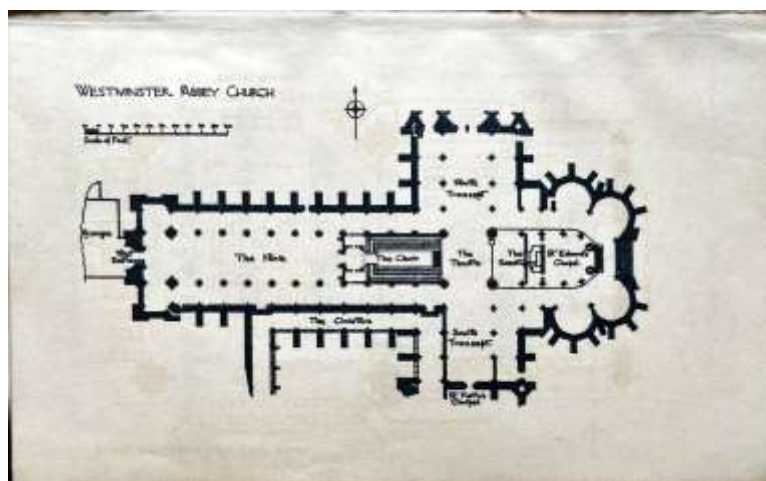
## Coronation Structure (1953)

- Entrance
- Recognition, Oath, Presentation of Bible
- Introit, Collect for Purity, Collect
- Epistle, Gradual, Gospel, Creed
- Anointing, Investiture, Enthronement
- Queen consort's Coronation (Anointing, Investiture, Enthronement)
- Prayers, Confession, Consecration, Communion, post Communion
- Te Deum and Recess
- Final Procession

More detail in the next few slides

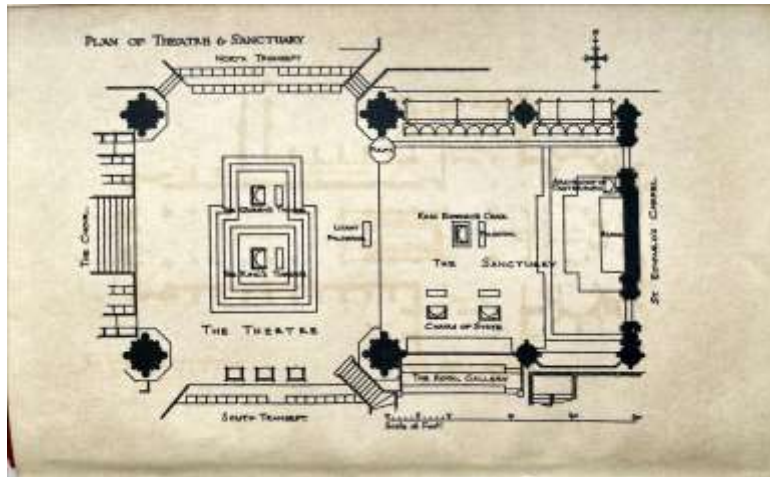


## Coronation geography



From: The Ceremonies to be observed at the Royal Coronation of Their Majesties King George the Fifth and Queen Mary in the Abbey Church of Westminster on Thursday, the 22nd day of June, MDCCCXI

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## The Entrance

- The Litany
- The Entrance of the King and Queen
  - Introit Anthem: Ps 122 (I was glad)
    - Used since coronation of Charles I in 1626
    - Parry's setting written for coronation of Edward VII in 1902
    - Parry's setting incorporates the separate acclamation (Vivat) of the Scholars of Westminster School
  - Communion vessels and regalia are placed upon the Altar

Historically the Litany was sung in full after the Recognition and before the Oath. For the actual coronation of Edward VII in 1902 it was displaced to accompany the clergy procession to the west door before the service begins and although it was restored for George V in 1911, it was displaced again in 1937 and 1953 and seems unlikely to be restored to its earlier place.

Vivats have to be adapted for each Coronation – in 2023 “Regina Camilla” and “Rex Carolus” will fit the 1911 setting of “Regina Maria” and “Rex Georgius”.

## The Recognition

- The Archbishop presents the monarch to the congregation four times as “your undoubted king”
- The congregation respond “God save King Charles”
- Historically this was followed by the Prayer Book Litany, but not in 1937 or 1953

## The Oath

- In 1937 and 1953 the Oath followed the Recognition
  - Previously it had been placed after the Creed and Sermon, immediately before the Anointing
- The Sovereign promises:
- to follow and uphold the laws and customs of their Realms
- and to defend the Church
  - The profession of the gospel, the Protestant religion established by law, the settlement, doctrine and government of the Church of England, the rights and privileges of the bishops and clergy and their churches

The Sovereign also makes a Declaration either at the Coronation or the State Opening of Parliament, whichever comes first. This has not been made at the coronation since George III in 1761.

Historically the Declaration was from 1689 considerably precise in condemning transubstantiation and the papacy and to deny any opportunity for the monarch to make mental reservations or be absolved from taking it. It was revised in 1911.

## The Presentation of the Bible

- The Sovereign is presented with a Bible
- Introduced in 1689 for William III and Mary II
- Always took place immediately after the Crowning
- In 1953
  - Moved to be after the Oath
  - The Moderator of the Church of Scotland presented the Bible and shared in the words of presentation

## The Communion service begins

- With the Oath taken, the Communion service begins:
  - Introit Anthem
  - The Collect for Purity
  - Kyrie (in 1953; before 1902 the Ten Commandments)
  - Collect, Epistle, Gradual Anthem, Gospel
  - Nicene Creed
  - (Sermon, omitted in 1937 and 1953)

## The Anointing

- *Veni Creator* is sung
- The Archbishop prays over the oil that the sovereign may be blessed
- *Zadok the Priest* is sung – this has been sung ever since 973
- Sovereign moves to King Edward's Chair
- Beneath a canopy the sovereign is disrobed
- Anointed in the form of a cross
  - On the palms
  - The breast
  - The crown of the head



Fortunino Matania, R.I. (Italian, 1881-1963)  
Scenes from the coronation of King George VI



## The Anointing

- The Sovereign puts on the *Colobium Sindonis*
  - A white linen sleeveless full-length shift or undergarment
  - Said to symbolise divesting worldly vanity, standing bare before God
- And the Supertunica
  - A gold full-length tunic
  - Inspired by the full dress consul uniform of the Byzantine Empire
- Robes originally taken from tomb of Edward the Confessor in 1269, destroyed in 1649



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## The Investiture: the Spurs and Sword

- The Spurs are touched to the king's heel, and returned to the Altar



- The Sword is brought, placed in the king's hand, then strapped on
- The king unstraps it and places it on the Altar as a gift
- A peer redeems it and carries it through the rest of the service



## The Armills, Stole Royal and Robe Royal

- The Armills are bracelets which keep the Stole in place
- The Robe Royal is a great golden cloak
  - Four-square
  - Embroidered with roses, thistles and shamrocks– and the imperial eagles of Byzantium



Eagle clasp rather Napoleonic

## The Orb

- The Orb is a golden globe surmounted by a Cross
  - Symbolizes the Cross ruling over the world
- Presented to the Sovereign's right hand
- ... and then given back and replaced on the Altar



# The Ring

- The Ring
  - Set with a sapphire and upon it a cross of cut ruby
  - Placed upon the fourth finger of the sovereign's right hand



## The Sceptre and The Rod with the Dove

- Next the sovereign is presented with the Sceptre
  - “The ensign of kingly power and justice”
  - Contains the Cullinan diamond, the largest diamond in the world
  - Surmounted by the Cross
- And the Rod with the Dove
  - “The rod of equity and mercy”
  - Topped with a globe and the Cross, with the dove perching on top, wings outstretched



## The Crowning

- The Dean brings the Crown
- The Archbishop solemnly places it on the sovereign's head
- The peers put on their coronets
- All the people repeatedly shout "God save the King"
- Trumpets sound
- A royal salute is fired at the Tower of London
- Church bells rung throughout the country
- The Archbishop solemnly blesses the newly-crowned sovereign





## The Inthronization

- The sovereign is taken to the Throne by the Archbishop, other bishops and peers, and seated in it.



## The Homage

- First the Archbishop and bishops pay Fealty
  - Kneel before the sovereign
  - Promise to be “faithful and true”
  - The Archbishop, on behalf of all, kisses the king’s left cheek
- Then the peers pay their homage
  - First the royal dukes
  - Then the other peers, by class (dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, barons)
  - The first of each class touches the Crown and kisses the king’s cheek



Laurits Regner Tuxen (1853-1927)

The Coronation of King George V; Edward, Prince of Wales doing Homage Signed and dated 1911-3

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/404478/the-coronation-of-king-george-v-edward-prince-of-wales-doing-homage>

The king is shown incorrectly wearing the Imperial State Crown, rather than St Edward’s Crown with which he was crowned.

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.

## The Queen's Coronation

- The Coronation of the Queen follows
- Similar to the king's, but simpler, and no special robes
- Anointing – only on the head since 1902
- The Ring
- The Crown
  - Peeresses all put on their coronets
- The Sceptre and the Rod with the Dove
- The Queen takes her seat in her Throne, next to the King



Up to 1761 anointed on the head and breast, her apparel being opened for that purpose

Queen Camilla will be crowned with the 1911 crown of Queen Mary, though two of the four arches will have been removed, I understand

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/31704/queen-marys-crown>

## The Queen's Coronation

- The Coronation of the Queen follows
- Similar to the king's, but simpler, and no special robes
- Anointing – only on the head since 1902
- The Ring
- The Crown
  - Peeresses all put on their coronets
- The Sceptre and the Rod with the Dove
- The Queen takes her seat in her Throne, next to the King



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<https://www.rct.uk/collection/31704/queen-marys-crown>

## The Queen's Coronation

- The Coronation of the Queen follows
- Similar to the king's, but simpler, and no special robes
- Anointing – only on the head since 1902
- The Ring
- The Crown
  - Peeresses all put on their coronets
- The Sceptre and the Rod with the Dove
- The Queen takes her seat in her Throne, next to the King



Up to 1761 anointed on the head and breast, her apparel being opened for that purpose

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## The Offertory

- Offertory Anthem is sung
  - In 1953 a congregational hymn, *All people that on earth do dwell*
- The sovereign offers
  - The bread and wine
  - An altar cloth
  - A pound-weight of gold
- A queen consort makes her offering
  - An altar cloth
  - A mark-weight of gold

## The Communion Service continues

- Prayer for the Church Militant
- Exhortation, General Confession and Absolution
- Comfortable Words
- The *Sursum corda*, proper preface, *Sanctus*
- Prayer of Humble Access
- Prayer of Consecration

## The Communion Service continues

- The Communion

- The Archbishop, the Dean, the assisting bishops
- The king and queen

- There is no general communion



Charles Robert Leslie (1794-1859)

Queen Victoria Receiving the Sacrament at her Coronation, 28 June 1838 1838-9

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/406993/queen-victoria-receiving-the-sacrament-at-her-coronation-28-june-1838>

Chalice and paten made for Coronation of Charles II, 1661

Chalice and paten made for James, later James II, pre-1685



## The Communion Service ends

- The Lord's Prayer
- The post-communion prayer "O Lord and heavenly Father"
- "Glory be to God on High"
- The Archbishop says the blessing

## The Recess

- While the choir sing the *Te Deum* ...
- The king and queen move into St Edward's Chapel
- The king is disrobed of the coronation vestments
  - Puts on a velvet and ermine mantle
  - Puts on the Imperial State Crown instead of St Edward's Crown
  - Takes the Sceptre and Orb (instead of the Rod with the Dove)
- The king and queen process out of the Chapel through the Abbey to the West Door

Historically the royal vestments and crown were not removed from the Abbey



## Picture credits and further information

- Sir George Hayter (1792–1871) The Coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey, 28 June 1838
  - <https://www.rct.uk/collection/405409/the-coronation-of-queen-victoria-in-westminster-abbey-28-june-1838>
- Fortunino Matania, R.I. (Italian, 1881–1963) Scenes from the coronation of King George VI
  - <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6057228>
- Laurits Regner Tuxen (1853–1927) The Coronation of King George V; Edward, Prince of Wales doing Homage
  - <https://www.rct.uk/collection/404478/the-coronation-of-king-george-v-edward-prince-of-wales-doing-homage>
- Queen Mary's Crown
  - <https://www.rct.uk/collection/31704/queen-marys-crown>
- Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859) Queen Victoria Receiving the Sacrament at her Coronation, 28 June 1838
  - <https://www.rct.uk/collection/406993/queen-victoria-receiving-the-sacrament-at-her-coronation-28-june-1838>
- See <https://oremus.org/coronation> for the text of all English / British coronations since 1689
- Lambeth Palace Library catalogue of Coronation material
  - <https://lambethpalacelibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Research-Guide-Coronations.pdf>

