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The Self-Coronation of Peter the Ceremonious (1336): Historical, Liturgical, and Iconographical Representations

By Jaume Aurell and Marta Serrano-Coll

Everything was ready for the solemn rite of the anointing and crowning of Peter IV of Aragon (1336–87). The ceremony was set for 14 April 1336 in Zaragoza’s San Salvador Cathedral. The celebrant was to be the archbishop of Zaragoza, Pedro López de Luna y Ximénez de Urrea (1318–45), to whom the honor fell as metropolitan of the kingdom’s capital. However, that spring morning there was a heated discussion in the vestry shortly before the start of proceedings. The king and the archbishop could not agree on who should place the crown on the new monarch’s head. As a result the liturgy was delayed, to the consternation of the assembled throng packing Zaragoza Cathedral.

The ceremony had two essential elements: unction and coronation. The king had no objection to letting the archbishop take the lead in administering the unction, considered a sacrament and proper to the spiritual and sacred sphere. But he demanded that the archbishop desist in his desire also to be involved at the moment of coronation, which belonged to the temporal sphere. The king wanted to crown himself and thus to replicate his father Alphonse IV’s gesture at his coronation eight years before in the same place, putting the crown on his own head without the aid of the officiating bishops. For all the archbishop’s insistence, the king vigorously refused his requests. At sixteen years of age, the king was having to face his first real test, a foretaste of how complex his reign would be. And in the event, it was King Peter who solemnly and ceremoniously placed the crown on his own head.

What historical significance can such a simple gesture have? In recent decades, historians and anthropologists have emphasized the art of interpreting the many meanings of a single rhetorical figure or symbolic event. This tendency has been closely associated with the concept of “thick description,” originating in symbolic anthropology but which has also had adherents among historians.¹ All events, but especially political gestures carrying a strong symbolic charge,

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¹ For the concept of “thick description” see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30.

are capable of generating multiple meanings, in some cases even contradictory ones.

The dramatic import of King Peter's self-coronation leaves us in no doubt as to its significance as a symbolically charged political gesture and makes it worthy of precise analysis. The king and the archbishop were fully aware of the scope, meaning, and effects of this variation to the coronation rite, which is why their argument in the vestry was so heated. Furthermore, the importance of King Peter's gesture is not determined by its exceptional nature (he probably imitated his father Alphonse IV of Aragon [1328] and Alphonse XI of Castile [1332]) but by its normative capacity in consolidating a tradition for the future. Although Peter's self-coronation still deserves more specific attention, the Aragonese royal ordinations and coronations have already been analyzed by scholars.² Some historians and literary critics have also highlighted Peter's singular ability to strengthen his authority by many different means, such as the king's moral energy in contrast with his corporal weakness and his particular and conscious use of writing to increase the administrative efficiency of his extensive kingdom.³ Considering these scholarly precedents, our specific contribution is about Peter's role in the design of a historiographical, liturgical, and iconographic program in order to provide the ceremony of self-coronation with long endurance. Thus, we argue that these representations commissioned by King Peter emerge as a means of continuity and future consolidation of his own political and cultural foundations.

This article aims to analyze three of the strategies implemented by King Peter to ensure that his self-coronation would not remain an isolated gesture but would come to form part of a tradition: the creation of a historical account that would serve as the primary version of the event, through writing his autobiography; the setting of the coronation ceremony rites through elaborating a new ceremonial; and the propagation of an iconographic tradition through images of the king himself—decked out with royal insignia—in miniatures, seals, and coins, above

² Bonifacio Palacios Martín, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón, 1204–1410: Aportación al estudio de las estructuras medievales* (Valencia: Anubar, 1975); Bonifacio Palacios Martín, "El ceremonial," in Vicente de Vera, ed., *Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón, 2: Transcripción y estudios* (Zaragoza: Centro de Documentación Bibliográfica Aragonesa, 1992), 105–33; Ricardo Centellas Salameo, "Pedro IV: Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón," in *Aragón: De reino a comunidad. Diez siglos de encuentros* (Zaragoza: Cortes de Aragón, Servicio Publicaciones, 2001), 190–91; Juan Antonio Yeves Andrés, "De la unción a la coronación: Ceremonial de la consagración y coronación de los reyes y reinas de Aragón," in Isidoro G. Bango Torviso, ed., *Maravillas de la España medieval: Tesoro sagrado y monarquía, 1: Estudios y catálogo* (León: Junta de Castilla y León, 2000), 95–96; Olga Pérez Monzón, "De la unción a la coronación: Libro de la coronación de los reyes de Castilla y Aragón," in Bango, *Maravillas de la España medieval*, 97–98; Olga Pérez Monzón, "Ceremonias regias en la Castilla medieval: A propósito del llamado *Libro de la coronación de los reyes de Castilla y Aragón*," *Archivo español de arte* 83 (2010): 317–34; Percy Ernst Schramm, "Der König von Aragon: Seine Stellung in Stadtsrecht (1276–1410)," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 74 (1955): 99–123.

³ Ramon d'Abadal, *Pere el Cerimoniós i els inicis de la decadència política de Catalunya*, Llibres a l'Abast 95 (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1987); Francisco M. Gimeno Blay, *Escribir, reinar: La experiencia gráfico-textual de Pedro IV el Ceremonioso (1336–1387)* (Madrid: Abada, 2006); Josep Bracóns Clapés, "Operibus monumentorum que fieri facere ordinamus: L'escultura al servei del Cerimoniós," in *Pere el Cerimoniós i la seva època*, Anuario de Estudios Medievales, annex 24 (Barcelona: C.S.I.C., 1989), 209–43.

all, in the gesture of the auto-coronation. Historiography, liturgy, and iconography were put into play by the king to perpetuate the memory of his self-coronation and thus ensure, through repetition, its transformation from an isolated event into a consolidated practice and part of inherited tradition.

MEDIEVAL SELF-CORONATIONS: THE POWER OF A GESTURE

The exercise of power demands symbolic practices. Historians and anthropologists agree on the value of rites and ceremonies as tools to strengthen images of dignity and supremacy for medieval and early-modern European monarchies.⁴ Coronation ceremonies have become a privileged field for understanding medieval symbols and politics because they served as an opportunity to emphasize the king's authority, the nature of that power and authority, the use of political symbols, the relationship between the king, nobles, and prelates, and the sacred idea of monarchy.⁵

⁴ Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 54; Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in Joseph Ben-David and Terry Nichols Clark, eds., *Culture and Its Creators: Essays in Honor of Edward Shils* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 150–71. For the cultural and political power of rituals see Sean Wilentz, ed., *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). David Cannadine, "Introduction: The Divine Rite of Kings," in David Cannadine and Simon Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1–19, describes the connections between history and anthropology in relation to these ceremonies.

⁵ For an excellent bibliographical comment on medieval coronations see János M. Bak, "Introduction: Coronation Studies—Past, Present, and Future," in Bak, ed., *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1–15. For a general context of the symbols of kingship based on a study of coronations see Percy Ernst Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, trans. Leopold G. Wickham Legg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), and Jean-Pierre Bayard, *Sacres et couronnements royaux* (Paris: Guy Trédaniel, 1984); for connections with political and legal theory see Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London: Methuen, 1969); for the political theology and the overall reception of the medieval state see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). For a more specific analysis of English coronations, which we have used to compare with Aragonese ones, see Roy Strong, *Coronation: A History of Kingship and the British Monarchy* (London: HarperCollins, 2005); H. G. Richardson, "The Coronation in Medieval England: The Evolution of the Office and the Oath," *Traditio* 16 (1960): 111–202; Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "Inalienability: A Note on Canonical Practice and the English Coronation Oath in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 29 (1954): 488–502; P. L. Ward, "The Coronation Ceremony in Mediaeval England," *Speculum* 14 (1939): 160–78; and Eloisa Ramírez Vaquero, ed., *Ceremonial de la coronación, unción y exequias de los reyes de Inglaterra*, 2 vols. (Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2008); for French coronations see Richard A. Jackson, *Vive le Roi! A History of the French Coronation from Charles V to Charles X* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). For the analysis of the long-term continuity of the political symbols see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "Oriens Augusti—Lever du roi," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 117–77; Percy Ernst Schramm, *Der König von Frankreich: Das Wesen der Monarchie vom 9. zum 16. Jahrhundert. Ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte des abendländischen Staates*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1960); and Jacques Le Goff, Eric Palazzo, Jean-Claude Bonne, and Marie-Noël Colette,

The coronation ceremony is the supreme moment in the association between the temporal and the spiritual, and the power of symbols naturally emerges in connection with it.⁶ The anointing with oil, based on the priestly anointing of the kings of Israel, affirms the king's supernatural election and confirms his royal duty as mediator between God and his people. The medieval king is therefore viewed as human by nature and divine by grace, as was always certified at the beginning of royal documents.⁷ In analogy with his role as mediator between God and man, the king is to mediate between the clergy and the people, for the king, who in some respects also belongs to the clergy, bears the image of Christ in his name as the *Christus Domini*.⁸

The coronation implies that the person being crowned is the legitimate successor of the last king. The words and gestures included in the coronation ceremony (its form) validate what is communicated (its content). Louis Marin argues that "the power-effect of representation is representation itself": the king is really a king in his images, both visual and narrative.⁹ The coronation ceremony is more effective as performance than as argument. It gives cultural legitimacy to the practice it represents.

There were few instances of self-coronation in medieval Europe. The most impressive precedent is King Frederick II's self-coronation in Jerusalem in 1229. The excommunicated king desired to connect his *potestas* directly to God, without the mediation of the church, and he placed the crown upon his head in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the most sacred space of all Christianity.¹⁰ Frederick's affection for Sicily reflects the great political influence of the island, based on the strong personality of its twelfth-century kings, especially Roger II.¹¹ After 1282, the Kingdom of Sicily was incorporated into the Crown of Aragon, so that the custom of using political symbols and rituals from Roger II to Frederick II greatly influenced later Aragonese kings. The incorporation of Sicily into the Crown of Aragon was an event of great consequence for the direction and rate of change in the Catalan-Aragonese court and its political thought and practice—and also

Le sacre royal à l'époque de Saint Louis d'après le manuscrit latin 1246 de la BNF (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

⁶ Ermoldus Nigellus argued for the transcendence of gesture because it meant that what would require many written words could be represented and made manifest in an instant. For Ermoldus see the introduction by Edmond Faral, *Poème sur Louis le Pieux et épîtres au roi Pépin*, *Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Âge* 14 (Paris: H. Champion, 1964), v–xiii.

⁷ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 87–88.

⁸ See Suzanne F. Cawsey, *Kingship and Propaganda: Royal Eloquence and the Crown of Aragon, c. 1200–1450* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), esp. chap. 4, "Usurpant officia sacerdotii: Royal Sermons," 52–72.

⁹ Louis Marin, *Le portrait du roi* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1981).

¹⁰ The circumstances, meaning, and consequences of Frederick's self-coronation are analyzed in Hans Eberhard Mayer, "Das Pontifikale von Tyrus und die Krönung der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Forschung über Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967): 141–232; and Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *L'empereur Frédéric II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 187–98.

¹¹ Helene Wieruszowski, "Roger II of Sicily, *Rex-Tyrannus*, in Twelfth-Century Political Thought," *Speculum* 38 (1963): 46–78.

at an artistic level, since the royal Pantheon in Santes Creus has to be understood as a reference to the Hohenstaufen one in Palermo.¹²

Nevertheless, Frederick II's self-coronation was performed in Jerusalem rather than in Sicily, and this would lessen its eventual influence on Peter's self-coronation. Thus, more interestingly because of his chronological and spatial proximity to the Crown of Aragon, Alphonse XI (1312–59) also performed the same ceremony in neighboring Castile.¹³ His self-coronation in 1332 was the culmination of a complex ritual that began with his journey to the Monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos to receive the sacred oil, continued with his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela to be knighted by the mechanical arm of the sculpture of the apostle and patron saint of Spain, and ended with his return to Burgos for the actual ceremony. Only then did the king sit on the throne, take the royal diadem, and place it on his head.¹⁴ When he crowned himself, Alphonse XI broke with tradition and strayed from the *Ordo*. Alphonse XI's chroniclers relate the story thus: "The king ascended to the altar alone, and took his crown, which was made of gold with stones of very great price, and placed it on his head; and he took the other crown, and placed it on the queen, and knelt again in front of the altar."¹⁵

In the Iberian Peninsula of the fourteenth century, the aspiration to reaffirm the autonomy of the kings against the church was enacted through the manipulation of the symbols and rites of coronation. Certainly, the ceremony of self-coronation remains a religious and sacred liturgy, which must be located in the context of the whole ceremony of the king's installation and unction. Yet the fact

¹² Marta VanLandingham, *Transforming the State: King, Court and Political Culture in the Realms of Aragon (1213–1387)*, *The Medieval Mediterranean* 43 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 9. See also Barry Charles Rosenmann, "The Royal Tombs in the Monastery of Santes Creus" (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1991).

¹³ For the coronation of the kings of Castile see Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, "Un ceremonial inédito de coronación de los reyes de Castilla," in *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*, *Historia General* 5 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1965), 739–63; and Luis García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia de las instituciones españolas* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1968), 430–32. For a general view of the ideological conception of the Iberian monarchy see José Antonio Maravall, "Sobre el concepto de monarquía en la edad media española," in *Estudios dedicados a Menéndez Pidal*, 5 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1954), 401–17; Francisco Elías de Tejada, *Historia del pensamiento político catalán*, 1: *La Cataluña clásica (987–1479)* (Seville: Ediciones Montejuorra, 1963); and, more recently, José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza: Propaganda y legitimación en la Castilla Trastámara* (Madrid: Nerea, 1993); and José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos del poder real en Castilla (siglos XIII–XVI)* (Madrid: EUDEMA, 1988).

¹⁴ Teófilo F. Ruiz, "Une royauté sans sacre: La monarchie castillane du bas moyen âge," *Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 39 (1984): 429. Ruiz explores this story as the singular manifestation of the Castilian "royauté sans sacre," which does not claim the healing character of French and English kings or the backing of the church in the coronation ceremony. See also Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges: Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: A. Colin, 1961).

¹⁵ "El Rey subió al altar solo, et tomó la su corona, que era de oro con piedras de muy grand prescio, et púsola en la cabeza; et tomó la otra corona, et púsola a la Reyna, et tornó fincar los hijos ante el altar": *Cronica de D. Alfonso el Onceno de este nombre: De los reyes que reynaron en Castilla y en Leon*, 2nd ed., *Colección de Crónicas de Castilla* 7 (Madrid: Impr. de A. de Sancha, 1787), chap. 100.

that the ceremony is directly officiated by the king, not the archbishop, increases the sense of the king's autonomy regarding the ecclesiastical sphere, and this is one of the central points that we argue in this article. Indeed, the Iberian kings' reluctance to be anointed and crowned was well known at that time outside the peninsula. John of Paris, in his defense of antihierocratism, declared that kings were kings even without unction and that in many Christian countries, such as Hispania, the anointing of kings was not practiced at all.¹⁶ Indeed, Portugal never crowned its kings, and Navarre introduced coronation and unction only after 1257.¹⁷ Castile abandoned its coronation ritual in 1157, taking it up again later, though only in isolated cases.¹⁸ Aragon introduced the ceremony only in 1204, and, after some interruptions to the practice, it became a self-coronation in 1328 with Alphonse the Benign.¹⁹ Yet, paradoxically, Iberia was the place where the practice originated—or, more correctly, was adapted from biblical Israel—with the custom of the royal unction being developed under the Visigoths and from there transmitted to the French and Anglo-Saxon monarchies and to the Byzantine Empire.²⁰

Medieval political authority was guaranteed by the legitimacy of the monarchy, with the king as the sacred center, and the cultural frame of his authority was firmly fixed in a long-standing notion of hierarchical order.²¹ To be sure, as some authors have argued, Iberian kings are distinct for being nonsacral not only because they did not cure by touch or produce relics but also because of their tendency to find symbolic and political spaces of sovereignty. Nevertheless, as we argue in this article, the relevance of Peter's self-coronation (and his unequivocal aspiration in providing this gesture with permanency and endurance) lies in his desire to release himself from ecclesiastical influence in the quest for a more

¹⁶ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 326, who quotes John of Paris, *De potestate* 18 ("ut patet in regibus Hispanorum"). Kantorowicz attributes the new practice of auto-coronation to King Peter III of Aragon, although in reality it was King Alphonse IV who introduced it. This mistake, repeated by other historians, had its origin in Schramm, who confused King Peter III the Great (1276–85) with Peter IV the Ceremonious—who came after Alphonse IV. The mistake is understandable since there are different numerations depending on whether the kings are considered just as "kings of Aragon" or under their original title as "counts of Barcelona."

¹⁷ Peter Linehan, "Utrum reges Portugalie coronabantur annon," in *2º Congresso histórico de Guimarães: Actas do Congresso, 2: A política portuguesa e as suas relações exteriores* (Guimarães: Câmara Municipal de Guimarães, 1996), 389–410; Mercedes Osés, "El ritual de la realeza navarra en los siglos XIV y XV: Coronaciones y funerales," in *Ceremonial de la coronación*, 2:305–21.

¹⁸ The royal coronations and unction in Castile have been extensively analyzed by Peter Linehan in *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and in "The Accession of Alfonso X (1252) and the Origins of the War of the Spanish Succession," in Derek W. Lomax and David Mackenzie, eds., *God and Man in Medieval Spain: Essays in Honour of J. R. L. Highfield* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1989), 59–79, at 60–61.

¹⁹ A very useful general retrospective of Aragonese coronations is given in Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*.

²⁰ On the Visigothic origins of coronations see Thomas Deswarte, "Le Christ-roi: Autel et couronne votive dans l'Espagne wisigothique," in Bruno Béthouart and Jérôme Grévy, eds., *Églises et pouvoirs* (Boulogne-sur-Mer: Maison de la recherche en sciences humaines, 2007), 71–83.

²¹ In his classic work, *The King's Two Bodies*, Kantorowicz shows how central the king's body was to the monarchical cultural frame. See also Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, Selected Papers of Edward Shills 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

temporal royal authority. Besides, as he explicitly states in the *Ordo* he commissioned some years after the ceremony, his aim was to separate the “temporal” from the “spiritual” sphere. These are the key concepts we use in this article, rather than the level of “unsacralty” or “sacralty” of the king, which has already been studied and debated.²² Also, and very relevant for our argumentation, Peter kept the ceremony of unction alongside the coronation, in a clear message about the preservation of the sacred in the ceremony, since anointing is obviously more sacralizing than crowning.

Without denying the eventual influence of Iberian tradition, and the more distant influence of the Kingdom of Sicily, Peter the Ceremonious's gesture is the culmination of long Aragonese dynastic practice: his self-coronation and the writing of a new *Ordo* for the coronation conclude the cycle of coronations of the Aragonese kings. The first Aragonese king who was crowned, Peter the Catholic, went to Rome in 1204 to receive the diadem from Pope Innocent III, who also conferred upon him the scepter and received his homage. His son James the Conqueror steadfastly refused to be crowned by Pope Gregory X because he wanted to liberate the Kingdom of Aragon from servitude to Rome. As he confesses in his autobiographical *Llibre dels fets*, he preferred to return to his kingdom without the crown rather than have to pay homage to Rome.²³ His successor, Peter the Great, was the first Aragonese king crowned in Zaragoza, the capital of the kingdom; that was in 1276, in the presence of the principal nobles and citizens. Although he was crowned by the bishop, he instituted the autonomy of the ceremony, liberating it from Rome.²⁴ Peter the Great's successor, Alphonse the Liberal, introduced the oath in the coronation ceremony in Zaragoza in 1286 and, more interestingly, explicitly declared that, though he received the crown from the bishop, this did not imply political subordination to Rome.²⁵ James the Fair was not crowned officially, perhaps because he considered that his previous coronation as king of Sicily made a new ceremony unnecessary.²⁶

These disruptions in coronation practice show how inconvenient the ceremony was for Aragonese kings, because of their tense relationship with Rome, the question of Sicily, and the difficulties in balancing the several branches and multiple territories of the kingdom at that time. Thus, Alphonse the Benign restored the coronation ceremony in 1328 but introduced the original and daring practice of

²² Teófilo Ruiz has highlighted the unsacred tendency of peninsular monarchy (Ruiz, “Une royauté sans sacre”) as José Manuel Nieto has its sacralization (Nieto, “Origen divino, espíritu laico y poder real en la Castilla del siglo XIII,” *Anuario de estudios medievales* 27 [1997]: 43–100).

²³ James I of Aragon, *Llibre dels fets* 538, in Ferran Soldevila, ed., *Les quatre grans cròniques: Jaume I, Bernat Desclot, Ramon Muntaner, Pere III*, Biblioteca Perenne 26 (Barcelona: Selecta, 1971), 183. For an English translation see *The Book of Deeds of James I of Aragon: A Translation of the Medieval Catalan Llibre dels fets*, trans. Damian Smith and Helena Buffery, Crusade Texts in Translation 10 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

²⁴ The ceremony is described by Bernat Desclot in his chronicle (in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 460).

²⁵ “Non intendimus a vobis recipere tanquam ab Ecclesia romana, nec pro ipsa Ecclesia nec contra Ecclesiam”: Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 308. See also Francesc Carreras i Candi, “Itinerari del rey Anfós II (1285–1291), Lo Liberal,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de las Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 10 (1921–22): 61–83.

²⁶ Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 190–91.

self-coronation, repeated by his son Peter the Ceremonious (1336) and his grandsons John (1388) and Martin (1399).²⁷

The chronicler Ramon Muntaner ends his historical narrative with a meticulous account of Alphonse's coronation, which he witnessed. Before the start of the Mass, the king placed the crown and the sword on the high altar "with his *own* hands." The king was anointed with chrism on his right shoulder and arm by the archbishop of Zaragoza. At the end of the Mass, the king unsheathed his sword *himself* and placed it back on the altar, near the crown. Then they began a second Mass, and, after a long ceremony, at the moment of the coronation, "the lord king *himself* took the crown from the altar and placed it on his *own* head; and when he had done this, the lord archbishop of Toledo [the king's brother, who had celebrated the second Mass] and the Lord Infante en Pedro [also the king's brother] adjusted it for him."²⁸

Eight years later, in 1336, Peter the Ceremonious would observe similar rituals during his own coronation, but in a context of considerable tension and pressure. He would not even allow his crown to be adjusted by anyone after his coronation.

THE KING'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY: SETTING DOWN THE WRITTEN MEMORY

King Peter wanted to be master of the primary historical account of what had happened on the morning of his consecration and royal coronation. That is why he decided to include the story of his self-coronation in the autobiographical *Chronicle* that he worked on with his collaborators. His version of events, constructed with the help of his scribes, goes as follows:

After scrupulously observing the prescriptions for prayer, fasting, personal cleanliness, and choice of wardrobe in readiness for the occasion, the king set off for the cathedral vestry in good time. There he met the celebrant, Pedro López de Luna, and the long list of concelebrants, among them the bishops of Lérida, Tarazona, Santa Justa (Cerdeña), and many priors, canons, and various members of religious orders, as well as some knights, most notable among them Ot de Montcada, one of the king's advisers.

Just when the ceremony was due to begin, a loud argument started in the vestry itself between the king and archbishop. The archbishop asked the king to let him place the crown on his head at the moment of coronation. King Peter refused, as he planned to act in accordance with the custom initiated by his father, Alphonse IV, who had put the crown on his own head without the aid of the attendant bishops. In this heated discussion in the vestry, King Peter had the support of his adviser Ot de Montcada,

²⁷ Ibid., 269–76. See also Palacios, "El Ceremonial," 104–33. Palacios proves that Alphonse the Benign introduced this practice, in opposition to the wrong belief of Schramm and Kantorowicz (see n. 16 above).

²⁸ Ramon Muntaner uses a peculiar and rather unusual Catalan verb, "adobar," to emphasize that the gesture of putting the crown on his head was performed by the king himself and that his brothers only "adjusted it." The archbishop of Zaragoza did not touch the crown and was not one of the celebrants of the Mass (Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica* 297, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 939–40); interestingly, Peter uses exactly the same verb in the narration of his own coronation (*Crònica* 2.10–12, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1025–26), making it evident that he knew Muntaner's narration very well.

who made the case to the archbishop that the coronation of the monarch “at the hands of a prelate” would be prejudicial to the Crown. However, none of the other courtiers present opposed the archbishop, leaving the king to defend himself virtually unaided.

The king had to resist the metropolitan of Zaragoza, face down the suspicion of the other bishops and prelates, and overcome the apathy of his own advisers. Moreover, time was pressing: the people present in the nave of the cathedral began to grow impatient with the delay to the ceremony. All the same, he was resolved to withstand the archbishop’s demands.

In the face of the king’s categorical negative, the archbishop then decided to change strategy, begging him with great insistence that he at least allow him to adjust (*adobar*) or set straight the crown in full view of the people, after the king had put it on with his own hands. Pedro López de Luna had witnessed the same action eight years before, when Alphonse IV had allowed the celebrant of that coronation, his brother Juan, archbishop of Toledo, and his other two brothers, the princes Pedro and Ramon Berenguer, to adjust the crown once it had been put on by the king himself. Alphonse may not have wanted to do this, but in the event he let them adjust the crown because they were after all his brothers. In any case, the impact of the self-coronation was thus somewhat mitigated by the appearance of the archbishop immediately afterwards, as joint architect of the coronation.

With this new request the king met the opposition of even his own advisers, who tried to persuade him to give way. To add to matters, the archbishop reproached him for dishonoring the whole church with his arrogant attitude, and specifically the archbishopric of Zaragoza, as well as his own kingdom of Aragon. The king then decided to accede to the archbishop’s requests, driven above all by the cumulative delay. The procession finally set off for the church, where the ceremony began. But when the moment of coronation arrived, the king went up to the altar and put the crown on himself, forbidding the archbishop to touch it and setting it straight on his own head. The archbishop was disconcerted but went on with the Mass, feigning normality and solemnity, and fulfilling the remainder of the formalities.

Such is the version of events that appears in the second chapter of King Peter’s autobiographical chronicle, known as the *Llibre del rei en Pere* (*Book of King Peter*).²⁹ Peter recounts these events in his *Llibre* with the simplicity of truth but also with the pride of one who has performed in accordance with his dignity, overcoming adversity. The autonomy that emerges from Peter’s own historical representation runs parallel with the political sufficiency that emerges from his self-coronation, which is, in turn, perpetuated with the creation of a new iconography. The story demonstrates the power of ritual gestures and symbols and the control that King Peter exercised over them. It reveals his calculated mastery of the situation, even under pressure from his adversaries and his own advisers. At a time when royal succession was dynastic rather than elective—independent both of approval or consecration by the church and of election by the people—Peter the Ceremonious laid claim to the power of symbols.³⁰

²⁹ The account given here is our paraphrase and summary of the original: Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre del rei en Pere* 2.8–12, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1025–26. An English translation can be found in *Pere III of Catalonia (Pedro IV of Aragon), Chronicle*, trans. Mary Hillgarth, *Mediaeval Sources in Translation* 23–24 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 1:194–97.

³⁰ For the consolidation of late-medieval European dynastic monarchy over the sacred or elective see Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies*, 330.

This is, in fact, the only account that we have of the ceremony; and while it carries a heavily dramatic, subjective, and emotional charge, none of the external facts available to us casts any doubt on its historicity. There is little chronological distance between this first historical representation and the event itself. The detailed nature of the account and, above all, the minute description of the king's state of mind confirm the close relation between the historical event and its narration. The evidence also shows that King Peter was already working on the book of his own deeds ("librum gestarum nostrorum") and on other historical books that he had commissioned his secretaries to write around 1349, only thirteen years after his self-coronation.³¹ In any case, we know for certain that the king had finished writing the first three chapters in 1375 from a letter sent to Bernat Descoll, one of his collaborators in writing the chronicle.³² Besides, the king's meticulous working method, personally elaborating the drafts that his secretaries passed on to him for the final wording of the finished manuscripts, suggests that the writing of the chronicle had begun many years before.³³

In the chronicle of his reign, the king was very concerned specifically to highlight the moment of self-coronation. He does not even refer in his account to the other rites in the long ceremony, such as the unction or the handing over of the other royal insignia such as the scepter and pommel. Significantly, the narrative centers on the above-mentioned argument in the vestry. The king intersperses the ordered account of events with descriptions of his own state of mind. First, he is saddened by the indolence of his advisers.³⁴ Then he is greatly dismayed at having to confront someone of the archbishop's authority, who is also his priest, on the very day that he was to be most honored in his life and receive the dignity of royalty.³⁵ Lastly, aware of his youth, he finds his emotional composure disturbed again when he has to make a final decision, feeling rushed into it by the impending start of the ceremony. It is then that the subtlety and astuteness that are so characteristic of his reign emerge: although he appears to give way to resolve the situation and allow the ceremony to commence, he decides at the moment of truth that he will take the crown himself and dispense with the archbishop.³⁶ These

³¹ On the dates of composition of the two redactions of Peter's *Llibre* composition see Jocelyn Hillgarth's introduction to Mary Hillgarth's translation, 1:53–57. The phrase "librum gestarum nostrorum" refers to a letter of the king to one of his secretaries at court, Bernat de Torre, in which the king asks Bernat to send the "librum gestarum nostrorum (the book of our deeds)" to him, in order to continue it; see Antoni Rubió i Lluch, *Documents per l'història de la cultura catalana mig-eva*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1908–21), 1:143.

³² Rubió i Lluch, *Documents*, 1:263.

³³ Antoni Rubió i Lluch, "Estudi sobre l'elaboració de la crònica de Pere el Cerimoniós," *Anuari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans* 3 (1909–10), 519–70.

³⁴ "Fom fort torbats en nostre cor": Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre* 2.10, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1025–26.

³⁵ "E nós llavors veem-nos en tan gran perill, ço és, per lo dia qui ens era lo pus honrat que null altre que nós esperàssem en aquest segle, e que aquell que teniem per pare quant en aquest món nos digués aitals paraules en honrar la sua esgleia e son arquebisbat en gran detrimento o subjugació de nostra regne": Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre* 2.11, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1026. For the close relationship between King Peter and Archbishop Pedro López de Luna see Josep Rius Serra, "L'arquebisbe de Saragossa, canceller de Pere III," *Analecta sacra Tarraconensia* 8 (1932): 1–62.

³⁶ Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre* 2.11–12, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1026.

emotional notes increase the dramatic force of the account and help get the reader on the king's side, convinced of his courage and loyalty, as well as of his statesmanlike sense of duty in the face of his new public responsibilities.

Apart from that, once he has completed his account of the coronation, the chronicler-king focuses on the applause he received from his vassals in the cathedral itself and on his grandiloquent horseback departure. He was decked out in silver chains, with the scepter in his right hand and the pommel in his left, both of them made of gold. The festivities that followed his coronation went on for three days, during which, according to the king's calculations, around ten thousand people came up to the royal table. This last detail is worthy of note, the royal exaggeration contrasting with the strictly realistic tone of most of the chronicle.

To properly understand the importance that King Peter placed on the gesture of self-coronation, we need to turn to the above-mentioned account that the chronicler Ramon Muntaner had given a few years before of his father Alphonse IV's self-coronation. By contrast, Peter the Ceremonious makes only a brief reference to it in his chronicle.³⁷ Muntaner finished his chronicle around 1336, exactly the year Peter was crowned. We cannot know for certain if Peter was familiar with this account or if he was present at his father's coronation ceremony, as he was only nine years old at the time. In any case, he was certainly apprised of the splendor of that ceremony, as his chronicle contains a rather mysteriously laconic note that it had been celebrated "more honorably than any of its successors."³⁸

However, it is instructive to compare the two accounts, as much in terms of form as content. With regard to form, Muntaner's account is determined by his enthusiasm, which deprives it of objectivity and deliberation. King Peter's smacks of authenticity on account of its realism but is informed by an intensely emotional and subjective authorial presence, inherent in the autobiographical genre. As for content, the texts reflect differences in the two ceremonies that require in-depth analysis. Perhaps the most important of these is that the rites of anointing and crowning King Peter took place jointly in a single Mass, whereas Alphonse's ceremony involved the celebration of two Masses, one including the rite of unction and the second the coronation.

At King Alphonse's coronation, the first Mass had been conducted by Pedro López de Luna, who anointed the king, while the second was conducted by the king's brother Juan, archbishop of Toledo, who appears not to have had too many problems recognizing the king's right to self-coronation and who was content to adjust the crown on his head afterwards. Pedro López de Luna would not have felt humiliated or disregarded in this case because he did not officiate in that part of the ceremony. By contrast, eight years later, the situation was very different. By merging unction and coronation in a single Mass, Archbishop Pedro would necessarily have to conduct the coronation, and he did not want to play a

³⁷ Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica* 244–48, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 934–43. An English translation can be found in *The Chronicle of Muntaner*, trans. Anna Kinsky Goodenough, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., 47, 50 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1920–21; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967).

³⁸ Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre* 1.43, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1019.

supporting role. Perhaps he assumed that King Peter would forget the small matter of self-coronation, a practice initiated by his father but without precedent in Aragon. King Peter, however, considered it a matter of no little weight, which explains the tension generated in the vestry.

We therefore posit that the importance of the self-coronation ceremony is not that it implies greater “autonomy” or “independence” for the king as regards the bishop but rather that it marks a step forward in the differentiation between the spiritual and temporal spheres. The former was expressed in the rite of anointing by the bishop, to which none of the Aragonese kings had posed any obstacle; the latter was expressed in the rite of coronation, which was exactly the point where Kings Alphonse and Peter claimed full autonomy. Significantly, this distinction was chosen as the central plank of the introduction to the ceremonial commissioned by King Peter for carrying out the coronation rites of his successors.

THE CORONATION CEREMONIAL: THE REGULATION OF LITURGY

In 1353, seventeen years after his coronation, King Peter and his collaborators finished working on a new ceremonial for the rite of coronation of kings.³⁹ The new ceremonial took the form of an appendix to a very lengthy document entitled “Regulations Made by His Highness Peter the Third of Aragon on the Governance of All the Officials of His Court,” dated 1344. Written in Catalan, it constituted the first vernacular version of the texts regulating the running of the royal household and the duties of all the king’s advisers, scribes, and officials.⁴⁰ The ceremonial appeared under the title “Regulation Made by the Most High and Excellent Prince and Lord, Peter the Third, King of Aragon, of the Manner in Which the Kings of Aragon Will Be Consecrated and Crown Themselves.”⁴¹ Even in the title, unction and coronation are clearly distinguished and the act of self-coronation emphasized. The ceremonial of the coronation of kings was complemented by another, shorter one, expounding how

³⁹ Palacios argues that the ceremonial was elaborated between 1336 and 1338, or even before the ceremony: *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 238–40. Yet this last assertion is difficult to sustain: if the ceremonial had been elaborated before the ceremony, the discussion in the vestry would make no sense, since the question of the auto-coronation would have been discussed during the process of elaborating the ceremonial rather than at the ceremony itself.

⁴⁰ The *Ordinacions* in Catalan, promulgated by King Peter in 1344, is an almost literal translation of the Latin *Leges Palatinae*, promoted by King James III of Majorca. The Kingdom of Majorca was reincorporated into the Crown of Aragon after the conquest of the island by King Peter in 1343. This union obviously would facilitate this cultural connection. See François Lainé, “Des *Leges Palatine* aux *Ordinacions* de Pierre IV: Un modèle dérobé,” in Ghislaine Fournès, ed., *Constitution, circulation et dépassement de modèles politiques et culturels en péninsule Ibérique* (Pessac: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 2009), 17–56. Yet the *Leges Palatinae* did not refer specifically to the auto-coronation rite, which would appear in the appendix in the *Ordinacions*.

⁴¹ “Ordinació feta per lo molt alt e molt excel.lent príncep e senyor lo senyor en Pere Terç, rey d’Aragó, de la manera con los reys d’Aragó se faran consagrar e ells mateys se coronaran”: Francisco M. Gimeno, Daniel Gonzalbo, and Josep Trenchs, eds., *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort de Pere el Ceremoniós* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2009), 241–66. The ceremonial was originally in Aragonese, although the second version, which prevailed in the end, was written in Catalan (Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 238).

queens should be consecrated and how they should be crowned by their royal husbands.⁴²

The writing of this new ceremonial, and the detailed rubrics it contained, again confirmed the importance Peter assigned to the anointing and coronation ceremony and his conception of the monarchy as the heart and nerve center of society. Peter has passed into history with the epithet “the Ceremonious,” which is closely related to his desire to exalt the function of royalty and, particularly, to consolidate a written and visual memory of the monarchy. This goal required a complex of ceremonies, rites, and symbols proportional to the king’s authority and the expression of his centrality, as both the very detailed compilation of *Ordinacions* commissioned by Peter and promulgated in 1344 and his royal nickname itself show.⁴³ Among these ceremonies, coronation was, of course, one of the most notable. The king himself was directly involved in the writing of the new ceremonial, as shown by the signed revisions that appear throughout the original manuscript, correcting the successive drafts that his scribes would pass to him or adding some new idea.⁴⁴

The new ceremonial consolidated the Crown of Aragon’s recent practice of establishing a ritual for the liturgical celebration of the anointing and crowning of kings.⁴⁵ Peter II the Catholic (1196–1213), the first king of Aragon to crown himself, did so in Rome in 1205. It would appear that he followed an imperial ceremonial, adapting it to his royal status.⁴⁶ Following the long reign of James I (1213–76), who preferred not to undergo this ceremony as it would renew the vassalage initiated by his father, the next two crowned kings were Peter III the Great (1276–85) and Alphonse III the Liberal (1285–91). Both followed the Huesca Pontifical, so called because a copy has been preserved in Huesca Cathedral, and were crowned in Zaragoza Cathedral, a tradition that would endure. The original core of the Huesca ceremonial matches a Burgundian ceremonial that must have been written at the end of the thirteenth century.⁴⁷ It was used by King Peter as the basis for writing his “Regulations.” James II the Just (1291–1327) was not crowned in Zaragoza, as the coronation he had received in Sicily before 1291 was considered sufficient.

The coronation of Alphonse IV the Benign (1327–36) in Zaragoza Cathedral in 1328 entailed an important change in the ceremony of anointing and crowning the kings of Aragon. Up to that time, the Huesca Pontifical had been used, with the addition of new ceremonies in marginal notes, such as the handing over

⁴² *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 266–74.

⁴³ Peter’s book of ordinations contains many rites and ceremonies programmed by the king, such as the way to celebrate feasts (*Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 207–33); for this work see also nn. 40, above, and 63, below.

⁴⁴ *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 14–15.

⁴⁵ Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 229–40.

⁴⁶ Reinhard Elze, *Ordines coronationis imperialis*, MGH Fontes iuris 9 (Hannover: Hahnische Buchhandlung, 1960); Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 25.

⁴⁷ Pascual Galindo Romeo, *El breviario y el ceremonial Cesaraugustanos (siglos XII–XIV)*, Estudios Eclesiásticos de Aragón, 1st ser., 2 (Zaragoza: Librería “Gasuca,” 1930), 130; and Percy Ernst Schramm, *Las insignias de la realeza en la edad media española*, trans. Luis Vazquez de Parga (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1960), 130.

of the pommel granted to Peter II by Innocent III and the reception of the order of cavalry. Doctrinal modifications were also introduced, such as the substitution of words alluding to the elective nature of monarchy with others emphasizing its hereditary nature. Alphonse IV, by contrast, found himself operating in a different context, in which the European monarchies sought to emulate the pomp of the empire in their ceremonies. His coronation was not based on the Huesca Pontifical but on the rather more ostentatious imperial ceremonial of Constantinople, as is evident in the fact that Alphonse appeared in the vestments of a deacon.⁴⁸ His successor and son, King Peter, would follow this example and embed it as a rule in the ceremonial he commissioned.

Reflecting this tradition of using different rituals in the coronation of Aragonese kings, the ceremonial commissioned by King Peter consists of two clearly differentiated parts: on the one hand, a conceptual and theoretical introduction, explaining the meaning of the ceremony; and on the other, the specification of the gestures and words that make up the rite as such.⁴⁹ The two parts are distinguished from each other by the grammatical form employed: in the introduction the royal “we” is used, and in the ritual part the third person. The first part is expository and discursive, the second enunciative and schematic. Finally—and fascinatingly—the first part is written in Catalan, while the second combines Catalan in the introductory sections with Latin in the strictly liturgical expressions.

The introduction is a brief but ambitious attempt to give theoretical legitimacy to the gesture of self-coronation. King Peter was aware that his desire for the king to crown himself unaided contrasted radically with established custom elsewhere in Europe. It was normal practice at that point for the metropolitan to place the crown on the king’s head (“metropolitanus reverenter coronam capiti regis imponat”).⁵⁰ Based on the content of both Peter’s chronicle and the ceremonial inspired by him, we argue that King Peter considers that the dignity of royalty is such that it bears comparison with that of the kings of the Chosen People, whose line emerged with King Saul, chosen and anointed by Samuel the priest. That similarity justified complete autonomy in the temporal sphere. The dignity can be corrupted by excessive vanity but also by a disdain for the gifts and rights attributed to the king, as Peter himself sought to make clear in his argument with the archbishop on the morning of his coronation.

⁴⁸ Alphonse IV’s coronation is narrated by the chronicler Ramon Muntaner, *Crònica* 297, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 939–49. On the political, religious, and cultural implications of Alphonse IV’s coronation see Jaume Aurell, *Authoring the Past: History, Autobiography, and Politics in Medieval Catalonia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 210–12; Bonifacio Palacios, “El Ceremonial,” 104–33; Antonio Durán Gudiol, “El rito de la coronación del rey en Aragón,” *Argensola: Revista de ciencias sociales del Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses* 103 (1989): 17–40; and Schramm, *Las insignias de la realeza*, 93–94.

⁴⁹ Introduction on fols. 157r–158v, the ritual on fols. 159r–176r (*Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort* 241–44 and 244–66, respectively). The ceremonial of queens’ coronations has a similar structure, with a justificatory introduction followed by the exposition of the liturgy of the ceremony (*ibid.*, 266–74).

⁵⁰ This example is taken from the twelfth-century Sicilian *Ordo* edited by Reinhard Elze, “The Ordo for the Coronation of King Roger II of Sicily: An Example of Dating from Internal Evidence,” in Bak, *Coronations*, 175.

In order to legitimize and justify his self-coronation, King Peter explains that the ceremony of consecrating and crowning the king refers to two different realities:

We have to deal with two very solemn realities: the first spiritual and the second temporal. Proper to the first is, namely, the holy sacrament of unction, which in the old law was dispensed by the princes among the priests as we read in the Old Testament, in the word of God as spoken by the prophet: “and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee” [1 Samuel 16.3]. . . . [The second] is temporal, which is to say, it refers to the crown, by which the earthly princes receive dominion over the people, and of this we have a foreshadowing as can be read in Holy Writ: “And he brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony” [2 Kings 11.12].⁵¹

The scriptural reference chosen to justify the unction was a commonplace in medieval political theology, referring to the God of Israel’s choice of David as king in place of the reprobate Saul. God promised to guide Samuel at the moment of choosing a king, who would arise from among the seven sons of Jesse: “et unges quemcumque monstravero tibi (and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee).” In fact, when Samuel recognized David, he “took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 16.13). David was not proclaimed king of Israel until some time afterwards, but the unction he had received stayed with him as a sign until his actual ascent to royalty and his re-anointing as king of Judah following the death of Saul (2 Samuel 2.4), and eventually of all Israel (2 Samuel 5.1–5). Significantly, church tradition has chosen the latter episode, in which David is anointed as king of all Israel, for the liturgy of the Mass of the Feast of Christ the King, a royal status that David pre-figured. So it is hardly surprising that the anointings of David should constitute a model for the legitimization of the medieval monarchy, as did the anointing of the first king of Israel, Saul, also related in the Book of Samuel: “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, ‘Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord, and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies’ (1 Samuel 10.1–9).”

However, the scriptural quotation chosen by King Peter to justify the “temporal” part of the ceremony is less commonplace and refers to the anointing of Jehoash as king of Judah. Jehoash, son of the old King Ahaziah, had been saved by some observant Jews to liberate them from the regent Athalia, who had usurped the kingdom following Ahaziah’s assassination, preserving the cult of pagan deities

⁵¹ “On Nós haven a tractar de dues coses molt solennes: la primera spiritual e l’altre temporal. De la primera és, a saber, del sant sacrament de la unció la qual los prínceps terrenals reeben per mans dels bisbes en lur novella creació, la qual en la Vella Lig se fahia per los prínceps dels sacerdots segons que legim en lo Vell Testament en la paraula que Déu dix al propheta: *Uncce aquell que jo te mostraré* [1 Sam 16, 3]. . . . [The second] és temporal, ço és, de la corona la qual quant prínceps terrenals reebén senyoria sobre el poble demonstra, e d’açò havem figura com lig-se en la Sancta Escripura: *Produí lo fill del rey, e posà sobre aquell corona e testimoni* [2 Kings 11.12]”: *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 242–43.

and planning to wipe out the entire royal line. In the seventh year there was a rebellion led by the Temple priest, who “brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king” (2 Kings 11.12). Shortly after, the regent Athalia was killed at sword point in the royal palace, and Jehoash was taken “into the palace, entering by way of the gate of the guards. The king then took his place on the royal throne, and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet” (2 Kings 11.19–20).

Of course, this passage was not selected at random by the king and his collaborators, and it is especially relevant to the coronation ritual. It highlights the act of proclaiming the new king in the Temple portico, with the regent still alive and hiding out in the royal palace. The sign of the new king being proclaimed is now not unction but the placing of the crown and the insignia (*testimonium*) and, with the regent now dead, the king’s enthronement. The king’s intention in choosing this text is, therefore, to emphasize the act of coronation, which on this occasion occurs *before* unction.

The distinction between “spiritual” and “temporal” reality forms the basis of the introduction to King Peter’s ceremonial. It is the key to understanding the vigor with which Peter defended the appropriateness of his crowning himself, without any mediation by the archbishop. His attitude is a kind of reaffirmation of Christ’s command, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22.21), which lies at the center of medieval political theology. In the final paragraph of the introduction to the ceremonial, the king again distinguishes clearly between the two parts of the ritual, the spiritual and the temporal: “Just as the kings of Aragon are worthy of receiving the holy sacrament of unction in the city of Zaragoza, capital of the kingdom of Aragon, which gives us our title and principal name, so it is also fitting and reasonable that in that [city] the kings of Aragon should likewise receive the crown and other royal insignia, just as we see the emperors take the principal crown in Rome, the city that stands at the head of their empire.”⁵²

The second part of the document is dedicated to the detailed exposition of the rubrics, the gestures, and prayers for the ceremony. The king must prepare from the preceding week, fasting for three days: Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On the eve of the coronation he is to bathe, confess, receive Communion, and appear before the knights of the realm in vestments specified by the ceremonial, symbolizing the chastity and dignity of the king. That same day he must withdraw in prayer in the coronation church. He specifically says a prayer that, because it is written in Catalan (in contrast to the Latin of most of the others in the ceremony), would appear to be the work of the king himself: “Lord God, it has pleased you to choose me as king and ruler of this chosen people, for which I deeply thank you. And as it is a great burden to bear without your grace and help, I beseech you the favor that in this royal dignity of which I will receive the insignia tomorrow, I will have such a life and do such works as are in your sight

⁵² *Ibid.*, 244.

pleasing, worthy, and honorable to my crown and for which I will attain your glory at my end.”⁵³

This evening prayer is recorded by King Peter himself in his chronicle. He recounts that on the eve of the coronation he went up to the altar of San Salvador, bowed before Jesus Christ and his mother, and, with great devotion, said some prayers “that our Lord God put in our heart, with all the humility we could summon.”⁵⁴ Those prayers may be the two brief supplications that the king inserted in Catalan among the other Latin prayers. One of them has been given in the preceding paragraph. The other is the one that appears at the end of his ritual investiture as a knight: “My Lord God, I pray you look favorably on this ordination of knighthood, which I now receive, that I might do such works as to serve you and earn my soul lasting glory, my heart honor and merit, and my royal crown and people growth and security.”⁵⁵

After recital of the prayer, a squire was to bear the royal arms to the altar, and the king was to withdraw to keep an all-night vigil; if he could not, owing to advanced years or other factors, the ceremonial stipulated that the king at least sleep in the vestry or somewhere close to the church.

In considering this exception, the king must have been very aware of the attitude of the knights who accompanied him to the church on the eve of his coronation. Seeing how he tarried over his prayer and how tired he was already, they insisted that he rest and withdraw to sleep in the vestry. They had prepared a bed for him there, so that the next day “he might partake in the festival with great joy.”⁵⁶ The king relented, moved by his vassals’ consideration for his “tender” age. By contrast, his vassals passed the whole night in “high spirits, singing, and sport,” which certainly contradicts the rule in the ceremonial that the king should order “the nobles and knights and other people with whom he [the king] has come to stay in the church to accompany and watch over the king’s arms [placed at the altar] all night.”⁵⁷

With the arrival of dawn, the king was to get up and hear a private Mass in one of the cathedral chapels. Then he was to go to a seat of honor prepared for the occasion, until the metropolitan and other officiating bishops called him into the vestry, once they had put on their vestments for the Mass. That suggests that the argument in the vestry must have taken place with all the prelates already dressed for the celebration of the Mass. The king was also in special vestments, wrapped in a dalmatic and with a stole crossed at the chest, as deacons usually are when reading the Gospel at Mass, which is clearly sacralizing. Some historians have seen in this attempt to make the king look like a deacon an urge not only to “appear” (as was the norm, with kings dressing as priests at coronations) but actually to

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 245. On the issue of the king’s oath see Marcel David, “Le serment du sacre du IXe au XVe siècle: Contribution à l’étude des limites juridiques de la souveraineté,” *Revue du moyen âge latin* 6 (1950): 5–272.

⁵⁴ “E ab gran devoció diguem aquelles oraciones que nostre senyor Déus nos hac meses en nostre cor, ab tota aquella humilitat que fer poguem”: Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre 2.8*, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1025.

⁵⁵ *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 252.

⁵⁶ Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre 2.8*, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 1025.

⁵⁷ *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 245.

“exercise” putting on the vestments of a deacon and thus assume a higher hierarchical status, as was envisaged for the coronation of emperors.⁵⁸

The procession of the principal royal insignia—crown, scepter, and pommel—would begin, leading to the foot of the altar. Then some long dedications to God and his saints were recited (the litanies). These would be proclaimed by the prelates with the king on bended knees as a show of humility—an attitude analogous to that adopted by candidates for ordination as deacons or priests, though they prostrate themselves completely on the floor. After that, the king would be invested as a knight, if he had not previously been invested. Here the blessing of the sword took prominence. It expressed a threefold promise: to defend the church against heretics; to protect the poor, orphans, and widows; and to maintain justice for his people.⁵⁹ The ceremony would then conclude with the king girding himself with his sword “without the aid of any other person,” in a gesture that prefigured the self-coronation and symbolized the king’s autonomy from the ecclesiastical hierarchy in temporal matters. This was a clear allusion to Aragonese monarchic tradition, given that James I had done the same thing in his ceremony of investiture as a knight at Monzón.

The ceremony then continued with readings, the profession of faith, and the presentation of the candidate, in a way that was also similar to the ordination of the diaconate and presbyterate. The presentation fell to the two most senior bishops, who would endorse the king before the metropolitan, confirming that the kingdom was his by legitimate succession. Next was the unction ceremony, one of the key moments. The metropolitan anointed the king’s shoulders and chest with holy oil. Then came the placing of the crown: “This prayer having been said, the king takes the crown from above the altar, and he himself puts it on his head without the aid of any other person. And while the king is placing the crown on his head, the metropolitan utters this prayer: ‘Receive this sign of glory, the royal diadem and crown.’”⁶⁰

In the same way, the king went to the altar to take the scepter with his right hand and the pommel with his left. The coronation ceremony would conclude with the singing of a solemn *Te Deum*, followed by the rest of the Mass and final prayers.

At the end of the Mass, the king would leave the church, riding solemnly on a white horse, adorned with all the royal insignia—the crown on his head, the scepter in his right hand, and the pommel in his left. Afterwards, he would hold a banquet for all the guests, and festivities would begin that would last for at least three days.⁶¹

⁵⁸ See Palacios, *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón*, 213–14.

⁵⁹ *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 251. This triple function appears almost in the same way in the Catalan text of Muntaner, *Crònica* 297, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 399–940.

⁶⁰ “E aquesta oració dita, lo rey prenga la corona de sobre l’altar e ell matex pos-l’es en lo cap senç ajuda d’alcuna persona. E dementre lo rey se posarà la corona sobre lo cap, lo matropolità diga aquesta oració: *Accipe signum glorie diadema et coronam regni*”: *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 259.

⁶¹ Analogies with the French and German traditions can be found in Richard A. Jackson, ed., *Ordines coronationis Franciae: Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995–2000).

The act of self-coronation reinforced the king's autonomy in temporal matters and privileged the role of the crown itself in the ceremony. The ceremonial stresses that, the crown being round, it has no beginning or end, which implies that the king should wear it with the infinite intention of doing good works, and especially of reigning fairly and justly. Kings must wear it on their head, the locus of understanding, which leads to a good will. It is full of precious stones, symbol of the virtues that should adorn the life of a king. The crown also furnishes the king with the necessary fear of God.⁶² It is the key emblem among the various iconographic representations commissioned by the king in commemoration of his own self-coronation.

THE IMAGES IN THE TEXT: ICONOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

As we have shown, King Peter's self-coronation was not the first during the Middle Ages—neither in Europe nor in the Iberian Peninsula, nor even in Aragon. It was, however, the only one to generate iconographic representations. These are preserved today in two of the three versions of the above-mentioned liturgical document *De la manera con los reys d'Aragó se faran consegrar e ells mateys se coronarán* (*On the Manner in Which the Kings of Aragon Are Consecrated and Crown Themselves*), commissioned by the king himself at the start of 1353 (Fig. 1; cf. Fig. 2, discussed below).⁶³ Their pages contain delightful miniatures depicting the moment at which the king of the Crown of Aragon—conceived generically rather than individually—places this royal emblem on his own head, dispensing with any civil or ecclesiastical intervention in the handing over of the crown, and receives the blessing of the bishop before a group of lay witnesses.

The image of self-coronation highlights the king's desire to appear with maximum sovereignty, but, paradoxically, these kinds of images then disappear in Western iconography until the beginning of the nineteenth century and Napoleon's self-coronation. Yet it is possible to find some later scenes with a similar meaning, if somewhat amplified by directly linking the king with the divine. This is the case with the opening illustration (Fig. 3) of the Latin version of the *Llibre de franqueses i privilegis del Regne de Mallorca* (*Book of Freedoms and Privileges*

⁶² *Ordinacions de la Casa i Cort*, 233–44. The chronicler Muntaner explains the symbolic meaning of the crown in a similar way: Muntaner, *Crònica* 298, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, 942.

⁶³ The oldest manuscript of the *Ordinacions* of King Peter IV appears to be the *Manuscrito de san Miguel de los Reyes*, which belonged to the Royal Palace of Valencia and was written between 1353 and 1357; the manuscript is now Palma de Mallorca, Biblioteca de la Fundación Bartolomé March, MS 2633. In the illustration the king is shown kneeling before the bishop after having taken the insignia: crown on his head, scepter in his left hand, and pommel in his right hand. Bohigas argued that this was the most ancient manuscript as the king is represented in his youth: see Pere Bohigas, "El manuscrit Phillips de les 'ordinacions del rei en Pere,'" *Cuadernos de arqueología e historia de la Ciudad* 10 (1967): 109; and Bonifacio Palacios, "Estudio histórico de las Ordenaciones," in *El "Manuscrito de San Miguel de los Reyes" de las "Ordinacions" de Pedro IV* (Valencia: Scriptorium, 1994), 58. We know from another document that King Peter was still not sure about the ceremonial in 1367 (Rubió i Lluch, *Documents*, 1, doc. 222, p. 216).



Fig. 1. Madrid, Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, MS Reg. 14425, fol. 19r. *Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón* (appendix to the *Ordinacions de Cort*). Second half of the fourteenth century. (All illustrations reproduced by permission)

of the Kingdom of Mallorca), from around 1334–41,⁶⁴ and with one of the panels making up Archbishop Don Sancho de Rojas's lovely altarpiece from around 1415–20.⁶⁵

The illustration relating to the *De la manera con les reynes d'Aragó se faran consagrar e los reys d'Aragó les coronaran* (*Of the Manner in Which the Queens*

⁶⁴ Palma de Mallorca, Arxiu del Regne de Mallorca, MS 1. The opening illustration was commissioned by the *Jurats* of Majorca, and James I is said to be represented in a miniature as being crowned by some angels. For a recent study on the illuminations of this book see Gabriel Llompart and Isabel Escandell, "Estudi historicoartistic," in Ricard Urgell Hernández, ed., *Llibre dels reis: Llibre de franqueses i privilegis del Regne de Mallorca* (Palma de Mallorca: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2010), 111–41. See also Marta Serrano-Coll, "Falsas historias, proposiciones certeras: Dominio visual e imágenes persuasivas en el entorno áulico de la Corona de Aragón," *Codex Aquilarensis* 27 (2011): 191–212, esp. 200–204.

⁶⁵ The panel is in the Museo del Prado (Madrid), and some commentators have interpreted it as the coronation of King Ferdinand I of Trastamara by Jesus Christ. A good introduction to this subject is Marisa Melero Moneo, "La Virgen y el rey," in Bango, ed., *Maravillas de la España medieval*, 419–31.



Fig. 2. Madrid, Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, MS Reg. 14425, fol. 35v. *Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón* (appendix to the *Ordinacions de Cort*). Second half of the fourteenth century.

of Aragon Are Consecrated and the Kings of Aragon Crown Them) also represents an innovation, in that the queen is depicted at the precise moment that her husband places the crown on her head (Fig. 2). According to the iconographic evidence, which contrasts with the miniatures in the three surviving versions of the Aragonese ceremonial, queens were never shown being invested by their husbands, at least during the Middle Ages. On the one hand, when they were proclaimed in the same ceremony as the king, they were shown next to him, as in the imperial models of the tenth and eleventh centuries, during the act of unction, coronation, or the later service of Holy Mass (Fig. 4).⁶⁶ On the other hand,

⁶⁶ As shown in the mid-fourteenth-century French *Ordre de la consécration et du couronnement des rois de France* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 1246, fol. 27v), in the *Ceremonial de coronación de los reyes de Castilla y León* (Biblioteca de El Escorial, Cod. Esc. & III.3, fol. 19r), and in manuscripts of the thirteenth-century *Grandes chroniques de France* (see, for example, the study *Speculum* 89/1 (January 2014)

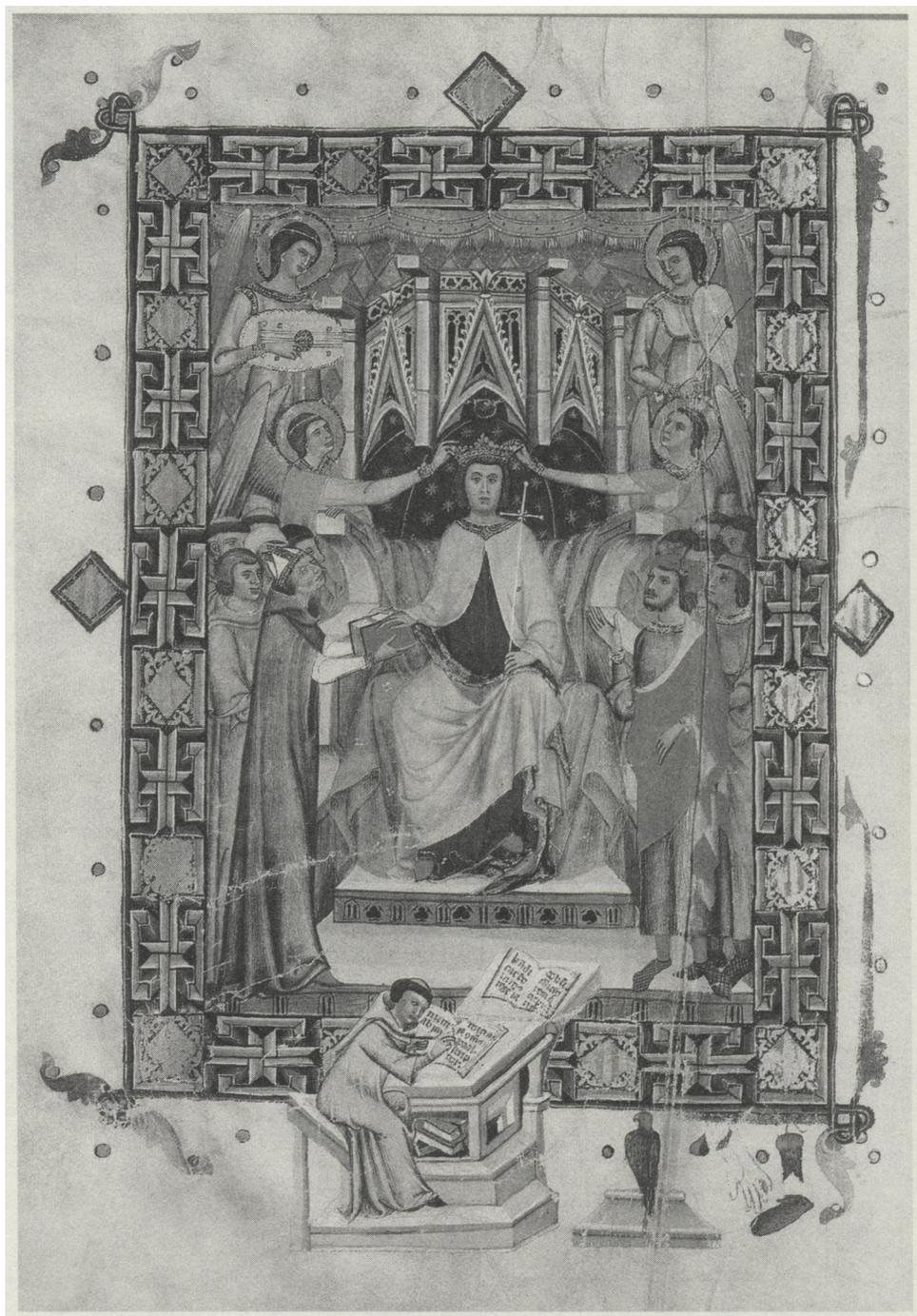


Fig. 3. Palma de Mallorca, Arxiu del Regne de Mallorca, MS 1, fol. 13v. *Llibre de franqueses i privilegis del Regne de Mallorca* (or *Llibre dels jurats*). 1337–39.



Fig. 4. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 1246, fol. 27v. *Ordre de la consécration et du couronnement des rois de France*. Ca. 1250.

when the queen had her investiture on a different day, another type of representation emerged in which she was shown kneeling during the unction ceremony, at the moment of coronation, and when receiving the blessing (Fig. 5).⁶⁷ In neither of these cases was the queen's coronation carried out by the king, which reaffirms the exceptional nature of what King Peter the Ceremonious did. In marked contrast, King Peter is shown crowning his wife.

by François Avril, Marie Thérèse Gousset, and Bernard Guenée, *Les Grandes chroniques de France* [Paris, 1987]). See also Anne D. Hedeman, *The Royal Image: Illustrations of the Grandes chroniques de France, 1274–1422*, California Studies in the History of Art 28 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); and Le Goff et al., *Le sacre royal à l'époque de Saint Louis*.

⁶⁷ See, for instance, *Ceremonial de coronación de los reyes de Castilla y León* (Biblioteca de El Escorial, Cod. Esc. & III.3, fol. 24r), *Pontifical à l'usage du diocèse de Reims* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi CVI.182, fol. 83r), *Livre du sacre de Charles V* (the miniature of Jeanne de Bourbon, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B.VIII), or the *Pontifical of Sens* (St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Lat. Q.v.I, no. 35). See Olga Pérez Monzón, "Ceremonias regias en la Castilla medieval: A propósito del llamado 'Libro de coronación de los reyes de Castilla y Aragón,'" *Archivo español de arte* 83 (2010): 317–34; E. S. Dewick, ed., *The Coronation Book of Charles V of France*, Henry Bradshaw Society, Publications, 16 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1899); and Shane Bobrycki, "The Royal Consecration *Ordines* of the Pontifical of Sens from a New Perspective," *Bulletin du Centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre* 13 (2009): 131–42.

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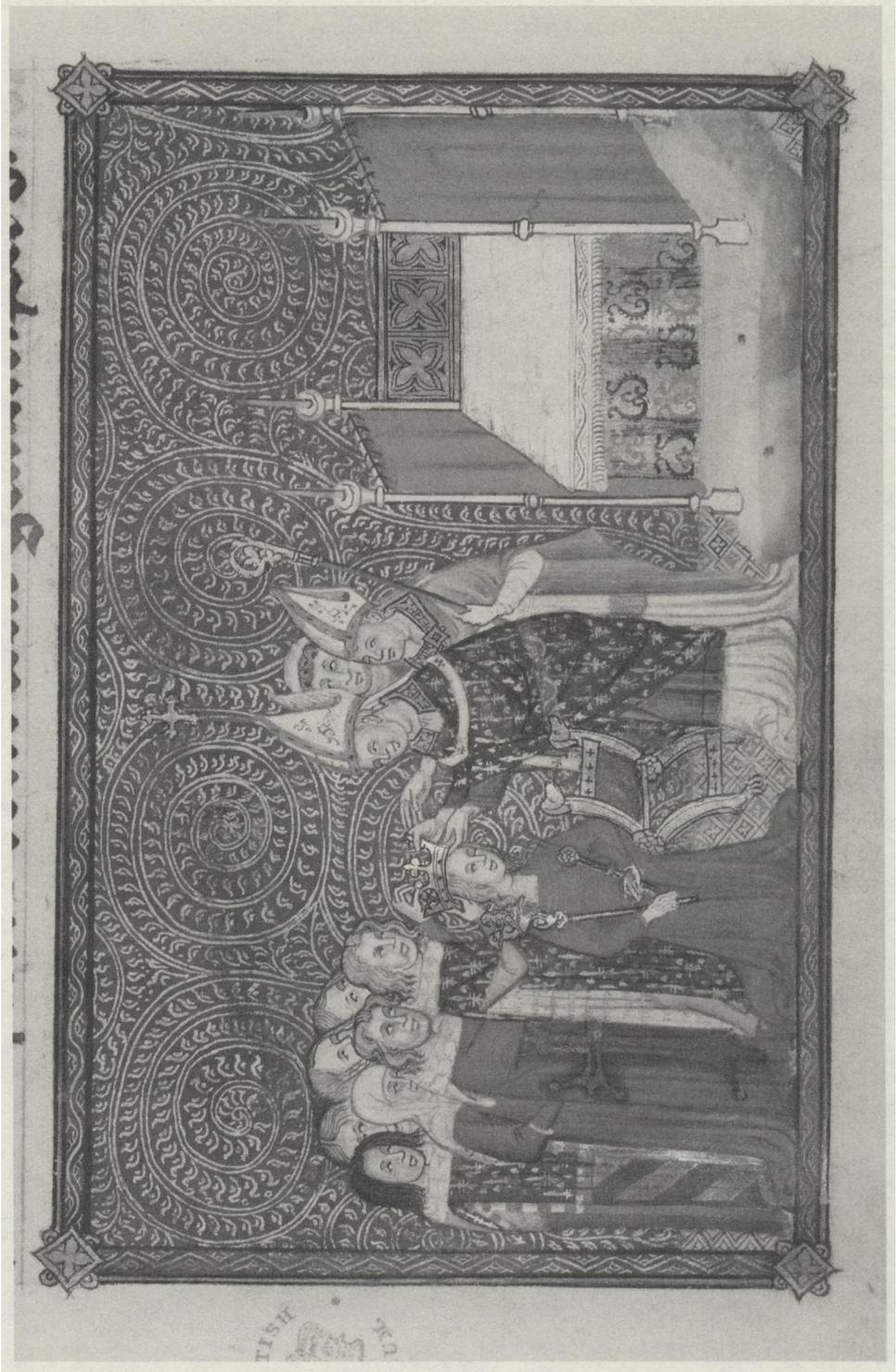


Fig. 5. London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B.VIII, fol. 69v. *The Coronation Book of Charles V of France*. Ca. 1365.

These Aragonese illustrations appear to revolve in an ideological orbit similar to the one that, in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, inspired the marginalia that introduces the *Ordo ad injugendum et coronandum regem Franciae* of the *Pontifical à l'usage du diocèse de Reims*: in the middle of the lower margin, the kneeling king is shown receiving the crown from the hands of a layman, rather than from the archbishop as the ritual would prescribe.⁶⁸ This should be taken as one more proof of the necessary and joint role of both ecclesiastics and laymen in this rite, even at the expense of magnifying the honor and dignity of the latter over the former.⁶⁹

The only illustrations showing the king of Aragon's self-coronation come from the miniatures that adorn two of the three versions of the ceremonial commissioned by Peter the Ceremonious. Made during the second half of the fourteenth century (though certainly no later than 1380), they were meant for the royal palaces of Barcelona, Zaragoza, and Valencia.⁷⁰ The first illustration, dated between 1370 and 1380, comes in the final appendix to the sumptuous *Ordinacions de cort fetes per el molt alt senyor en Pere Terç rey d'Aragó sobre lo regiment de tots los officials de la sua cort* (*Court Regulations Set Forth by His Royal Highness Peter the Third, King of Aragon, on the Administration of All the Officials of His Court*), a codex created by the royal workshops of Barcelona, as can be deduced from its literary style, the decorative elements, and the repetition of the Aragonese arms in its illuminations.⁷¹

One of the most significant moments in the coronation of the king of Aragon is reproduced in the codex's first initial on folio 129r (Fig. 6): the instant at which the sovereign himself places the crown on his own head. Thus the king, standing before the altar in the presence of several people seated on wooden benches, holds aloft a great golden fleur-de-lis crown while facing the metropolitan of Zaragoza, now restricted by the regulations to giving a simple blessing. At a textual level, the autocratic character that the monarchy was assuming was obvious in Peter the Ceremonious's ceremonial. Anything that could sully the image of the king's sovereignty was eliminated, which is why this miniature illustrated his iron determination in such a clear and graphic way. Dressed

⁶⁸ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi CVI.182, fol. 71r. On the iconography of the coronations of the pontificals see Eric Palazzo, *L'évêque et son image: L'illustration du pontifical au moyen âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), esp. 258–305. Richard Jackson maintains that this pontifical comes from Cambrai, not from Reims as traditionally has been believed (Jackson, ed., *Ordines coronationis Franciae*, vol. 2, Ordo XXIIA).

⁶⁹ See Jean Claude Bonne, "Images du sacre," in Le Goff et al., *Le sacre royal à l'époque de Saint Louis*, 208–9.

⁷⁰ Facsimile, edition, and commentaries in *El "Manuscrito de los Reyes" de las "Ordinacions" de Pedro IV* (Valencia: Scriptorium, 1994), 14.

⁷¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Esp. 99. For the hypothesis of this manuscript's chronology see Pere Bohigas, "L'agrupament de les miniatures del llibre vermell," *Analecta Montserratensia* 9 (1962): 47. For a recent study see Françoise Lainé, "L'image du roi dans le ms. Espagnol 99 de la BNF (c. 1350–1360)," *e-Spania: Revue interdisciplinaire d'études hispaniques médiévales* 3 (2007), accessed 13 September 2013.



Fig. 6. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Esp. 99, fol. 129r. *Ordinacions de Cort*. 1370–80.

in his dalmatic—beautifully and abundantly bordered with gold thread—and sporting loose, well-kempt locks, the sovereign lowers his head to place the crown on it with his own hands, the mark of royalty par excellence.

The second part of the appendix, which begins on folio 147r, aimed to describe how the queens of Aragon were to be crowned. Its initial miniature (Fig. 7) depicts the moment at which the queen, in the presence of several ecclesiastics among whom the archbishop of Zaragoza can be discerned blessing her, receives the crown from her husband. This ceremonial entailed innovations as regards the regular iconography of the coronation of queens, who usually attained regal dignity through the sacrament of marriage: “betrothals make the queen,” in Fanny Cosandey’s words.⁷² Generally speaking, the images accompanying these liturgies show that the queen was entitled to similar formalities as the king, being not only his wife but also the mother of the future king (or so it was to be hoped).⁷³ It is true that, as a sovereign, the queen partook of the sacredness of

⁷² This would explain why the queen’s unction has less solemnity than that of the king. She appears with fewer insignia, and her ceremony has less ritual than her husband’s: Fanny Cosandey, *La reine de France: Symbole et pouvoir, XVe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

⁷³ In the French tradition the queen received special benediction since she would be the mother of the future king: Cornelius Adrianus Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning: The Development of the Latin Ritual for the Anointing of Kings and the Coronation of an Emperor before the Eleventh Century* (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1957), 151.



Fig. 7. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Esp. 99, fol. 147r. *Ordinacions de Cort.* 1370–80.

the monarchy, and so she was also anointed; but she acceded to the crown through her spouse, so her subordination to him was a reality acknowledged by various mechanisms: whereas the king kept the crown for his whole life, she could lose it.

This basic principle usually manifested itself at the textual level: among other elements of a legal nature, the queen's ceremonial follows her husband's investiture—she is crowned after the king. But this generic difference can also be seen at the figurative level given the notable lack, in the European sphere, of representations of the queen compared with those relating to the coronation of kings. In this sense, King Peter's ceremonial also marks a milestone in proclaiming a certain parity in this regard, although the equivalence is merely quantitative, not qualitative. The representations of the queen's coronation need to be understood as a manifestation of the regal self-proclamation and, therefore, as a further proof of the political exploitation of the image by Peter the Ceremonious, as it falls to none other than the king to crown the queen. Thus the subordination of the queen to her husband is evident not only in the incipit of Peter's ordination (“the kings of Aragon will crown them [the queens]”) but also in the beautiful illustration that accompanies it. She is crowned by the king in accordance with the ceremonial, before an altar on which some liturgical objects have been arranged, wearing embroidered clothing, kneeling, and with her hands together in an attitude of prayer. King Peter's textual representation (his autobiographical chronicle) corroborates that this solemnity was enacted by Peter himself, explaining that he moved to Zaragoza because he wanted to

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solemnly crown his wife, Queen Sibilia, and to organize a big celebration in her honor.⁷⁴

There are very similar images to these two initials in the second of the codexes of the *Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón* (*Consecration and Coronation Ceremonial of the Kings of Aragon*), also from the second half of the fourteenth century (see Figs. 1 and 2).⁷⁵ This manuscript is one of the vernacular copies that were made from the Latin original, specifically the one prepared for Zaragoza, and it appears to be incomplete.⁷⁶ It is missing the previous document, the *Ordenaciones de corte* (*Court Regulations*), which, by contrast, is found in the copies intended for Barcelona and Valencia. The shields hanging from the borders that frame the writing boxes in the first folios of the coronation ceremonials of both monarchs might indicate that the codex came from the royal workshops. The shields are those of Ñigo Arista of Aragon and the Cross of St. George in the case of the king's coronation and just the shield of Aragon in that of the queen. At a stylistic level, the drawing of clear analogies between the initials of this manuscript and those of the previous one entails accepting the dependence of one on the other.⁷⁷

In emphasizing the gesture of self-coronation, these representations show the king's interest in relegating the prelates to a secondary level. This tendency is also highlighted in the representations of the coronations of queens, where the king plays an absolutely leading role, magnifying his power to the detriment of the visual statement of his links with the divine. Nevertheless, since unction remains in the ceremony, it is not the ceremony or the kingship that is secularized. It is the authority of confirming or conveying temporal power that is transmitted to the king. As a consequence, the monarchy maintained a marked interest in expressing its connection with the sacred by means of all kinds of textual and iconographic resources: significantly, King Peter set up, with the aim of asserting the sacred origin of his office, a series of mechanisms that affected his own image and that of his insignia.

The iconography of medieval coronations verifies the presence of laymen, whose participation could be justified by the monarch's awareness that his survival rested, in large part, on the recognition of his vassals. Their original witness role, sometimes reduced to mere assent, was giving way to their involvement in one of the high points of the ceremony: their help in the putting on of the insignia, which,

⁷⁴ Peter IV of Aragon, *Llibre*, in Soldevila, *Les quatre grans cròniques*, appendix. The queen receives from the king the crown, the scepter, the pommel, and also the ring, called *medicus*, on the fourth finger of her right hand: see Palacios, *Estudio histórico de las Ordenaciones*, 87.

⁷⁵ Madrid, Biblioteca de la Fundación Lázaro Galdiano, MS Reg. 14425, fol. 19r (for the king's coronation) and fol. 35v (for the queen's coronation). See the facsimile, edition, and commentaries in *Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón*.

⁷⁶ Found in Sádaba (Aragon) at the beginning of the twentieth century: Palacios, *Estudio histórico de las Ordenaciones*, 15.

⁷⁷ Bohigas argued first that both were composed by the same artist (Bohigas, *L'agrupament de les miniatures del Llibre Vermell*, 47) and afterwards that at least they were made at the same workshop: Pere Bohigas, *Sobre manuscrits i biblioteques*, Textos i Estudis de Cultura Catalana 10 (Barcelona: Curial, 1985), 114.

in the eyes of those present, symbolized the receiving of royal dignity. Yet neither of those aspects is evidenced in the miniatures adorning the various copies of the ceremonial of King Peter's coronation. For that reason, they proclaim themselves, and should thus be understood, as the most exceptional graphic source for the autocratic character that the Kingdom of Aragon was assuming.

EPILOGUE: THE CONSOLIDATION OF A RITE

King Peter had to create new cultural weapons to preserve his central position in the Kingdom of Aragon and in Catalan society. Menaced during his reign by internal insurrections and external resistance, he emphasized historical language, liturgical gestures, and iconographical models to protect the reputation of kingship. These are means of shaping the perception of interests, developing discursive royal ideology, highlighting ritual symbolical meanings, and attracting the audience to generate a specific image of the king. Thus, historical, liturgical, and iconographical representations emerged as a means of persuasion, a way of reconstituting the social and political world.⁷⁸ That is why we argue that King Peter's efforts at constructing the memory of his own reign through history, liturgy, and images is an operation of self-justification. He *knew* the cultural power of the writing of history, the symbolic attraction of royal ceremonies, and the popular efficacy of iconographical strategy. He used historical texts, liturgical rituals, and images as a tool for the control of his large kingdom, from "autography" to authority.⁷⁹

More specifically, King Peter benefited from the devaluation of late-medieval royal coronations, which were affected by the progressive separation of episcopal unction—a true sacrament—from the ceremony of the coronation.⁸⁰ Unction was kept as an important part of the *Ordo* of the coronation, but it possessed less symbolic power than the act of the coronation itself. This strengthened the influence of the gesture of self-coronation and confirmed King Peter's idea of the separation between the spiritual (unction) and temporal (coronation) parts of the ceremony. His aspiration to separate the temporal from the spiritual was made explicit in 1344 by his refusal to pay tribute to Rome for the possession of Sardinia, arguing that no one, not even the pope himself, was superior to the king in temporal things. Peter rejected papal intervention and denied the preeminence of the pope over Aragon, speaking of "the superiority which is falsely

⁷⁸ We borrow some of these concepts from Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class*, 24; William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); and John G. A. Pocock, "The Concept of a Language and the *Métier d'historien*: Some Considerations on Practice," in Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19–40.

⁷⁹ See Gimeno, *Escribir, reinar*, 11–13 and 21; M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 185–90; and Attilio Bartoli Langeli, *La scrittura dell'italiano*, *L'Identità Italiana* 19 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), 40–75. See also Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

⁸⁰ As Kantorowicz suggests, the ceremony of unction would progressively lose rank in the liturgy: Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 318–24.

claimed over the kingdom of Aragon, for which, after God, We recognize and have no superior in temporal things.”⁸¹

Certainly, the very ceremony of self-coronation remains a sacred liturgy, one that must be located in the context of the whole ceremony of the king’s installation and unction. This is clear from the *Ordo* that Peter himself ordered to be produced and also from the context of the illustrations in Figures 1 and 2, which are closely contemporary with Peter’s self-coronation and thus have enormous historical value as a source. Yet what we have highlighted in this article is the fact that a coronation ceremony directly officiated by the king increases the impression of the king’s autonomy vis-à-vis the ecclesiastical sphere and even asserts the king’s capacity for a sacred role. To what extent this king’s disposition toward a sacred role and to what extent the exaltation of his authority by conveying temporal power through self-coronation led, paradoxically, to secularization in early-modern Europe is a very interesting question but one that would require further research to answer.

We have tried to show that Peter the Ceremonious deployed all manner of symbols to consolidate his power. The “image” of the king, imprinted in the Catalan *imaginaire* for centuries, reveals the efficacy of his strategy. In addition to the three kinds of representations analyzed in this article, Peter planned the construction of sculptures of his ancestors in the Royal Palace of Barcelona, the restoration of the Royal Pantheon in Poblet, and the carving of the nineteen figures of his predecessors on the new royal coronation sword, considered the custodian of tradition of the kingdom. His title “the Ceremonious” refers to his obsessive attention to gestures, rituals, ceremonies, and liturgies as privileged platforms of political power. Peter was aware that any policy of consolidation required recourse to the authority of the past. Yet he not only emphasized the collective memory shared by his subjects but also operated with the symbols that made the emergence of his own authority possible. Many of these gestures illustrate his political power and natural authority as a king. Yet, the most impressive of the gestures took place when Peter was still an adolescent of sixteen and definitively marked his tendency to autocracy and authoritarianism: his self-coronation.

⁸¹ “Superioritas que fabulose pretenditur de regno Aragonum, pro qui nullum post Deum in temporalibus superiorem recognoscimus vel habemus” (as translated by Jocelyn Hillgarth in the introduction to *Chronicle*, 1:77). Part of this strategy is his intention of conveying himself as *rex et sacerdos*, as had worked for the Anjou dynasty; see Darleen N. Pryds, *The King Embodies the Word: Robert d’Anjou and the Politics of Preaching*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 93 (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

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