THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CORONATION:
FROM EDGAR TO EDWARD II

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INTRODUCTION

"First Gent. God save you, sir! Where have you been broiling? Third Gent. Among the crowd i' the abbey; where a finger could not be wedg'd in more...
First Gent. How was it? Third Gent. Well worth the seeing.
Second Gent. Good sir, speak it to us. Third Gent. As well as I am able."¹

This excerpt from Act iv., scene 1 of Shakespeare's Henry VIII reflects the long prevailing English reaction to a king's coronation. Past and present Englishmen alike have felt the awe inspired by the inauguration of their rulers. In medieval England the coronation was an especially glorious occasion, and the pageantry and celebration were widely acclaimed. But beyond the ostentatious ceremony, there lay far greater meaning. As the coronation ritual developed in medieval England, its importance also increased. Raising the king to a position of honor and prestige, the symbol of the coronation became closely entwined with the medieval concept of kingship; yet it also reflected the needs and qualities of England and its rulers. Although some scholars overlook the historical significance of the medieval English coronation, the coronation ceremony does indeed deserve attention. During the Middle Ages this brilliant and wondrous rite came to embody the unique traditions and the history of the English nation.
Chapter One

THE NATURE OF MEDIEVAL KINGSHIP

In order to intelligently discuss English coronations, one must first relate the significant elements of and changes in kingship of the Middle Ages. Certainly the coronations of medieval English sovereigns were closely linked to kingship and its evolution. The notion of medieval kingship has been the source of considerable dispute and confusion, and it is often difficult to adequately define. In European countries of the era, the theory of kingship was everchanging. This is also true in medieval England. Thus, the prevailing concept of kingship in medieval England, as well as in other European countries of the time, was a formidable and potent factor in the workings of the state and in the minds of the people.

In an effort to define kingship, Henry Myers, author of *Medieval Kingship*, notes that "Kingship is both the rule of one person over a political unit, as at least its nominal head, and the art or science by which such a ruler governs well." However, as Myers himself recognizes, such a definition is of little use, since it attempts to rationalize something which often had very little in common with rationality or logic. Myers further notes that

the problematic thing about kingship
...is that both more and less are expected
of the kingly office-holder than simply
ruling as one man; more, in the sense that the king must possess a certain mystique or charisma in order to fulfill his role adequately; less, in the sense that a role embodying and symbolizing the people may actually be his main function, while major political decisions can be made by others without necessarily drawing into question the worth of the office or its holder.2

In his assessment of medieval kingship, Christopher Brooke in his book, From Alfred to Henry III: 871-1272, adds that a medieval sovereign must also inspire fear and respect in his subjects in order to successfully function as an effective ruler.3 Speaking of the necessary elements a ruler should possess, both Myers and Brooke acknowledge the fact that the king's role in society was an important and demanding one.

The origins of medieval kingship in Europe are obscure. The idea of kingship was certainly not a new concept in the Middle Ages. Indeed, it was the result of a variety of influences dating from antiquity. However, the origins of medieval European kingship had the strongest connections with the Germanic tribes and the later Romans. Myers remarks,

Medieval kingship has its origins in the royal tradition of the Germanic tribes of northern Europe, but it owed much of its development to the largely rational concept of monarchy derived from later Roman civilization.4

In other words, the Germanic tradition satisfied the psychological needs of the people, while the Roman interpretation tended to be much more rational, reflecting the need for subordination and organization in government.5 Medieval
kingship combined these two models in order to construct an acceptable and all encompassing standard. Thus, both irrational and rational elements are reflected in the medieval solution.

The Germanic peoples emphasized the theocratic, paternalistic king. Walter Ullmann, author of *A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages*, recognizes that Germanic kingship relied heavily on the monarch's theocratic role. Although the Germanic king had to be superior to his subjects in every aspect, "The essence of Germanic kingship was 'doing well' for the people..." Serving as an intermediary between the people and the gods, a king was supposed to be able to assure his subjects of victory in battle, prosperity and the like. Moreover, Myers states,

The Germanic peoples expected their king to have *Heil*, a concept sometimes given in English as "luck"..., but for the Germanic peoples a thing quite unrelated to chance or accident. A king who had Heil did well for his people not because things happened to go surprisingly well for him but instead because in his person he subdued or eliminated the elements of chance.

It is the irrational or emotional aspects of Germanic kingship that the people of the Middle Ages incorporated into their notion of kingship.

The later Romans also had a significant impact on medieval kingship. From about 509 B.C., the time of the Tarquins, the last ruling house, the Romans had an engrained...
aversion to kingship. The Tarquins had proven to be despots and to be unworthy of their offices. As a result of their treachery, the Romans believed it a deadly fault to reveal kingly ambition. Thus, even after a kind of monarchy was restored in Rome, the Romans chose to alter their kingship into a much more rational, therefore more controllable ideal without relinquishing complete power. In fact, the Romans set the tone for a limited monarchy—a monarchy in which the people had a role although this role was often slight. Later Constantine established the precedent of the emperor cooperating with and taking a role in the Church. Consequently, the Romans contributed a relatively logical interpretation of kingship to the medieval standard.

Despite the fact that the Germanic and Roman examples provided a considerable basis for the medieval notion of kingship, it was the Church which came to wield the greatest influence. Henry Myers remarks, "The medieval Church both restrained and supported the evolving notion." Not only did the Church assist in developing the models of kingship, but it also had a vested interest in this development since it was concerned about the way kings should treat religion and the Church. The Bible was often contradictory on the subject of kingship. Moreover, the conflict between the Church and State from the eleventh century on made the Church even more ambivalent about kingship. Nevertheless,
it is not surprising that the Church possessed such a powerful position considering that the churchmen were virtually the only people of the time who were well educated and could write on broad political and social topics. Until the early Middle Ages, Myers claims,

[churchmen] dealt with kingship...
only as an instrument for enabling it to do its work or, on occasion, as a threat which could undermine the efforts of the Church and encroach upon its sphere of authority.  

Indeed, although the theory of absolute divine right of kings did not completely materialize and was not sanctioned until the Middle Ages were over, Church spokesmen of the era did consistently demand that kings respect the interests of the Church.  

Throughout the Middle Ages the Church was closely involved with kings although the nature of this involvement changed. Some historians, such as Walter Ullmann, tend to overemphasize the evolution from theocratic to feudal kingship; for during the Middle Ages the Church would play a significant, yet everchanging role.

Just as the continent of Europe was greatly affected by these aforementioned influences, England too developed in the light of these very same elements. Needless to say, the English theory of kingship underwent tremendous change particularly from the tenth century until the fourteenth century. In early medieval England the theocratic function of the ruler was more important than his other functions.
But as the feudal system grew and became a formidable political and social institution, a dichotomy between a king's theocratic role and his role as a feudal overlord arose.

The Anglo-Saxons were especially important in creating the English theory of kingship in the Middle Ages. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill in his book, Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent, says,

In the tenth century, Alfred the Great had worked out a theology of kingship which was remarkably like that applied to successful Carolingians in infusing kingship with divine trust, but it also stressed the king's freedom of choice in the exercise of temporal power more than the Carolingian models do.\(^\text{12}\)

This connection between kingship and divine trust is illustrated in the preface to Werforth's translation of Gregory's Dialogues. King Alfred refers to his divine connection, stating,

\[\text{1, Alfred, honoured with the dignity of kingship through Christ's gift, have clearly perceived and frequently heard from statements in holy books that for us, to whom God has granted such a lofty station of worldly office, there is the most urgent necessity occasionally to calm our minds amidst these earthly anxieties and direct them to divine and spiritual law.}\(^\text{13}\)

But at the same time Alfred notes the king's dependence on men as well in his translation of Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy. In this dialogue Mind is speaking to Wisdom. Mind remarks,
You know of course that no one can make known any skill, nor direct and guide any authority, without tools and resources. In the case of the king, the resources and tools with which to rule are that he have his land fully manned: he must have praying men, fighting men and working men. You also know that without these tools no king may make his ability known... nor without the tools can he accomplish any of the things he was commanded to do.¹⁴

Reiterating these ideas, the "Extracts from the Laws of King Alfred" reflect how the king sought to maintain the social order while expressing his ideological and political aims.¹⁵

Before the Normans toned down the king's theocratic connections, the "Anonymous of York" wrote,

...Kings receive in their consecration the power to rule the Church, that they may rule it and strengthen it in judgment and justice and administer it in accordance with the discipline of Christian law; for they reign in the Church, which is the kingdom of God, and reign together with Christ in order that they may rule, protect and defend it. To reign is to rule the subjects well and to serve God with fear.¹⁶

While the king's theocratic role was emphasized in the early years of the Middle Ages, this concept of a theocratic sovereign led to certain problems. Walter Ullmann writes,

However logically, flawlessly and symmetrically constructed the theocratic theory was, it...took little account of the human elements which necessarily entered into actual government. It was as if government moved entirely within the precincts of concepts and abstractions,
and not within the realm of human 
society with all its earthly concrete-
ness and multifarious diversities of 
man's own all-too-human ambitions, 
voltions and prejudices.\\textsuperscript{17}

Most medieval historians recognize this fact and the fact 
that one of the most significant events in the evolution of 
practical, as opposed to theoretical, kingship from the 
eighth century to the twelfth century was the regularization 
of the king's standing at the top of the feudal system. 
What is particularly notable about this development is that 
it not only made the king seem more human, but feudal govern-
ment itself "...proved...to be an important harbinger and 
incubator of ideas which later could be developed on the 
basis of a theoretically conceived populist or ascending 
theory of government."\\textsuperscript{18} In addition, the feudal system 
created a significant bond between the king and the laity, 
and this bond demanded certain responsibilities and promises 
from each side. It is not surprising that the king, 
conscious of existing dilemmas, preferred to extend the 
theocratic position where he was free and unhindered.\\textsuperscript{19}

But H. R. Loyn, author of The Governance of Anglo-Saxon 
England: 500-1087, contends that the means of achieving 
spiritual welfare in the community 

...involved the consultation with the 
wise, listening to the good and the 
exercise of force in the basic matter 
of exacting compensation. Royal 
authority in itself should be enough to 
ensure that the evil-doer paid up, but 
if not, royal power should be so strong
that justice could be done against 
the will...of the evil-doer.\textsuperscript{20}

In other words, the royal power and religious authority of 
the king are inherently dependent upon each other. Never­
theless, the late Anglo-Saxons often struggled to balance 
the two.

The Normans also encountered these same problems.
Although the first Anglo-Saxon sovereigns "...appear to have 
been war-kings who continued for life with the distinction 
being partly hereditary and partly elective," the Normans 
found themselves in a precarious position when they took 
over the country.\textsuperscript{21} Because the Normans were foreigners, 
they needed to make their new kings acceptable to the English 
realm. They needed to assure the people that the Norman 
kings had a legitimate right to the throne. For this reason 
Myers asserts,

\begin{quote}
The early Norman kings toned down the 
exalted expressions of their divinely-
sanctioned office, but they incorporated 
the Anglo-Saxon religious awe for 
kings and the notion of the king as 
God's representative into their own 
ruling tradition, thus laying the 
groundwork for the concept of divine 
right as it later developed in England.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

Furthermore, the Normans also tried to use hereditary right 
when possible, but it was not until the succession of 
Richard II in the fourteenth century that the idea of primo-
geniture became firmly established. In all, the Normans 
struggled with the same dilemmas which the Anglo-Saxons had
faced, as well as new ones in the form of opposition by the Church.

Kingship continued to be problematic for the English throughout the Middle Ages. Ideas that were strongly rooted in the past often underwent drastic change as they were forced to meet the needs of the current governing officials. As the theory of kingship evolved, attempting to balance the theocratic and feudal functions, the ecclesiastics and the laity exerted considerable influence as well. In England, more than in the other countries on the Continent, kingship continued to experience a number of metamorphoses, making it a concept unique to that country; for the traditions of the countries on the Continent had for many years been firmly entrenched.

Just as kingship was transformed by the prevailing emotions and needs at the time, the coronations of kings also reflected such changes. Although the idea of the coronation service did not originate in England, it did develop there in the light of a myriad of distinctly English trends. Hence, one cannot speak of the medieval English coronation without relating the evolution of the English theories of kingship which were so potently influential.
Chapter Two

THE MEDIEVAL CORONATION

The coronation of a king in medieval Europe was a glorious occasion. It was a time of renewed hope and expectation for the future of the realm. Because this ostentatious ceremony had considerable political, religious, social and economic ramifications, the coronation ritual held a revered position in western European countries of the time. Not only did the coronation of a sovereign symbolize the power and dignity of the kingly office, but it also demanded that certain obligations be fulfilled by the king, the clergy and the laity alike.

The coronation ceremony reflected the history and the future of a country. For this reason the day of the coronation was a very special day for all those involved. Walter Ullman in his work, A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages, claims, "...the day of the coronation was the one day in any medieval king's reign which really counted." William Jones reiterates this point, saying,

...the august ceremonial of a royal inauguration must appear to the mere novelty-seeker a "fine sight;" but a deep seriousness would rather seem to be the prevailing feeling of those who see, beyond the gorgeous display and formalities of crowning a monarch, the effect that may be produced in the destinies of a nation; and every celebration of
coronation rites must bring with it a forecast of events, which may result in the benefit or misfortune of a country.\(^2\)

Medieval sources which describe a king's coronation also echo such sentiments. In any case, Jones quite accurately contends that if there is any faith to be placed in the symbols of dignity and honor, the coronation ceremony which has been carried out through so many ages insures it.\(^3\) In other words, the coronation ceremony gives meaning to the symbols of the kingly office. Thus, the historical significance of the coronation service is considerable.

The coronation ceremony of the Middle Ages supported the prevailing concept of kingship. The theory that the king never dies wielded much power in medieval times.\(^4\) This theory asserted that while a king's physical body dies, the body politic, that part which is intangible, never dies. It is merely transferred to a new ruler. This doctrine was particularly important in France, but it was also a significant factor in other countries. Percy E. Schramm in his book, The History of the English Coronation, contends that the king is always there, but from time to time a ceremony must be held to proclaim that the sovereign's name has been changed.\(^5\) Maxims existed that asserted if a king's successor is to fulfill his responsibilities and become king in every sense "...he must first be inaugurated into government by legal and ecclesiastical rites."\(^6\) Consequently, the coronation service gave added meaning to the contention that the king never dies.
The inauguration of a ruler particularly served to raise him above other men. Historian Christopher Brooke recognizes that the medieval coronation was an actual symbol of a king's divine blessing and a symbol of regal authority. It gave meaning to a king's claim to the throne.

The rite of anointing the king and investing him with the insignia of the royal office became a potent vehicle for establishing the glory and the power of the sovereign. Ullmann writes that the ritual of unction suggested itself because the early medieval kings were anxious to underscore their divine authority. At first it was considered a sacrament, but over the years there was constant debate between the clergy and the king over its status among other sacraments. Ullmann contends that it was devalued from a sacrament to a mere sacramental in the twelfth century when the conflict between the Church and State was a significant problem and the advantages provided for the king by unction as a sacrament presented themselves. The dispute over whether or not anointing of a new king is a sacrament or merely a sacramental is less important than the fact that unction gave the king a position reserved for him by God, as well as a special position among the laity. P. E. Schramm notes the significance of the anointing when he says, ...

...as the ruler is outwardly changed by the hand of the priest, so inwardly he is at the same time changed--cleansed, that is purified and so forth--through the grace of the Holy Ghost. The
anointed person becomes another man. He enters a new status; he is brought into a new relation with God; he is now the Lord's Anointed, a Christus Domini.... In granting the new ruler consecration God has accepted him as His office-bearer in this world. The king now has his place not only over the people, but in the divine order of the world. 

Quite significantly the ritual of unction was a necessary factor in the inauguration of a ruler, for it established his position among his subjects, the ecclesiastics and God.

Walter Ullmann also comments on the importance of the royal coronation in relation to the king's authority. He states,

What a royal coronation made so unambiguously clear was the superioritas of the king..., because he was "supreme" in the kingdom, as a number of texts expressly declared. In this both royal and episcopal aims were identical: that royal sovereignty...had reference exclusively to the laity which, in the coronation texts, was called the "plebs." 

Certainly the coronation service placed the king in a powerful position, leaving the care of the realm and its people to him. However, this does not mean that the clergy were inferior to the king in the early or late Middle Ages.

In addition the coronation service creates a compact between the king and his people--both clerical and lay.

"The investiture of the king is of two characters and relates to his two distinct powers in the Church and State," states William Jones. It is this contractual character which
probably exerted the most influence on the development of the coronation service. As circumstances changed over the years, the coronation rite evolved, reflecting the changing impact of the ecclesiastics and the laity on kingship.

Detailed accounts of medieval royal coronations often do not exist or are difficult to locate. However, among the European countries, medieval England offers some of the most extensive records. The first important coronation orders were written in the ninth century, and a variation of these early orders is still used in modern English coronations.

The clergy, the only ones with the necessary intellectual equipment, constructed these royal coronation orders. They did so because they had a vested interest in the way a king should treat the Church. Moreover, in the medieval coronation, the clergy and the Church found a permanent place. Nevertheless, kings still retained some authority. Ullmann suggests,

...the [coronation orders] give considerable insight into the texture of medieval kingship. The coronation orders were the result of ninth-century clerical efforts. And yet it was the kings themselves who, by bolstering up the theocratic form of government, made it possible for the episcopacy to share the very ceremony which created the theocratic king.13

In any case, the development of these coronation orders was quite important, and the coronation ceremony has its full effect only if the forms and rituals have been strictly observed at the coronation. Thus, without the development
of the coronation orders in the ninth century, the service had little meaning for those involved.

Indeed, the ecclesiastics, as well as the laity, were important in the coronation of the king. Ullmann declares,

In fact and in theory the king became through the liturgical coronation a persona ecclesiastica; he was, as it were, adapted by the officiating bishops and was built into the clerical structure.14

This example illustrates the role of the Church in the king's coronation. Ullmann continues by noting that the coronation service was carefully designed to avoid the possibility of the king having any rights over the clergy, while separating him from the laity themselves.15 While the Church was greatly involved in the coronation of the king, the laity too took part in and were affected by a royal inauguration. In particular, the laity were affected by the governmental doctrine which presented itself in the coronation orders. The elements of governmental policy which are outlined in these coronation orders are the principle of concession, the principle of subjection, the principle of lawgiving and the like.16 As the years passed these policies took on greater meaning for the king, the clergy and the laity. Hence, despite the fact that in the early Middle Ages the Church was more involved in creating the coronation orders than the secular population had the opportunity to be, the laity also found a lasting place in the ceremony.
The corona tion oath was one part of the corona tion ceremony in which some of the laity could play a role. Even though the significance of the inaugural oath could vary depending on the existing circumstances, the corona tion oath taken by an English king was the most solemn oath of his reign. Christopher Brooke writes, "Medieval England was not a democracy. The king had to reckon on the consent and cooperation of a large number of people--large, but not beyond counting." Henry Myers adds, "No matter how English kings succeeded to the throne, they found it the best course to take corona tion oaths with... assurances contained in them. These did not have the effect of turning an excess of power back to the aristocracy or leaving the crown too weak to provide for the effective administration of the realm. Instead, in implicitly acknowledging the rightness of former demands for guarantees against arbitrary rule, they functioned...by presenting the idea that English kingship in its existing form was the choice of everyone who mattered from past and present generations." In all, the oath encouraged cooperation between the king and the people by assigning certain obligations on each side. Because the oath was an essential element of the medieval English coronation, its importance will be discussed in relation to specific coronations in later chapters. The history and development of the royal coronation was different in each nation in western Europe during the Middle Ages. Lawrence Tanner, author of The History of the
Coronation, writes, "...the outcome of religious and political controversies have left their mark on or become imbedded in the coronation rite." The unique developments in the ritual also illustrate the individual qualities and peculiarities of each nation, and they reflect a country's needs and beliefs. P. E. Schramm states,

...England—at least in the coronation rite and their appurtenances—appears neither as a remote island of Teutonism nor as an outpost of western Europe; but simply as something by itself: England.

Thus, the evolution of the coronation ceremony in medieval England not only reflects the European-wide shift from a theocratic government to a feudal organization but also the changing situation in England over the course of the period. Each occasion illustrates the character of a particular king's reign. The most significant developments in the inauguration of the king occurred from the age of the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar in the late tenth century to the rule of King Edward II in the fourteenth century. These innovations will be related in the following chapters.
Chapter Three

THE CONTINENTAL ORIGINS OF THE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH CORONATION

The English certainly did not create a coronation ceremony all by themselves; for, although the English were often separated from the influences of the Continent, they did not live in a vacuum. In fact, during the Middle Ages, the consecration of a monarch was one of the most important and memorable occurrences created by the medieval spirit. In developing their own unique coronation rites, the English borrowed greatly from their neighbors, and this fact may be seen in some of the earliest consecrations of the Anglo-Saxon kings, such as the consecration of Ecgfrith in 785 A.D.

The first recorded Christian consecration of an Anglo-Saxon ruler took place in 785 when King Offa of Mercia had his son anointed and crowned as his successor. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which seems to be the first source to record this event, merely remarks, "And Ecgfrith was consecrated."¹

Christianity was the vehicle by which Continental practices influenced England, and it provided the concept of unction. According to the Old Testament, from the days of Samuel onwards, the Jewish kings were consecrated with holy oil. P. E. Schramm suggests,

"...The Bible was read by Christians who associated the anointing of the King with a number of other sacred rites where oil was employed, such as baptism,"
confirmation, the anointing of the sick and dying, and finally the consecration of a bishop...²

Teutons and Celts alike assumed this rite. Schramm notes that it is possible that the Celts were the first people to take the decisive step of anointing the new king with holy oil, but this is difficult to prove.³ However, it is certain that between the time of Pepin in about 751 and the tenth century many medieval kings felt it was preferable not only to receive the insignia of the royal office but to be anointed at the hands of the clergy as well.⁴ In any case, by the tenth century the Franks had developed these ideas and had drawn up a complete and elaborate coronation service.

As already mentioned, the Anglo-Saxons first anointed a sovereign in 785, according to primary sources. Maurice Bloch, author of The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France, intimates that this royal anointing probably took place in the light of the Council of Chelsea which had recalled the commandment of unction.⁵ Lawrence Tanner writes that it was probably the first occasion on which the Frankish custom of anointing was used in England and that it may be from that date that unction became a permanent feature of the inauguration of an English sovereign. Whether or not this was the first instance of a king's consecration in England is not as significant as the fact that this particular coronation was the first recorded occasion. In other words, the details of the ruler's
consecration were finally considered significant enough to record.

The consecration of Ecgfrith marked only the beginning of a mutual influence between Continental and English coronation rites. Although the interaction between the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks, in particular, declined to some degree from the middle of the ninth century until the middle of the tenth century, the assimilation renewed itself in the late tenth century. Schramm writes that this assimilation began with the adoption of an oath, which was an old custom among the Franks, but had not been used in England before Edmund (940-946).6

In all, the development of the medieval English coronation rite is closely linked to a variety of Continental examples. Teutonic, especially Frankish, Celtic and Christian elements alike provided the basis for the English. In particular, the Christian rite of unction was of the utmost importance, for it created the divine bond between God and the king for which medieval scholarly minds had been searching. Bloch comments, kings were "...protected from all the machinations of the wicked by the divine word, for God himself had said: 'Touch not mine anointed.'"7 Furthermore, borrowing from the Romans as well,

Teutonic princes...wanted to wear precious embroidery and silken robes, so they even placed the Imperial purple on their shoulders, and felt entitled,
as conquerors, to claim the insignia of the Roman Imperator—the diadem, and then the sceptre and the orb.

writes P. E. Schramm. Hence, combining these examples, the English created a unique coronation ritual for themselves.
Chapter Four

THE CORONATION OF KING EDGAR (973 A.D.)

King Edgar's coronation and his reign reflect the extreme influence and importance of the Church. Ruling during a relatively peaceful period, Edgar turned his interest to strengthening the bonds between the State and the ecclesiastics. Throughout his reign he worked hand in hand with the Church to govern his realm. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle praises Edgar as a king. His coronation in 973 is worthy of the same acclaim, for it marks the first time a truly elaborated coronation ritual took place in England. Edgar's reign is not only notable as a period in which Continental influence on the coronation ritual reached a peak through the efforts of Archbishop Dunstan, but also as a time when the Church and the realm depended greatly upon each other. Edgar's coronation ritual embodies these forces.

Since he had been on the throne for many years prior to his inauguration, the circumstances surrounding Edgar's coronation are unique. This probably accounts for the detailed service which he presented in 973. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that King Eadwig died in c. 959 and that Edgar, at the age of sixteen, immediately succeeded to the throne. It also states, "And God also supported him so
that kings and earls willingly submitted to him and were subjected to whatever he wished..." It continues, remarking,

He [Edgar] came to be honoured widely throughout the countries, because he zealously honoured God's name...and continually and frequently directed all his people wisely in matters of Church and State.

From these recorded statements, Edgar seems to have been an acceptable king, at least to most people.

As mentioned, churchmen exerted a great influence over Edgar and his reign, and St. Dunstan was an especially potent force. Dunstan, the archbishop of Canterbury since 960, had spent some years in a monastery near Ghent while he was out of favor with King Eadwig. While there he came into contact with the Cluniac religious movement, and he later brought some of those ideas back to England with him. With the help of Æthelholwold and Oswald, he adapted what he had learned to meet the needs of the Anglo-Saxons. Moreover, like many other medieval bishops, Dunstan was ruled

...by his strong conviction that Church and State were one; that the king was [the] natural ruler of the Church, "king and priest." This union of offices did not give the king the specifically clerical functions of performing the rites and administering the sacraments of the Church; but it meant that in return for protection and patronage the Church recognised in him God's instrument for controlling its government.

Thus, the ecclesiastical reformers, having found favor with
Edgar, worked to strengthen the position of the king in order to gain his aid in checking the power of the magnates who were limiting both Edgar and the Church. Indeed, there was a common cause for alliance.

It was in the light of these events that the long delay in the coronation of Edgar took place in 973. Historian Peter Hunter Blair in his book, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England*, notes that this delay may have been deliberate, "for in 973 Edgar reached the age of thirty, the minimum canonical age for ordination to the priesthood." Reiterating this point, Christopher Brooke describes the coronation as "...a ceremony that laid special emphasis on the analogies of kingship and priesthood, and provided for the first time in England a fully elaborated coronation service on the Frankish model." Hence, one can see the emphasis on the religious nature of the service.

In the tenth century most coronations took place at Kingston-on-Thames, where kings were inaugurated on the "King's stone," which is still preserved. However, Edgar's ceremony was held at Bath. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records this momentous occasion.

...In this year [973] Edgar,...with great company, was consecrated king in the ancient borough, Acemannesceaster--the men who dwell in this island also call it...Bath. There great joy had come to to all on that blessed day which the children of men call and name the day of Pentecost. There was assembled a crowd of priests, a great throng of
learned monks, as I have heard tell....
And Edmund's son, bold in battle, had
spent 29 years in this world when this
came about, and then in the thirtieth
he was consecrated king.

Drawing upon the recollections of a monk of Ramsay who wrote
in 1000 A.D. about the coronation of Edgar, Schramm remarks,

He [the monk] begins by recording how
the bishops, abbots and secular
magnates assembled for the festival,
and then describes the procession to
the church where the lay magnates and
the people awaited the king.10

These two examples show how significant the role of the eccles-
astics was. Both the archbishop of Canterbury and the arch-
bishop of York were present; however, the archbishop of York
assumed the second position of prestige. On this occasion
Edgar wore royal robes of great value, which he bestowed on
the Abbey of Glastonbury following the inauguration.11 In
addition, he resumed the insignia of royalty which "...had
been interdicted by Dunstan for his crime in carrying off a
nun," notes historian William Jones.12 Jones, however, does
not elaborate on what those insignia were. In any case, this
ceremony was a truly spectacular and awe-inspiring event.

Following the procession to the church, the ritual
began. First Edgar removed his crown from his head and
prostrated himself before the altar. The presiding bishops
then raised the king who then took the coronation oath.
Following Edgar's promises to the laity and Church alike,
Dunstan offered prayers for the king and duly anointed him.
The king was then invested with the insignia of his office.
The ceremony ended with the celebration of the Mass followed by Edgar's enthronement. Upon the conclusion of these rituals, a coronation banquet was held to honor the king and celebrate his inauguration.

The coronation rite used for Edgar's inauguration in 973 was the newly created "Edgar" ordo. This ordo was developed by St. Dunstan between 960 and 973. It seems to be an offspring of two earlier coronation orders and was as highly developed as its Frankish and German models. The two coronation orders used to create the "Edgar" ordo are the "Leofric" and "Egbert" recensions. They appear to date from the early tenth century. It is uncertain whether either of these is English in origin, but the "Egbert" version is indeed an amplified version of the "Leofric" service, incorporating the Mass with the coronation service. St. Dunstan used these examples to construct the service for Edgar's coronation, and he added many of the coronation rituals used on the Continent at the time to create a uniquely English service.

Schramm relates,

The first version ["Leofric"] recognized only the elements of anointing and enthronement, and therefore has no crowning. The second introduced this rite. It provides...not for a crown, but for the Germanic golden helmet to be placed by the clergy upon the king's head. Moreover, according to the West Frankish plan, it inserts the investiture with a short sceptre and a long rod, in which the principes take part.
Hence, the "Leofric" and the "Egbert" revisions provided the basis for the "Edgar" ordo of St. Dunstan.

The "Edgar" ordo made a number of amendments to its predecessors. The most important constitutional development was the metamorphosis of the kingly mandate into a promise or oath. This oath formally bound the king to his people, but it also placed certain demands on the laity as well. P. E. Schramm also notes that the oath was moved to the beginning of the ceremony, following the Carolingian tradition. Furthermore, the increased solemnity of the rite and the spiritual dignity of the new ceremony further set the king apart from the lay magnates and raised him to an exalted position. Schramm also recognizes the fact that, in accordance with Frankish custom, the sword and ring were introduced into the ecclesiastical ceremony; and he writes that the largest indication that English are moving towards the Frankish model is that the crown replaces the Teutonic helmet. The acts of German inheritance, which had been an integral part of the coronation ritual, were pushed out of the ecclesiastical ceremony, but they found their place in the coronation banquet following the service. These acts included the king taking his seat on the king's bench as the greatest of all the magnates. Beyond these visible changes the service emphasized the divine source of royal authority and the close affiliation between Edgar and the Church.
Lawrence Tanner accurately sums up the significance of the new "Edgar" ordo. He writes,

...all the essential features of a modern coronation appear in a primitive form—the Oath, the Anointing, the Investiture with Ring, Sword, Crown, Sceptre and Rod, the Enthronement and the Homage. It marked the completion of the process in England whereby...Teutonic ceremonies of inauguration...became blended with the distinctively Christian "hallowing" or anointing, and it put beyond question the right of the clergy to take a leading part in the service. 19

The detailed revisions of the "Edgar" ordo make little sense unless one realizes that Edgar had been in office years before his inauguration. For this reason, there was time to work out specific facets of the ceremony on which both he and the clergy could agree. Brooke declares,

The coronation ceremony in 973 was the climax of the collaboration between the King and his chief councillor, Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury...Dunstan combined the fullest appreciation of the spiritual aspect of his office with political statesmanship of a high order. 20

The "Edgar" ordo established a model for future reference. Because there are no traces of an independent Anglo-Saxon tradition, it appears that the consecration of a sovereign had hitherto never been firmly fixed. 21 Hence, the continuous history of the English inaugural ritual begins with Edgar's service in 973.

As a result of the efforts of St. Dunstan, Continental influence reached its greatest peak under Edgar. The alliance between the king and the clergy had great effects
on the development of the English coronation ritual. Although the Church reformers were less interested in stimulating religious zeal and fervor than in restoring order, obedience and rules, their efforts were admirable to the king and to the Church. Despite the fact that the question of who should carry the king's regalia remained unanswered, the "Edgar" ordo was especially influential in European nations of the Middle Ages. It was even used to install a Duke of Normandy. Moreover, this coronation ceremony is the ancestor of the coronation ritual which is still used in England today.

There does seem to be one significant difference between Edgar's coronation and later coronations. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle makes no mention of lay participants; it records only the procession led by the ecclesiastics. The monk of Ramsay cited by Schramm also makes no mention of any secular people participating in the actual ceremony although he does note that they were present. Assuredly, many of the most important lay magnates were present. Certainly the oath taken by Edgar is a promise to the laity as well as the Church and God. But beyond this vow the laity have virtually no place in the coronation ceremony. One cannot deny the fact that this ceremony is dominated by the clergy and a king who are interested in bolstering a theocratic rule.

Edgar's revised service effectively limits the influence of the secular population. Percy Schramm makes an accurate
appraisal of the situation.

The conclusion is inevitable that ecclesiastical influence is increasing. The clergy, to whom alone the coronation belonged, annexed to themselves a share in the investiture with the regalia and brought enthronement into the ecclesiastical ceremony.23
With the accession of William of Normandy the Anglo-Saxon era came to an abrupt end. The influence of the Anglo-Saxon heritage, however, did not abate, and William's reign was in many ways dependent upon the traditions of his newly acquired realm. As in Edgar's case William's coronation ceremony would mirror much of his reign, as well as the circumstances of his accession. While William's coronation service reveals little actual change in ritual, it does indicate William's dependence upon the approval and support of the laity alike.

This support was necessary because William found himself in a precarious position in 1066. Prior to that date the Norman chroniclers of William, as well as the Duke of Normandy himself, claimed that William had already been appointed as Edward the Confessor's successor as early as 1051. William of Jumièges, a contemporary of William who represents the Norman sentiment of the time, records the situation.

Edward, king of the English, being according to the dispensation of God, without an heir, sent Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, to the duke [William] with a message appointing the duke as heir to the kingdom which God had entrusted to him. He also at a later time sent to the duke, Harold the greatest
of all the counts in his kingdom alike in riches and honour and power. This he did in order that Harold might guarantee the crown to the duke by his fealty and confirm the same with an oath.

While William of Jumièges mentions this event as fact, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, oddly enough, makes no mention of Harold's trip to see William at all. Historian Christopher Brookes suggests that William managed to cajol Harold into taking an oath. On the other hand, David C. Douglas, author of William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England, writes that there is no reason to believe that William was not appointed as the future king by Edward. The debate came over whether or not this nomination had ever been formally rescinded. This dilemma remained unanswered, and it resurfaced upon the defeat of Harold in the Battle of Hastings. After William conquered Harold, who had attempted to seize the English throne, he sought to answer this dispute at his coronation. There is a notion that ecclesiastical support aided William in his triumph at Hastings, as it is of little surprise that William chose to emphasize his support from God and his divine link to him at his coronation and during his reign.

The events following William's victory at Hastings also had a significant impact on the Duke of Normandy's inauguration. P. E. Schramm cites,
After William's victory... events
taken at the accession of Canute.
There was an attempt to elect a native
King by right of consanguinity, followed
by a rapid break-up of his supporters,
their overthrow, and finally a request
to the Conqueror to take the crown.

Thus, even after William had won the right to the English
throne in battle, there was still dissension as to whether
or not he should become king. In the light of these circum-
stances, Duke William felt somewhat obligated to gain the
approval of his subjects at his coronation. For this reason
the election of the king, which had existed since Anglo-
Saxon times took on new meaning, as will be shown later.

William's inauguration service followed the English
tradition that had been used from the time of Edgar and
virtually no substantial changes were made in the coronation
ritual. As a matter of fact, every effort was made to stress
the continuity of the English rule. The coronation of the
Duke of Normandy also "...gave sanction to the kingship he
had won by arms and was designed to glorify the regality
into which he had entered." Furthermore, most historical
sources note that William's coronation enjoyed the mutual
approval of the Normans and the English. William of Poitiers,
a Norman priest who was made chaplain to William, writes,

On the day appointed for coronation
the archbishop of York, a wise, good and
eloquent man, famed for justice and his
mature prudence, demanded of the English
in a fitting oration whether it was their
will that William should be crowned as
their lord. All without the least
hesitation shouted their joyous assent,
as if heaven had given them one will and one voice. Then the Bishop of Coutances in like manner addressed the Normans, and they showed the same eagerness as the English. Nevertheless, those who for safety were keeping guard outside the abbey, being armed and mounted, thought that the shouting boded some ill-will, and so without reason they started to set fire to the city.

This illustration given by William of Poitiers shows the new meaning taken in by the term "election." In Anglo-Saxon times the election of a sovereign was more of a choice of those in power. At William's coronation in 1066 the election was altered into a form of adoption. In other words, William's subjects were actually asked for their approval of his inauguration.

As for the riot which ensued as a result of the shouting, Schramm writes that eventually the uproar was allayed, "...and William put his seal on the restoration of peace by swearing an oath of security to his subjects." After that the Archbishop of York was able to return to the service to the end. William of Poitiers notes,

William, the duke, was hallowed king by the said Archbishop of York.... He it was who set the royal crown upon the duke's head, and led him to the throne in the presence of a great company of bishops and abbots assembled in the Church of St. Peter...which is graced with the tomb of King Edward. This was done on Christmas Day in the year of our Lord 1066. The Duke had refused to be crowned by Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, because he knew that the just zeal of the apostolic see had stricken Stigand with anathema.
The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also records the details of William's inaugural celebration.

Then on Christmas day [1066] Archbishop of Aldred consecrated him [William] king at Westminster. And he promised Aldred on Christ's book and swore moreover (before Aldred would place the crown on his head) that he would rule all these people as well as the best of the kings before him, if they would be loyal to him.10

William of Jumièges also notes the events of the Conqueror's accession. He writes,

His triumph was thus completed after so many dangers, and his wonderful virtues even our praise has not been able to adequately extol. He was chosen king by all the magnates both of the Normans and of the English on Christmas day; he was anointed with the holy oil by the bishops of the kingdom; and he was vested with the royal crown in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord....11

Lawrence Tanner lists other details of the coronation ceremony. He notes that William received the royal sceptre in his right hand and the rod in his left. Following the regal ceremony, a coronation banquet was held.12 From all these examples, it is clear that William's service was a highly detailed and well thought out ceremony.

There were several distinctive elements in the coronation service which took place in 1066. While some of these innovations were the result of Norman influence, others came about in answer to a number of problems posed by William's accession to the English throne. In particular, the election of the new king and the unction have an increased importance;
the laudes, liturgical acclamations sung to honor a leader, were used for the first time in England; and there was a dispute over what cleric would conduct William's ceremony.

The election of William was especially important in 1066. Although "...it was continuously argued that William was the legitimate successor of Edward the Confessor after an interregnum caused by the usurpation and that he was king of England not only de facto but also de jure," election was necessary to assure William of support. David C. Douglas asserts that William's emphatic claim that hereditary right gave him the justification for succeeding to the throne was in fact quite weak, for William was only remotely related to Edward along the female line. Besides William's hereditary assertion, he also claimed the right of kingship on the basis of nomination by Edward, the oath of fealty by the English, the victory by the sword, the consent of the magnates and the coronation. Regarding these claims, Schramm remarks,

Modern opinion, which can see that these claims are mutually contradictory is in no way impressed by this method of piling them up; but it was different in the Middle Ages, when, if a legal case was to be strengthened, it was highly desirable to buttress it from every angle, and to prove that, on every hypothesis, the claim was legal.

As an innovation the new king was presented to those in attendance by Archbishop Aldred, speaking in English, and by Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances, speaking in French. Although no
provision for this is made in the "Edgar" ordo, the question of approval was customary in France and quite advisable under William's circumstances. However, many Anglo-Saxon kings also received approval prior to being crowned. While primary sources record that Normans and English alike gave their approval, the English magnates may have felt that they had to acquiesce because they had just been severely defeated in battle. In any case, the election of William in 1066 was essential, and in time this French innovation would become a vital part of the English coronation rite.

Like the election, unction too assumed a new position of importance in the ceremony, for William and the party would later use the fact that he had been anointed for his political advantage. Also the fact that William was a foreigner made the act of unction even more significant as a symbol of his right to rule. Marjorie Chibnall in her book, Anglo-Saxon England: 1066-1166, remarks,

so for a hundred years after the Norman conquest, it was doubly important for the reigning king to uphold the legitimacy of his rule by keeping the support of the baronage and the approval of the Church. Coronation and unction, long important to set the seal on accession to the throne, might seem in such circumstances actually to make a king.  

"By unction...the king is sacramentally transformed; he becomes a Christus domini; he becomes a sanctus; and there may even be found in his office a reflection of the authority of God himself," writes Douglas. Since William's reign
marked the beginning of a new dynasty, anointing was even more important in his case. The prevailing ecclesiastical doctrine stipulated that suitability to rule rather than hereditary right must be held to justify any sacramental sanctions. Nevertheless, the implications of the unction were disputed. The ritual may have served to separate the king from the laity by stressing his divine connection, or it may have made the sovereign's status directly dependent upon the clergy who had the authority to invest him. In any case, no Norman duke had ever been anointed before William as primary sources note, and at the time the unction played an integral part in encouraging recognition of William as the new English sovereign.

A purely Norman innovation, which had little to do with the question concerning William's right to the throne, was the introduction of the Norman laudes. These were liturgical acclamations created to honor and exalt a ruler. Ernst Kantorowicz, author of Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship, notes that such laudes were unknown in the Church of the Anglo-Saxons. But because William's coronation corresponded with a Norman laudes day, it is only natural that in keeping with the Norman ritual these laudes were chanted at his ceremony. The use of these religious laudes in William's coronation service set a precedent for future coronations even if they
took place on days not set aside as laudes days. Most importantly, however, is the fact that William's new position is recognized by the Church in the litany of the Laudes Regiae. William has been recognized as a rex, and he has been honored as an equal of the French king. Therefore, in the introduction of the laudes, the Normans make a unique and lasting contribution to the medieval English coronation ritual.

A minor, nevertheless significant, change also took place at William's service in 1066. In earlier coronations, the prayer *Sta et Retine* referred to a new king's father. Obviously this phrase was not appropriate in 1066. As a result, the phrase "by hereditary right" replaced it. Again William secured his position as king.

Finally, the last distinctive element which was visible at William's installation was that the archbishop of York, rather than the archbishop of Canterbury, presided over the anointing and investiture of William. William could hardly accept anointing from Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, for Stigand was not recognized by Rome at the time. Moreover, Stigand's irregularities as archbishop had been complained of for years, and they had been one of the grounds for papal support for William. Although William could not let Archbishop Stigand assume the most prestigious religious position at his ceremony, he was allowed to assist in the service. This situation was highly irregular.
William was crowned king at a time when the notion of Christ-centered kingship was widely accepted, and his ceremony was quite a memorable occasion. What it symbolized in all was William's superiority in a number of aspects. The ceremony itself, however, was a religious act taking place at a time when new ideas of political theology were surfacing. The coronation was indeed the culminating event in William's career, and it marked a turning point for both the Normans and the English. David C. Douglas remarks that, in particular, the coronation of William gave the promise of a continuance of identity, as well as the reorientation of the politics to England. Thus, the outward ceremony of the coronation rite had tremendous ramifications for the future of England.

The significance of William's inauguration is indeed considerable. Certainly the ties with the religious faction were noteworthy, but those are not as interesting as the other unique elements of William's service. The coronation ordo used in 1066 reiterated the previously established promise that the king would teach, foster, protect and establish the Church in England. But in 1066 William also relied greatly on the support of the lay magnates. The common people still did not assume a significant position in the ceremony, but the lay magnates were essential for William's election. As mentioned earlier, the election, which had existed from Anglo-Saxon times, was altered into a form of
adoption rather than choice, and it would remain that way from William's time on. The laity had finally found a meaningful, although small, place in the coronations of sovereigns.

In all, the coronation of William not only reflected the difficulties he experienced in laying claim to the English throne; it was also a symbol of the difficulties that were to follow in his reign. His coronation marked the beginning of a new dynasty, yet this dynasty had a long way to go in order to truly establish itself. William's first great step was his effort to control the Church. But at the same time, with his help, the English were slowly moving towards a feudal society in which the laity gained more influence.
Chapter Six

THE CORONATION OF KING HENRY I (1100 A.D.)

The growth of government and the contest over lay investiture are among some of the most memorable developments of Henry I's reign in England. Succeeding to the throne after the oppressive rule of William Rufus, Henry faced significant religious and secular problems, yet he aptly dealt with the situations in which he found himself in 1100. Willing to make necessary concessions, Henry I restored good government to his realm. His coronation reflected the unstable government which he had inherited from his brother, as well as his intentions to correct such problems. The coronation of Henry I, like that of William the Conqueror, discloses few actual changes in ritual, but it does reveal a definite shift towards the development of a much more organized feudal system.

When Henry came to power he faced a very dissatisfied nation. William Rufus, who ruled from 1087 to 1100, had had a wretched reputation. There had been lots of debauchery at his court, and he had tyrannized the nobles and commoners alike. In addition, he was especially notable for his greed. Not only was he interested in maximizing his profits from his tenants and the churches, but he also held some churches in wardship and pocketed the revenues. It was this legacy
that Henry I inherited from his older brother.

Henry, however, was an able man. William of Malmesbury, a contemporary source for information on the reign of Henry I, describes the capacities of William the Great's youngest son. He notes that Henry was a well-educated man, as well as prudent and caring. Moreover, he had learned how to restrain his subjects with lenity, and he only employed his troops when absolutely necessary. Thus, it seemed that Henry I was truly capable of governing medieval England, and his coronation in 1100 raised new hope for his subjects.

Once again the coronation ceremony was of the utmost importance, for historians note that what mattered most for the pragmatic Normans was the visible coronation service. Yet in Henry's case, the election preceding his inauguration was also vital. Schramm notes that Henry was truly elected. There was a choice between Henry and his older brother, Robert. However, Henry was chosen because he was born after his father had been crowned. In this case primogeniture lost out, but the theory used to elect Henry I disappeared after it found its usefulness at that time. William of Malmesbury cites this election.

On the violent death of King William [Rufus] after the solemnisation of the royal funeral [Henry] was chosen king, though some small dissension had arisen among the magnates which was allayed mainly by the exertions of Henry, earl of Warwick, a man of unblemished integrity with whom he had long been in the closest intimacy.
Soon after this election Henry was crowned as the king of England.

Henry's coronation service in 1100 was a joyous occasion, for it symbolized a new beginning. Because his brother, William Rufus, had established the precedent of using Westminster for the coronation rite, Henry took the time to travel from Winchester to Westminster for the ceremony. Because his brother, William Rufus, had established the precedent of using Westminster for the coronation rite, Henry took the time to travel from Winchester to Westminster for the ceremony. William of Malmesbury records the event of the coronation, stating,

So amid the universal rejoicing Henry was crowned king at London on 5 August, that is to say, four days after his brother's death. These acts were more carefully carried out lest the magnates should be induced to repent their choice....

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also mentions the coronation, remarking,

...before the altar at Westminster, he vowed to God and all the people to put down all the injustices that there were in his brother's time, and to maintain the best laws that had stood in any king's day before him. And after that Maurice, the bishop of London, consecrated him king, and all in this country submitted to him and swore oaths and became his men.

Thus, Henry I became the legitimate ruler of the English soon after the death of William Rufus.

As already mentioned the coronation was a tremendously important event for Henry. Yet, as The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle notes, Henry was anointed by the bishop of London rather than the Archbishop of Canterbury. Anselm, the archbishop of
Canterbury, had withdrawn from the archbishopric as a result of a dispute with Rufus about the way Anselm should receive his pallium. For this reason he was not present at the service in 1100. M. T. Clanchy comments on the ramifications of this. He writes,

> From a legal point of view Henry was in a weaker position than Rufus had been on his accession, as he could not claim that his predecessor had designated him king, and furthermore he had been crowned neither by the archbishop of Canterbury (as Rufus had been) nor by York (as William the Conqueror had been)....

Although he was not inaugurated by Anselm, Henry did have to send a submissive letter to him declaring that he had been chosen king by the clergy and the people of England. Therefore, having been inaugurated by the bishop of London, Henry found the need to further assert his legitimacy.

Henry's coronation took place under unique circumstances. Certainly the elements of the ceremony remained the same. The oath, the anointing, the investiture, the enthronement and the homage were all present. However, because of the actions of his brother, Henry felt obligated to make more concessions to his subjects, both lay and religious. He found the appropriate solution in the coronation charter. In fact, "The Coronation Charter" issued by Henry in 1100 marks a new development in the course of the medieval English coronation.

At the time of his coronation, Henry thought the existing coronation oath to be too narrow, considering the harm
done by his brother. He may especially have felt obliged to bend to his subjects' belief that it was too narrow. Marjorie Chibnall claims that the coronation charter written in 1100 was an expression of what customs seemed acceptable at the time, and indeed it was.\(^8\) In time the coronation charter became something of a tradition, for some of the future English sovereigns used his idea to appease the demands of their subjects. For example, Stephen felt it best to issue one, following his uncle's example, at the time of his coronation in 1135. Later King John too utilized Henry's example in drawing up the Magna Carta. The coronation charter issued in 1100 is an impressive work which not only served as a precedent for future coronations but also had a considerable effect on Henry's reign and his acceptance by the Church and the laity.

This famous charter well describes feudal relationships. Most likely this document, which seems to be asking for support, was eventually circulated to every shire. In this document Henry makes promises which he hopes will be acceptable to a variety of his subjects, especially the baronage.

In the charter Henry first asserts:

> Know that by the mercy of God and by the common counsel of the barons of the whole kingdom of England I have been crowned king of this realm.

He continues, saying,
And because the kingdom has been oppressed by unjust exactions, I now, being moved by reverence towards God and by the love I bear you all, make free the Church of God; so that I will neither sell nor lease its property; nor on the death of an archbishop or a bishop or an abbot will I take anything from the demesne of the Church or from its vassals during the period which elapses before a successor is installed. I abolish all the evil customs by which the kingdom of England has been unjustly oppressed.10

Thus, in his opening remarks, Henry makes sweeping statements, eliminating all the unfair laws of his brother.

The particulars of Henry's charter deal with a large cross section of the population. Not only does he make concessions to the Church and lay magnates, but he also somewhat grants privileges to the commoners. For example, Henry asserts,

I forgive all pleas and all debts which were owing to my brother, except my own proper dues, and except those things which were agreed to belong to the inheritance of others, or to concern the property which justly belonged to others.11

In one of his last promises, he states, "I restore to you the law of King Edward together with such emendations to it as my father made with the counsel of his barons."12

From these illustrations one can see the point behind the document.

The importance of the charter was of such magnitude that chroniclers of the time felt compelled to comment on it in their works. Florence of Winchester writes that the sovereign
...on his day of consecration made free the church of God, which in his brother's time had been sold and let out at farm, abolished all evil customs and unjust exactions by which the realm of England was wrongfully oppressed; established firm peace throughout the kingdom, and restored to all the laws of King Edward with such emendations as his father had made, but retained in his own hand the forests that his father had established.¹³

William of Malmesbury also records these ns. Without a doubt, "The Coronation Charter" of Henry I was a novel development in the history of the English coronation.

Many modern historians have claimed that the charter was a necessary extension of the coronation oath. P. E. Schramm recognizes that

...like the oath itself, the charter proceeded on the general idea that the King was under the law, and that a mutual bond was contracted between him and his people. A charter of this sort, therefore, was not in itself a diminutio capitis, but it could become such if individual clauses were put into it limiting the King to a greater extent than was in accordance with tradition.¹⁴

In fact, the promises made in this charter did not really limit Henry at all. Chibnall reiterates the significance of this charter for Henry's coronation.

...Promises had to be given to secure the crown, but the implementation of the promises would depend on keeping a balance between the reasonable demands of the great vassals and churchmen, and the king's customary rights. Prudence, not cynicism, was his guiding principle.¹⁵
But Chibnall also points out that while these promises were necessary for the coronation, the charter had a negligible place in the political thinking of Henry I's reign.\textsuperscript{16}

Chibnall explains this remark, noting,

\begin{quote}
It was not that the king cynically disregarded it [the charter], or gave thought to wringing a legal justification out of the obscure wording of the hastily drafted clauses. The charter had simply, for the time being, ceased to be relevant to the needs of government and to keeping the peace and dispensing justice.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

In any case, the coronation charter of 1100 does reflect a significant change in government, and historians, both past and present, praise it for its attempts to rectify the abuses of Rufus.

Like the coronations of Edgar and William the Conqueror, Henry's inauguration ceremony reflected his particular situation and his needs. Because Henry I was not specifically named as William Rufus' successor, he may have felt obligated to gain the approval of the Church and the magnates. In addition, the charter drawn up for Henry's coronation shows the movement towards a more highly developed feudal society. While the concessions granted throw a great deal of light on the time, they also foreshadow the near future of England. Schramm suggests.

\begin{quote}
The charter shows how the fundamental laws become definite. Not only is the King under the law, but he recognizes that a certain legal conception which has come down from the past is valid.
\end{quote}
Moreover, in confirming the duty towards the people, the King takes his stand not only on the three praecepta, but also on quite a number of general and particular rites. These praecepta are the promise of the Church and people to keep the peace, the promise of the King to be merciful and the forbiddance of rapacity or inquity on the part of any one. Although the impact of Henry's charter is often overemphasized, the coronation of Henry I made strides towards a government which depended on the king, but the Church and the people respectively. During Henry's reign the royal household was transformed into a governmental bureaucracy, and a number of new offices were created.

Beside its contribution to the growth of government, the coronation charter may have established the ground for the investiture struggle between Henry I and the Church. Chibnall states,

Throughout his reign Henry exercised the regalian right, customary in western Europe, of administering the estates of vacant abbeys and bishoprics, and appropriating the profits. Probably the vague wording of the coronation charter never implied a renunciation of that right.

Moreover, the dual role of bishops and abbots—secular and spiritual—exacerbated the problem. This dispute made a perceptible gap between the Continent and England, and the struggle was not solved until a compromise was reached. Henry relinquished to the Church the visible act of
investiture, but by doing so he secured real influence for himself. 21

In the end, the coronation service of Henry I was a glorious occasion. Not only was it a reaction to the past, but it was a symbol of the future. In Henry England found renewed hope, and he greatly fulfilled the country's expectations. Although the coronation ritual remained unchanged, the ceremony took on new meaning. If ever the coronation symbolized a new beginning, the inauguration of Henry I seem to assure the English of such a possibility.
Chapter Seven

THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD II (1308 A.D.)

In 1308 Edward II succeeded to the English throne, facing a myriad of problems left to him by his father. Outwardly, the young Edward had the qualities requisite for a good ruler. But soon after his coronation Edgar found himself in a precarious position. During his reign the barons asserted themselves, creating new constitutional growth in government. The coronation service may have provided the necessary material for the lay magnates to seize control. Moreover, the event of the coronation in 1308, which is notable for a number of new developments in the medieval ceremony, also foreshadowed the failure of Edward II as a king to some extent.

Although Edward proved to be a miserable ruler, he had many good qualities in his favor as a young man. He was physically strong and quite handsome. He had also had the training and counsel of excellent tutors, and he had had an earlier preview of state-affairs as prince-regent. Moreover, he was interested in art, music and architecture. Harold T. Hutchinson, author of Edward II, The Pliant King, adds that Edward's regard for the Church was "...sincere to the point of enthusiasm." Finally, Edward had previous experience in battle in which he had fared quite well.
Hence, on the surface Edward II appeared to be a capable successor.

Nevertheless, Edward, like King John, was not a popular king, and this fact is recognizable even at his coronation. As a king, he lacked the great abilities of his father although he possessed the Plantagenet temper. Hutchison also asserts that Edward's "...addiction to humble crafts and rural sports was...unorthodox and less respected." But what bothered the barons the most was Edward's reliance on a series of young men during his reign. His control over the royal bureaucracy was also often questioned.

The legacy bequeathed to Edward was not a pleasing one. Hutchison writes that he inherited a kingdom whose exchequer was heavily in debt, whose resources and manpower had been strained by warfare in Wales, Flanders, Gascony and Scotland, and whose revenues were in pawn to the Frescobaldi and the Bardi, hated moneylenders of Florence.

Moreover, he adds,

The English baronage held to a tradition of oligarchic privilege which had several times in the previous hundred years humbled the monarchy, and which, in spite of what later hindsight has discerned, paid little heed to new political forces emerging from below.

In addition to these problems, at the very moment of Edward's accession to the throne another expedition was preparing to leave for Scotland to put down the forceful rebellion of the usurper, Robert Bruce. Thus, Edward's heritage was not
a favorable one, and the innovations in the coronation ritual somewhat attest to this fact.

The circumstances surrounding Edward's coronation also aroused speculation and unrest. The ceremony was postponed for a week, a move which was probably explained at the time. But historians today are unsure of the reasons. Historian May McKisack, who wrote volume III of *The Oxford History of England*, contends,

Some historians, following the St. Paul's annalist, believe that the postponement of the ceremony...was a consequence of baronial exasperation and that Edward had to promise to dismiss Caveston [a favorite of Edward's] and to concede a number of other demands before the magnates would allow him to be crowned. But this version of events is peculiar to one chronicle and it seems almost certain that the true reason for postponement was Edward's desire to have himself crowned by Winchelsey.5

In fact, it seems that there was nothing at all sinister about the delay. The new king, who was all for appeasement, did bring back Winchelsey, whom Edward I had exiled. Because of a misunderstanding about the prelate's situation and who would officiate at the inauguration service, the ceremony had to be postponed. In the end, Winchelsey was too ill, so the bishop of Winchester, Henry Woodlock, presided. This delay was unfortunate, for it created dissension before Edward was even crowned.

The preparations for Edward's coronation began as early as October 1307 although the ceremony was not held until 1308.
H. G. Richardson, author of "The English Coronation Oath," suggests that the first signs of preparation for this inauguration are in the writs summoning the parliament which met in October 1307. He writes, "These writs...set out as the principal subjects for consideration the burial of Edward I and the king's marriage and coronation." Thus, the parliament had plenty of time to work out the details of the accession.

The essential elements of a medieval English coronation established by St. Dunstan were all present in the ceremony in 1308, and the coronation was a spectacular event. The oath, the anointing, the investiture, the enthronement and the like were all included. In fact, the coronation ritual reached a peak in its development.

Furthermore, Harold Hutchinson recognizes that not only the clergy and the baronage assembled for the service, but also "suitable" representatives of boroughs, shires and cities were in attendance. The ceremony has grown to include a larger number of people. No longer is it attended only by members of the Church and lay magnates.

There was, however, a particular problem which greatly bothered the people in power. Hutchison contends, "The lavish ceremonies could not disguise the fact that the 'community of the realm' was face to face with the problem of the king's wanton affection for and extravagant patronage of Peter of Gaveston." Indeed, the role of Gaveston caused considerable
Some distinguished French visitors to the coronation observed that Edward preferred the couch of Peter to that of his queen, and all men resented the fact that there were now two kings in England, one in name and the other in effect.  

Furthermore, 

To the general indignation, the crown and the sword of St. Edward were carried before the king in the procession by the earl of Cornwall [Gaveston]. And a normally joyous occasion...was marred by the collapse of a wall which killed one of the attendant knights, and by the fact that at the coronation banquet the earl of Cornwall had the effrontery to wear royal purple instead of cloth of gold.

Thus, it seems that concern was voiced as early as the coronation ceremony. But H. G. Richardson claims that chroniclers who testify that harsh words and criticisms were voiced at Edward's coronation, "...are reading their history backwards."  

As for the developments in the coronation service, there were three of particular interest in 1308. First a new coronation order replaced the "Anselm" order which had been the accepted standard for many years. Moreover, there were significant developments in the oath itself. Finally, Edward II used the vernacular when he took his oath. This in itself was unusual.

People had been satisfied with the "Anselm" ordo for nearly two hundred years before Edward came to the throne.
The "Anse!.." ordo had been written in the late eleventh century or the early twelfth century, but it was probably not used until the inauguration of Henry II. The new rite established in 1308 used the "Anselm" ordo as its model. But it attempted to beautify and enrich the ceremony. P. E. Schramm suggests that it was more English than the "Anselm" ordo of the Normans. 13 He also writes, "On the liturgical side the ordo of 1308 is built up on tradition: there is no breach in continuity," but "there are changes in detail." 14 As government is growing more mature and secure, men trained under Edward I

...could never be satisfied to continue to use a text like the "Anselm" ordo: they require that the new record shall be more carefully preserved, so that at the next coronation they may not have to rely on oral tradition or clerical arguments.15

In other words, men involved in government wanted assurances that the king would not change his intention. Nevertheless, the only additions to the new coronation order were special prayers and blessings on the sword, the ring and the royal robes.

As already mentioned, the most significant development was the expansion of the coronation oath. Henry I chose to issue a coronation charter. But a revised coronation oath more perfectly suited the needs of Edward II. Usually a king bound himself to the people of his realm by a threefold promise. In this promise a king vowed to preserve peace
and protect the Church, to maintain good laws and abolish bad and to dispense justice to all. To this oath the creators of the new oath added a fourth promise. Schramm points out that

...the important principle to be recognized is that the king's oath by 1308 was not unilateral but reciprocal. The oath of allegiance taken by the nobles at the coronation service gave them duties which were the counterpart of the king's responsibilities. This means that the new oath reflected existing changes in the constitutional development of England.

A few historians note that Edward I had also added to the traditional oath. He vowed to protect the rights of kingship and the crown. H. G. Richardson suggests that those who opposed Edward I asserted that this additional promise was a weapon used to assert the king's rights and limit the power of the prelates. This additional promise may have suggested the possibility of altering the oath again in 1308.

The situation in which Edward found himself in 1308 demanded notice, and the oath was the appropriate answer. The oath provided the easiest way to include additional promises in the inaugural ceremony. In order to create a policy of conciliation, Edward was forced to concede the most. The magnates too could not forget that over the past ten years the pope had annulled all measures which had been contrived to protect and secure respect for their charters.
and that the new king was "...as free from obligations as
his father." Because parliament met in 1307 to discuss
the coronation and the ceremony was not rushed, it seems
safe to assume that the new oath was discussed and settled
upon by the king and his council. The "Liber Regalis" is
one of the first primary sources which provides evidence
that the coronation oath of 1308 was not hastily drawn up.
It also includes the Latin form of the French oath which
Edward took at his inauguration.

The fourth promise asserted that the king would observe
the laws and the rightful traditions and customs chosen by
the people of his realm. In particular it was the phrase
"which the community of your realm shall determine" which
caused controversy. It seems that parliament was pushing
for control of the offices of state and in the affairs of
the realm. But how did the community decide? Most historians
acknowledge that the wording of the vow was ambiguous.

H. G. Richardson recognizes,

...Even in the fourteenth century there
seem to have been two opinions, as there
have been since, as to whether these words
referred to the past only or to the future
as well.20

Considering this confusion, debate could not be avoided.
In fact, this dilemma caused immediate problems and remained
unsolved for hundreds of years.

Historian H. G. Richardson sums up the elements of the
new rite.
...The second and third interrogations veil with many words the simple demand, as it would seem, that the king shall pursue peace and justice. The first and fourth appear to resolve themselves into a demand for a guarantee that the charters [drawn up by the magnates] would be observed, and for a guarantee that those agreed corrections or amplifications of the law shall be observed which the commonality have demanded or willingly accepted.  

Most likely Edward II acknowledged the idea that the coronation oath bound him to maintain and protect the legislation of his people. However,

Whatever may have been the intentions of those who framed the additional promise, the king [Edward II] found in it a meaning that made it a two-edged weapon to be used either against papal claims or against the claims of the baronage.  

Thus, the coronation oath may well have been purposely vague.

Yet another controversy relating to the coronation of Edward was the fact that Edward took his oath in French. Some felt that since the king spoke in the vernacular rather than in Latin, he was an illiterate man. Harold Hutchison writes that "It is now believed that he spoke in French simply because he wished his audience to understand what he was saying--for Edward, and for most of those in the Abbey, French was their mother tongue." Moreover, this may reflect the fact that French was becoming the language of government at that time. Indeed, the vernacular oath was no novelty; and even if Edward had not been instructed in Latin he could easily have memorized the few necessary words.
Hence, most likely the king and his council had settled on the use of French prior to the service.

With the use of a new ordo and a newly developed coronation oath, the coronation of Edward II set yet another precedent in medieval England. The oath in particular was the most significant outcome of Edward's council's efforts. Walter Ullmann states that the new clause "...embodied the ideological and consequently constitutional development... since the Magna Carta." While the laity finally found a lasting place in the coronation ritual, the ecclesiastics still retained the position assured to them in 973. The oath in the form developed for Edward's coronation was administered virtually unchanged to successive kings throughout the Middle Ages until it had to be recast in 1689.

Upon Edward's accession the medieval English coronation reached its peak of development. Although Edward II was in an insecure position from the start, he presented an elaborate and well thought out inaugural ceremony. Borrowing from his medieval predecessors, Edward and his council created a service reflecting the English traditions while meeting the needs of the time. Unfortunately for Edward, the fact that the oath was ambiguous hurt his reign. The baronage, on the other hand, took this opportunity to assert themselves. Thus, the laity played a more formidable role in government while Edward's authority was suppressed as a result of his inadequacies as king.
Once again, the coronation of a sovereign reflected the times and the needs of those involved. It established new standards and created new traditions. But most of all it marked the final medieval metamorphosis in the development of a highly elaborate and uniquely English coronation ritual.
CONCLUSION

The history of the medieval English coronation ritual is a fascinating one. While the English borrowed elements of the ceremony from Continental examples, they aptly constructed a ceremony uniquely their own. From the age of King Edgar to the time of Edward II, the ritual became more elaborate and more influential. While a sovereign’s coronation reflected qualities unique to that ruler’s reign, an overall view of the coronation shows the development of England into a society which relied on the ruler, the clergy, and the laity alike.

During Edgar’s reign the Church assumed the most important role in the development of the English coronation. Stressing his divine connections, Edgar and Archbishop Dunstan created an elaborate religious ceremony borrowing from Continental models. The ecclesiastics were essential for working out the details of the ritual, and they found a permanent place in the inauguration of the king. For the first time a highly developed ritual complete with the oath, the anointing, the investiture, the enthronement and the like appeared in England. For many years the innovations of Edgar’s time would set the precedent for royal coronations.

Under William the Conqueror few changes were made in the ritual, but the election became an important part of the
ceremony. As a foreigner claiming the English throne, William found it necessary to gain the approval of the lay magnates and the prelates. During his reign the laity, although not the common people, began to assume a more significant part in the coronation. William also added some Norman traditions to the English standard by introducing such elements as the laudes into the celebration. In all, the coronation of William in 1066 marked the beginning of a new rule in England, as well as the movement towards a more feudal society.

Under the rule of Henry I another new addition was made to the coronation. In an effort to make amends for the actions of William Rufus, Henry issued the first coronation charter. A document which seemed to be asking for support, the charter well describes feudal relationships. Again few actual changes in ritual occurred, but the creation of a coronation charter illustrated the fact that the lay magnates are very important to the king. This ceremony offered renewed hope to the English realm.

With the accession of Edward II, the medieval coronation ceremony reached its peak of development. In particular, with the addition of an elaborated coronation oath, one can see indications of constitutional development in England. Parliament and the lay magnates were demanding more control in government, and the king was forced to oblige. The coronation ordo drawn up in 1308 not only reflected the
particular qualities of Edward's reign, but it also marked the final medieval change in the creation of a uniquely English ritual.

From Edgar to Edward II the coronation ritual became more detailed and perfected. It is difficult to sum up the significance of its development, for it affected the religious, political, social and economic elements of the English realm. Nevertheless, it would be safe to say that the development of the coronation mirrored the prevailing circumstances of the time. It reveals the shift from a theocratic kingship to a feudal society. It also illustrates the constitutional developments which followed. A spectacular and awe-inspiring ceremony, the medieval coronation of a sovereign came to reflect the English people as well as the tradition and trend of their society—a society which depended on ruler, clergy and laity alike.
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4Myers, p. 2.

5Myers, p. 13.


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8Schramm, p. 28.

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14 Schramm, pp. 76-77.

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