1 Introduction: the British coronation and its music

The coronation of a monarch is the prime example of the combination of a great state occasion and an elaborate religious act: the new monarch is presented to and acknowledged by the people and the principle of divine right is manifested by the anointing with holy oil. In the words of Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury at the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, it is 'one of the oldest institutions' in the 'English church and state', and 'the occasion for much splendid pageantry'.\(^1\) This book examines one specific part of this 'splendid pageantry': the music. As observed by two writers in 1911, at the time of the coronation of George V and Queen Mary, 'music is the art which adds most to the grandeur of the ceremony' and it 'helped to make the great solemnity impressive'.\(^2\) In order to understand how exactly music contributes to the ceremony, it is instructive to examine the musical programme at the coronations, its actual performance, its reception and possible interpretations. The music's exact place, and role, in the ceremonial will be addressed – an aspect hitherto largely neglected. In this way the present study will follow up a question formulated by David Cannadine:\(^3\)

If it is the case [...] that pomp is of itself a visible form of power, then precisely what form of power is it?

Many studies have tackled the issue of pomp, ceremony and ritual as means of power. Nevertheless, the exact nature and character of this 'pomp' and its precise relationship with the ceremonial are all too often neglected. At the same time, Cannadine's understanding of pomp as a visible form of power is

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\(^2\) Walter G. Alcock, Preface to The Form and Order of the Service [...] in the Coronation of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary [...] With the Music to be Sung, ed. by Sir Frederick Bridge (London: Novello, 1911), iii–vi, here iii; 'Music in the Coronation Service. By our Representative in Westminster Abbey', MH (1911), 213–15, here 213.

here expanded to include especially the audible aspect: indeed, in many ways the visual and audible part of pomp work closely together to create a ceremonial Gesamtkunstwerk.

Liturgically, the coronation service is similar to the consecration of a bishop. It is modelled around the celebration of Holy Communion and a division of the service into two main parts became evident early: the coronation part with all the ceremonies of the investiture of the new monarch, and the celebration of the Eucharist. Some sources describe the second part of the service as the ‘Communion Service’. However, strictly speaking, the whole of the service is a communion service. Notably, there was never any sort of congregational communion and one commentator pointed out:

No one communicates with the Archbishop save the King and Queen, the Dean of Westminster who assists in the Administration, and the Bishops Assistant.

From a ceremonial point of view it is a striking that at coronations the monarchs appear always to have received the sacrament in full view of the assembled congregation. In contrast to that, when the monarch took communion in the Chapel Royal, at least until the reign of George III this happened in a special, secluded traverse near the altar.

The 1603 coronation was an important caesura in the history of the ceremony: it was the first fully to follow the rites of the Church of England and it is also the earliest for which some more information on the music survives. Furthermore, this coronation was the first of a de facto ‘British’ monarch, as James I/VI reigned over England with Wales, and Scotland. Since 1066 Westminster Abbey has been the traditional place of the crowning of English monarchs, and, since the Act of Union in 1707, of the monarchs of ‘Great Britain’. In addition, in the period of study here there were two coronations in Scotland: those of Charles I in 1633 and of Charles II in 1651. Another ‘coronation’ ceremony, the investiture of the Prince of Wales, was not celebrated on a grand scale before the investiture of

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5 See, for instance, *London, College of Arms (Lca) MS Ceremonials 18: ‘Coronations. Queen Anne. George Ist’*. (Steer Catalogue, No. [18]), item 90, Procession and order of service for the coronation of George I in 1714: ‘[after the Homage] Then follows the Communion Service.’

6 Perkins, 124.

the future Edward VIII in 1911. Ifan Kyrle Fletcher described the 1911 ceremony as ‘revived with a splendour surpassing any of its predecessors’. However, generally little is known about the individual ceremonies before the twentieth century. Regarding the music, it has been stated that Tallis’s English adaptation of his famous forty-part motet ‘Spem in alium’ (‘Sing and glorify heaven’s majesty’) was sung at the investitures of Prince Henry in 1610, of Prince Charles in 1616, and also at that of the future Charles II in 1638. An eighteenth-century description of such a ceremony contains many general details, but gives no information on the music.

The history and evolution of the coronation service has always generated much interest in Britain. Printed accounts of coronations appeared very early on, and they were soon complemented by comprehensive studies of the ceremony. The situation is similar in other countries in which the coronation was an important state ritual, such as France. In the Holy Roman Empire, the coronations in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were commemorated in semi-official ‘diaries’, or descriptions.

8 For the history of this ceremony see Francis Jones, God Bless The Prince of Wales. Four Essays for Investiture Year 1969 (Carmarthen: Lodwick and Sons, 1969). For 1911 see Ceremonial to be observed at the Investiture of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, K.G., Carnavon Castle, 13th July, 1911 ([London]: Harrison and Sons, [1911]). For a more contextual approach to this ceremony see also Krishan Kumar, The Making of English National Identity (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 182, and the literature referred to there.


10 See, for instance, Douglas Macleane, The Great Solemnity of the Coronation of the King and Queen of England According to the Use of the Church of England, with an introduction by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury (London: George Allen, 1911), 208f. Macleane refers to ‘a description of the investiture of Henry, son of James I., in the Parliament House, June 4, 1610’, but no details of this source are given. See also below, fn. 12.


15 Since the coronation of Leopold I in 1658 these were known as Krönungsdarium. See Bernhard A. Macek, Die Krönung Josephs II. zum Römischen König in Frankfurt am Main. Logistisches Meisterwerk, zерemonielle Glanzleistung und Kulturgüter für die Ewigkeit (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 11f.
times, the interest in coronations is still especially high in Britain; this may be due to the fact that the monarchy is still an integral part of everyday life and that it is the only European country still to have a coronation ceremony.\textsuperscript{16} Two of the leading scholars of British coronations were John Wickham Legg and his son Leopold George, who produced several studies at the beginning of the twentieth century, most prominently the extensive \textit{English Coronation Records} (1901) by the latter. A very authoritative volume was Percy Ernst Schramm’s 1937 study, which, however, was concerned mostly with the earlier, medieval coronations.\textsuperscript{17} Of a more encompassing character was the work of Lawrence Tanner, librarian of Westminster Abbey.\textsuperscript{18} A number of more populist contributions, containing little or no original research, appeared throughout the century, especially when there actually was a coronation. The present state of research is summarized in a collection of essays edited by Paul Bradshaw and, most compelling of all, Roy Strong’s comprehensive study of the topic.\textsuperscript{19} The coronations and their ceremonial specifically in the early modern period have recently also been discussed by Alice Hunt.\textsuperscript{20} While these works give a good introduction to the topic of coronations, they deal with the music only marginally. The coronation music itself has been examined in a number of earlier essays.\textsuperscript{21} There are two more recent overviews of the music and Jeffrey Richards presented a good, comprehensive introduction to the programme and performance conditions at the twentieth century

\textsuperscript{16} All the other remaining monarchies (Spain, Benelux and the Scandinavian countries) have, at best, a blessing of the monarch; however, no crowning, or crown-wearing, takes place in these countries. The last papal coronation was that of Paul VI on 30 June 1963.


\textsuperscript{20} Alice Hunt, \textit{The Drama of Coronation: Medieval Ceremony in Early Modern England} (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

coronations. However, several new details can be added to these studies; and generally so far little consideration has been given to the music’s place within the overall ceremonial – but it is the exact place of the music within the service that can have significant implications for its composition and performance.

Notwithstanding one or two exceptions, there is often much uncertainty regarding the music at British coronations before the twentieth century. There is not a single coronation for which the complete programme of music can be established with certainty and for which all of the music survives. Many of the pieces that are extant survive in only a few sources, which might furthermore not reflect the original scoring and performance practice. It is only from the 1902 coronation onwards that the music is more fully documented, but still some details have remained obscure. In 1953, Gerald Hayes commented:

> It is curious that while the most elaborate records are accessible of the ceremonies, processions, liturgies, clothes and expenses of long-past Coronations, references to the music are very meagre and to composers still slighter.

In the same year another writer summarized that 'State occasions of pageantry are usually feasts only for the eye, with music as a background accompaniment.' However, it will remain to be seen how far such a verdict is generally justified for the coronation music; and while that writer already promulgates an exception for the 1953 event, it appears that also at the earlier coronations the music was much more than a mere 'background accompaniment'.

Apart from the actual scores, one of the main sources for the coronation music, and especially for its place in the ceremonial, are the orders of service. In Britain, the 'form and order of the service of the coronation' has never been fixed obligatorily, as were other special services in the Book of Common Prayer – for example, a thanksgiving service for the monarch’s

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23 For details see the individual chapters. See also the author’s article ‘“With Instrumental Musick of all sorts” – The Orchestra at British Coronations before 1727’, AM 82 (2010), 87–104.


25 Evan Senior, [Editor’s Preface], Music and Musicians. Coronation Number (June 1953), 5.
accession. Therefore, the coronation service is arranged anew for each monarch. In the words of the late Georgian author Robert Huish ‘a coronation is the mere creature of precedent, and rests rather upon practice than principle, although the reason of it also may be traced’. The order of service is usually prepared by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, as the Primate of all England, has the right to crown the monarch. His proposed order is discussed and eventually ratified by the Privy Council, which regulates all matters concerning the accession of a new monarch. While the ceremonial of the church service is arranged by the ecclesiastical authorities, the other ceremonies of the day are regulated by the heralds of the College of Arms under the Duke of Norfolk as the hereditary Earl Marshal, who is responsible for the ceremonial at all the great occasions of state. The clear division of the responsibility for the service and for the rest of the ceremonies is vividly illustrated by an example from 1902. Joseph Armitage Robinson, then Dean of Westminster, wrote to Archbishop Frederick Temple about the printed order of service for the coronation of that year; he pointed out:

I am startled & shocked by the new cover, which introduces the Earl Marshal and the Herald’s College – neither of which have anything to do with a Church of England Service. This is a most dangerous precedent, & ought in my opinion to be absolutely quashed. I acquit the Earl Marshal, but the Heralds are full of mischief!

Nevertheless, there was some historic precedent for at least a light collaboration: it is documented that in 1761 the Archbishop of Canterbury had discussed some of the ceremonial aspects with Garter King of Arms before the service. Close collaboration between these two officials is also documented for the 1937 and 1953 coronations.

It is important to remember that sources such as the order of service or ceremonials written by the heralds are merely official guidelines, normally produced before the ceremony and representing an ideal; they do not necessarily report what actually happened. In his manuscript account of the 1727 coronation Stephen Martin Leake, then Lancaster Herald, remarked sharply about the problems when arranging the various processions.

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27 Robinson to Temple, 6 April 1902 (London, Lambeth Palace (Llp) MS 2797, fo. 143).
28 See Ch. 6, fn. 8. Close collaboration between these two officials is also documented for the 1937 and 1953 coronations.
Another difficulty, that always attends these Grand proceedings, is, That the Great ones, will not observe the directions of the Heralds.

Furthermore, referring to problems at the coronation of George III and Queen Charlotte in 1761, Leake later explicitly stated:

This shows how little Ceremonials are observed, there being thirteen [sic] persons, beside the two Bishops Supporters, after Garter who had the Archbishops printed form of the Solemnity, though not one knew where his Majesty was to go upon his Entrance.

Similarly, in respect to printed reports and illustrations it has been observed that some mistakes in fact multiplied themselves and soon became established custom. However, comparison of all the surviving sources – official documents, unofficial reports, pictures, and the music itself – allows the reconstruction of at least part of the musical programme and ceremonial, and to gain new insights into its performance, reception, and possible meaning.

The music of the service is predominantly choral music, consisting of the liturgical music related to the celebration of Holy Communion, and several topical anthems. It has been observed that it was at the 1603 coronation that ‘the Anthem first appeared’, referring to a setting of a Biblical text in English rather than in Latin, as in the pre-Reformation antiphons. Even though the order of service does not normally include any specific details about the music, crucially, it provides the texts to be sung. Like most of these texts, the music is chosen or written for each coronation individually.

The coronation choir traditionally consisted of the monarch’s own choir, the Chapel Royal, and the choir of Westminster Abbey, it being both the coronation church and a royal peculiar. The selection of the music and the overall responsibility for its performance usually lay with the leading musician of the Chapel, and, from the twentieth century onwards, the organist of the Abbey. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the choir was augmented by other choirs and selected individuals from different places in Britain and the Empire/Commonwealth. Orchestral accompaniment of the choir, mostly drawn from the royal musicians, is documented from the seventeenth century onwards.

Although there is little evidence of monarchs being personally involved in the planning of the ceremonial, there are several instances of them being

32 Hayes, 10.
involved in matters concerning the music. This may be due simply to many British monarchs’ enthusiasm for music, but it is also a reminder of the fact that the music is one of the most flexible parts of the service.

Music at the coronation: its place

Up to 1661, the coronation included a cavalcade from the Tower of London through the city to the Palace of Westminster on the day before the coronation. Proceedings on the coronation day itself, until the coronation of William IV and Queen Adelaide in 1831, began in Westminster Hall, where the monarch to be crowned was shown the regalia. From there a procession with all the nobility and clergy to Westminster Abbey took place. The participating choirs also walked in this procession and accompanied it with the performance of an anthem. This practice can be traced back to the twelfth century, when the so-called ‘Third Recension’, a revision of the first order of service for a coronation, came into use; it mentions the choir singing the antiphon ‘Firmetur manus tua’, ‘Let thy hand be strengthened’.33 The fact that there were also instrumentalists from early on is confirmed by the order for King Stephen’s coronation in 1135, which stipulates ‘Let him be conducted to the church with sound of trumpets and with chanting.’34 From the seventeenth century onwards at least, the text of the anthem accompanying this procession was ‘O Lord, grant the King a long life’.35 However, the musicians were so far ahead of the king or queen that their anthem did not directly accompany the royal procession. Furthermore, the singing must have been difficult as the choir was stretched out, and much of the music would surely have been drowned out by the ringing of the Abbey bells and the shouts of the cheering crowds.

Once the procession had reached the Abbey, the royal party was ‘received’, as it is usually worded in the orders of service, with the entrance-anthem.36 For the earlier coronations it is not clear exactly when and how this anthem was performed; but from 1685 onwards the reports explicitly

33 See Strong, 42–5. In addition, there is evidence for this processional antiphon at the coronation of Richard I in 1189. See J. Wickham Legg, ‘Notes on the coronation of King William and Queen Mary’, in J. Wickham Legg (ed.), Three Coronation Orders (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 129–59, here 135.
34 See Maclean, 248.
35 The text then consisted of vv. 6–7 from Ps. 61 and v. 19 from Ps. 132.
36 Some authors use the term ‘introit’ for this anthem. However, at least from 1902 onwards this term was used to denote the anthem that marks the beginning of the communion service, and therefore the term ‘entrance-anthem’ is more appropriate.
describe that it accompanied the procession through the nave to the quire. At earlier coronations its text had been taken from Ps. 84, beginning at verse 9: ‘Protector noster’ (‘Behold, O Lord our protector/defender’), a text which was also used at papal coronations. Since the seventeenth century the text has been a selection of verses from Ps. 122, ‘I was glad’. An additional feature at the beginning of the service is the shouting or singing of the *Vivats*, the Latin acclamation ‘Vivat Rex NN/ Vivat Regina NN’.38

Very little is known of the music at the pre-Reformation coronation service. The service included the *Ordinarium* and *Proprium Missae*, and the additional ceremonies were accompanied by several antiphons and the Te Deum. Indeed, especially the Te Deum, probably the grandest song of praise in the church, features prominently in earlier descriptions of coronations.39 Some of the earliest surviving coronation music appears to be the *Laudes Regiae* that were sung at medieval coronations.40 A presumably pre-Reformation manuscript description of ‘The maner of Coronations of the Kinges & Queenes of England’ includes the names of a few antiphons, but nothing about the respective settings.41 One copy of this includes at the end some music in score, probably for six parts; however, it is not clear if this music is in any way linked to coronations.42

The Reformation did not change the form of the coronation service significantly. The first Protestant coronation in Britain was that of Anne Boleyn, second queen consort to Henry VIII. She was crowned in 1533 by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer who also wrote a description of the event.43 The first coronation of a reigning monarch after the Reformation was that of Edward VI. Hunt has argued that this event was modified so as to articulate ‘a new conceptualization of the authority of coronation and the legitimacy of ceremony’.44 After only six years, however, Edward VI was succeeded by

38 Andrew Hughes, ‘Antiphons’, 150ff., shows that these had originally been sung at the end of the service, and were moved to its beginning in the ‘Fourth Recension’, in the early fourteenth century. For the later custom see Ch. 3.
41 Oxford, Bodleian Library (Ob) MS Rawlinson B 120, fo. 113.
42 London British Library (Lbl) MS Harl. 4848, fos. 79v–83: ‘The maner of Coronations of the Kinges & Queenes / of Englande.’, c. 1530. The music is on fos. 84v–88.
43 For details of this coronation see Strong, 162 and 510 (for sources and literature).
44 Hunt, ch. 3 (77–110); this quotation on p. 79. For details of this coronation see also Strong, 199–211.
his Catholic half-sister, Mary I, who tried to reverse the Reformation. After her short but intense reign Protestantism could not be re-introduced immediately; the coronation of her successor, Elizabeth I, in 1558, was still incorporated into a full Catholic mass.\textsuperscript{45} By the time Elizabeth I died, Protestantism was firmly established and the coronation of her successor James I (James VI of Scotland) and his queen in 1603 was a clearly Protestant affair. The ceremonies concerned with the inauguration of the new monarch saw few or no changes and were still combined with the celebration of the Eucharist. From that coronation on they were integrated into the Communion Service according to the Book of Common Prayer and no longer into a full (Roman Catholic) mass. The service continued the pre-Reformation tradition by including a number of special, topical motets, or anthems as they were more commonly called now. Their texts were never fixed and to this day depend solely on tradition; they were normally taken directly or in slightly varied versions from either the Prayer Book or the King James version of the English Bible. As before the Reformation the main stages of the coronation part of the service were punctuated by such anthems:

1. The Recognition occurs at the very beginning of the ceremony and symbolizes the affirmation of the monarch by the people. The archbishop proclaims the monarch to the four compass points and the people signify their consent (‘recognition’) by shouting ‘God save the king/queen’. This is followed by the singing of an anthem during which the monarch returns to the Chair of Estate.\textsuperscript{46}

2. The Anointing, when the archbishop anoints the monarch with holy oil, is the spiritual climax of the service.\textsuperscript{47} It begins with the singing of \textit{Veni Creator Spiritus} (‘Come Holy Ghost’). This ninth-century Pentecostal hymn has been used at this place in ‘every coronation of which a record survives’, and the origins of its inclusion at coronations have been seen in its use at the election of popes and the consecration of bishops.\textsuperscript{48}

The \textit{Veni Creator} is followed by the anthem ‘Zadok the Priest’, a translation of the antiphon \textit{Unxerunt Salomonem}. The text is derived

\textsuperscript{45} Strong, 208f. For the 1558 music see Timothy Morris, ‘Music to Celebrate the Coronation of Elizabeth I’, in booklet text to \textit{Coronation of the First Elizabeth}, CD GCCD 4032 (Griffin: 1994), 4–6.

\textsuperscript{46} For the history of this anthem see Legg, \textit{Three Coronation Orders}, 136.


\textsuperscript{48} Ian Bradley, \textit{God Save the Queen. The Spiritual Dimension of Monarchy} (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), 88.