

King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in
History

Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Sroka

Introduction

A central feature of nearly every ancient and medieval society was kingship--rule by divinely appointed kings--an institution whose origins are lost in the mists of time. In the view of the ancient Egyptians, kingship was coextensive in time with the world itself;¹ to the Sumerians, kingship was a gift of the gods.²

A central ritual associated with kingship was the coronation ceremony, that series of acts, performed in a temple or other sacred space,³ by means of which the king accedes to the throne and is endowed with the power and

1 Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 50.

2 Cyril J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient Near East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 21.

3 In the ancient Near East, in particular, coronation ceremonies were frequently carried out in temples. Joash's consecration took place in the temple (2 Kings 11:4-14, 2 Chronicles 23:3-12), and Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 102, thinks that "the consecration of the other kings of Judah after Solomon took place" there. According to Alan Gardiner, "The Coronation of King Haremhab," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 38(1953): 25, the coronation of certain Egyptian kings, such as Haremhab, took place in the temple. Further, as Henri Frankfort notes, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 245-47, both Sumerian and Assyrian texts describe coronation ceremonies were performed in the temples of Erech and Assur. So also in ancient Persia the enthronement rites of the king generally took place in a temple at the ancient capital of Pasargadae; see M. N. Dhalia, *Zoroastrian Civilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 227.

authority by which alone his rule is possible. Features of these coronation ceremonies, which have been attested among numerous and often widely separated cultures, display remarkable similarities. The cultural anthropologist Arthur Hocart was the first to isolate the common features of coronation ceremonies and to synthesize the available evidence, which he published in his groundbreaking work *Kingship*.⁴ Subsequent specialized studies of kingship and coronation patterns in Africa,⁵ India,⁶ Japan,⁷ and the ancient Near East⁸ have served only to confirm the general outline of Hocart's findings, but there has been no synthesis of the accumulated evidence.

In this study, we consider some of the more widely attested features of the coronation ceremony, especially as attested in the ancient Near East. Relevant material from other cultures where detailed studies of enthronement rites have been made is also considered. Given the amount of evidence available and the number of ritual acts in the coronation ceremony that have been isolated, not all of the features can be dealt with in the body of the text. They

4 Arthur V. Hocart, *Kingship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).

5 Tor Istraem, *The King of Qanda* (Lund: H. Ohlsson Boktr., 1944).

6 J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1957).

7 D. C. Holtow, *The Japanese Enthronement Ceremonies* (Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan, 1928), and Robert S. Ellwood, *The Basis of Kingship* (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1973).

8 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 1978.

are summarized in Appendix A. In an additional Appendix (B) all the features of the coronation ceremony which are attested in selected cultures--Africa, Egypt, England, Fiji, India, Israel, Japan, and Siam--are noted.

A note on methodology is appropriate. Comparative studies in religion and anthropology have been popular during the past century. These works are often memorials to the extraordinary erudition and insight of their authors, but have subsequently, and often justly, been criticized for their lack of critical acumen. These studies are elaborately descriptive but often fail to explore the meaning of parallels, even within a single cultural setting. While these criticisms have been important in tempering the excesses of "parallelomania" by emphasizing the distinction between the formal similarities of ritual acts and the contextual meaning of those acts, comparative studies do retain their value, because they delineate the contours of broader cultural patterns. While the primary purpose of this study is to outline the striking resemblances in coronation rites throughout the world by detailing formal similarities among the various ceremonies, we remain aware of the differences in meaning which, each of the ritual acts may have in its own context.

Individual Elements of Coronation Rites

Secrecy

Secrecy--the insistence that the ritual acts

constituting the coronation ceremony be viewed only by the initiated--is an important feature of several of the rites, especially modern ones, for which we have detailed accounts. In the Japanese enthronement rite, "the Daijo enclosure certainly keeps out all non-participants, and it was guarded by traditional groups such as the Uruho, Mononobe, etc."⁹ Similarly, women, children, and commoners were all excluded from the Indian coronation ceremony.¹⁰ In Thailand, the traditional rite of the king's consecration was "distinctly private."¹¹ This same secrecy is also a part of the African¹² and Polynesian¹³ coronation ceremonies.

Secrecy seems to be an almost universal feature of initiation ceremonies. The Egyptologist C. J. Bleeker notes that "initiation presupposes a religious secret which is only known to the initiated."¹⁴ These secrets include, according to Mircea Eliade, "the myths that tell of the gods and the origin of the world, the true names of the gods, (and) the role and origin of the ritual instruments employed in the initiation ceremonies."¹⁵

9 Ellwood, *The Feast of Kingship*, p. 151.

10 Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 78

11 H. G. Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies: Their History and Function* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1931), p. 124.

12 Istrom, *The King of Ganda*, p. 72.

13 Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 76

14 C. J. Bleeker, "The Significance of Initiation," in C. J. Bleeker, ed., *Initiation* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), p. 15.

15 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1958), p. 188.

The secrecy surrounding initiation rites in general and enthronement ceremonies in particular also characterizes the rituals at temples and other sanctuaries. Among the Mesopotamians, temple rites were a jealously guarded secret.¹⁶ The ancient Egyptians were strictly forbidden to reveal what they had seen in the temple.¹⁷ In ancient Greece, the secrecy surrounding the rituals performed in the sanctuary at Eleusis was so rigorous that in 200 B.C. when two young men from the distant town of Akarnania innocently entered the sanctuary at Eleusis during the enactment of a mystery festival and betrayed themselves by asking questions about the rites, they were promptly executed.¹⁸ Of the Eleusinian mysteries George Mylonas writes that "the last Hierophant carried with him to the grave the secrets which had been transmitted orally for untold generations, from one high priest to the next."¹⁹

Of secrecy in religious traditions in general Irach Taraporewala writes:

16 Samuel H. Hooke, *Babylonian and Assyrian Religion* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 47; cf. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 16.

17 Bleeker, "Initiation in Ancient Egypt," pp. 55-56; H. V. Fairman, "Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple," *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 37(1954-55): 174, 187, 201; cf. M. V. Seton-Williams, *Etusianic Temples* (Cambridge: The author, 1978), p. 38.

18 Carl Kerényi, *Eleusis* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1967), p. 118; George Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 225.

19 Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*, p. 281.

In considering the history of any religion we get, first of all, either authenticated Scriptures compiled by the followers of that Faith or else descriptions left by contemporary outsiders narrating how these doctrines and beliefs affected them. In the second place, there is a certain amount of what might be called "floating tradition" and folklore embodied in the varied rites and ceremonies practiced by the believers in that Faith. And thirdly, there is a certain amount of "sacred" or "mystic" tradition and teaching known to only a few, and which was jealously guarded from the "profane" who were likely to scoff at it. This "sacred," and therefore secret, lore was known only to a few initiates, but in order that the memory of these may not be completely lost most of this secret teaching was embodied in some sort of symbolic ritual which could be performed openly before the public.²⁰

Ablutions

Ablutions--ceremonial washings which were believed to avert evil, give life and strength, and to symbolize rebirth²¹-- were a regular part of the coronation ceremonies in the ancient Near East. Even as a child the Egyptian crown prince was sprinkled with water by officials in order that he might be endowed with divine qualities and be reborn.²² In his daily preparations for entrance into the

20 Irach J. S. Taraporawala, "Mithraism," in Vergilius Fera, ed., *Esoteric Religions* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), p. 205.

21 Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 130; cf. also Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (Cleveland: World, 1963), pp. 188-89, 193-94; Maurice A. Canney, *Myths of Life* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1928), p. 67; W. B. Kristensen, *The Meaning of Religion* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1960), p. 447; A. J. Wensinck, "The Semitic New Year and the Origin of Eschatology," *Acta Orientalia* 1(1923): 166, 186; Robert A. Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Osiris* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), pp. 125, 153.

22 Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts*, 4 vols. (New York: Longmans and Green, 1952), 4:55; cf. Aylward M.

temple, the pharaoh was sprinkled with holy water, an act that endowed him with life, good fortune, stability, health, and happiness. For the purpose of performing these ritual acts of ablution, a pool or lake was connected with many Egyptian temples.²³ During the Sed festival, the recurring feast celebrating the pharaoh's kingship, the pharaoh would have his feet ceremonially washed.²⁴

It is still uncertain whether ablutions were part of the ancient Israelite coronation ceremonies. However, since purification in water is mentioned in Ex. 29:4 in connection with the anointing and investment of Aaron and his sons (cf. Ex. 40:12), Geo Widengren thinks that "it is probable that certain water-purifications had a place in the Israelite royal consecration."²⁵ St. Cyril of Jerusalem may have based his comments on an extra-biblical tradition when he said, in one of his lectures "On the Mysteries," "When the High Priest raised Solomon to the kingship, he anointed him after

Blackman, "An Ancient Egyptian Foretaste of the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration," *Theology* 1(1820): 140-41.

23 Blackman, "An Ancient Egyptian Foretaste of the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration," pp. 135, 137-38; Aylward M. Blackman, "Some Notes on the Ancient Egyptian Practice of Washing the Dead," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 5(1918): 124; Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* (London: Luzac, 1949), pp. 348-50; Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Osiris*, p. 145.

24 Aylward M. Blackman, "The House of the Morning," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 5(1918): 155; Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 83; Eva L. R. Meyerowitz, *The Divine Kingship in Ghana and Ancient Egypt* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 159.

25 Geo Widengren, "Royal Ideology and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," in P. P. Bruce, ed., *Ecumenism and Fulfillment* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), p. 207.

washing him in the waters of Gihon."²⁶ Although there is no explicit mention in 1 Kings 1:38-39 of a ritual ablution in connection with King Solomon's coronation rites, the Talmud records that "our Rabbis taught: The kings are anointed only at a fountain."²⁷

Ablutions are also widely attested in coronation ceremonies in other parts of the world. During many African coronations, kings were either washed or sprinkled with water, which both cleansed the king and enabled him "to see a part of the divine life."²⁸ In Japan, the emperor entered a building called the Kairyu-den, or Ablution Hall, where he took his bath of purification. After entering the bath, the Emperor folded his arms and stooped down while the officiants poured water over him.²⁹

26 Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis Mystagogica* III.6 (*Catechesis XXI*) in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graecae*, 161 vols. (Paris: Fratres Garnier, 1892), 33:1093.

27 Babylonian Talmud, *Horayoth* 12a. The presumption in favor of the existence of ablutions in the Israelite coronation ceremony is also strengthened by the symbolic placement of the temple--the site of many Israelite coronations (e.g., the coronation of Joash, 2 Kings 11:4-14)--over the center of the world, where the "Water of Life" flowed; see Geo Widengren, "Israelite-Jewish Religion," in C. J. Bleeker and Geo Widengren, eds., *Mistica Religiosa*, 2 volumes (Leiden: Brill, 1969), I:258-59.

28 Irstam, *The King of Qanda*, pp. 64-65.

29 Zoe Kincaid, in Benjamin W. Fleisher, ed., *Enlightenment of the One Hundred Twenty-fourth Emperor of Japan* (Tokyo: The Japan Advertiser, 1929), pp. 31, 34. In general, the available descriptions of the coronation rites give few particulars concerning the ablution ceremony. Reports of other initiation rites, however, provide us a fairly detailed insight into the procedures involved. For example, according to reports concerning the ceremonial ablutions among the Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran and cited in

Anointing

Anointing the king with oil is a significant element of the coronation ceremonies in the ancient Near East, as elsewhere in the world. From extant sources it is clear that the Hittite accession ceremony included "anointing with oil, clothing in special garments, coronation, and the bestowal of a royal name."³⁰ Further, although there is no clear evidence that the Egyptian king was anointed at the time of his accession to the throne, the sources indicate that he was anointed every morning prior to entering the temple in order to perform the daily liturgy there.³¹

The Bible records the anointings of six Israelite kings: Saul, Solomon, Jehu, Joash, and Jehoahaz.³² Indeed,

E. S. Drower, *The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1937), pp. 102-04, the hands, face, forehead, ears, nose, lower part of the body, mouth, knees, legs, and feet are all washed. During the initiation ceremony of the Bektashi order of Sufi Muslims (detailed by Helmer Ringgren in "Initiation Ceremony of the Bektashis," in C. J. Bleeker, ed., *Initiation*, pp. 203-04, the meaning of each act of the ablution rite is explained:

He washes his hands in order to be freed from all the prohibited things to which he has stretched his hands before; he rinses his mouth in order to cleanse it from all falsehood and fault that may have issued from it; he rinses his nose to cleanse it from whatever forbidden things he has snelt; he washes his face in order to be absolved from every shameful thing; his feet in order to be cleansed from every instance of having walked in rebellious and mistaken paths; while he wipes his head and ears he wishes to be absolved from every unreasonable thing which is counter to the religious law, and further, while wiping his face from all the acts of disobedience which he has committed. Keiri adds that this ablution differed from the ordinary ablution in so far as it was

the very name "Messiah," used with reference to several of the kings of ancient Israel, means "anointed," and it doubtless refers to the rite of anointing the king at his installation as monarch.³³ Later Jewish legend had it that the idea of anointing began with the first man. According to this story, when Adam was 930 years old, he knew that his days were coming to an end. He therefore implored Eve, "Arise and go with my son Seth near to paradise, and put earth upon your head and weep and pray to God to have mercy upon me and send his angel to paradise, and give me of the tree out of which the oil floweth, and bring it (to) me, and I shall anoint myself and shall have rest from my complaint."³⁴

effective forever. This meaning is quite clear: it is the complete removal of all that is sinful and unclean and belongs to his former life.

30 Oliver R. Gurney, "Hittite Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 118.

31 Ernst Kutsch, *Salbung als Kechisaki im Alten Testament und im Alten Oriente* (Beihäfte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 97) (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1963), pp. 41-52; Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 348.

32 Saul: 1 Samuel 10:1; David: 2 Samuel 5:3; Solomon: 1 Kings 1:39; Jehu: 2 Kings 9:6; Joash: 2 Kings 11:12; Jehoahaz: 2 Kings 23:30. In addition, it is recorded in 2 Samuel 19:11 that Absalom was anointed to be king.

33 Kutsch, *Salbung als Kechisaki*, pp. 52-63; cf. also J. A. Soggin, "mašāḥ," in Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 2 vols. (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971), 1:214.

34 *Apocalypsis Mosis* 9:3, cited in W. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 2:143.

Anointing as part of coronation rites is also well attested in India, Cambodia, Siam, and throughout Europe.³⁵

R. M. Woolley, who examined European enthronement ceremonies, found anointing to be an integral part of the rite in Byzantium, Russia, England, France, Hungary, Spain, and Germany. Some of the anointings of these coronation were quite complex. One of the more elaborate anointings was received by the Russian czar. According to Woolley:

The Anointing takes place after the Communion hymn. Two bishops summon the Czar, who takes his stand near the Royal Gates, the Czarina, a little behind him, both in their purple robes, and there the Czar is anointed on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, and on both sides of his hands by the senior Metropolitan, who says: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost."³⁶

New Name

According to A. M. Hocart, at his coronation the king "usually acquires a new name, either a title or the name of a predecessor; so do priests very frequently, for instance Popes and monks in Europe."³⁷ Perhaps no element of coronation rites is more widely known (and taken for granted) than the monarch's receipt of a new name or throne name at the time of his (or her) accession to the throne. During the Middle Kingdom the Egyptian king, who had no less than five names in all, received one of these, the praenomen

³⁵ Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 79-86.

³⁶ Woolley, *Coronation Rites* (Cambridge: University Press, 1915), p. 29.

³⁷ Arthur M. Hocart, "Initiation," in *Folklore* 35(1924): 312.

or throne name, at the time of his accession.³⁸ In Mesopotamia, the new name was given at the time of the king's accession "when the choice of the gods became effective in the world of men."³⁹ Before his accession, the kings in Mesopotamia bore a different name, the "name of sealings."⁴⁰ Similarly, Parthian kings assumed the throne-name Arsak at the time of their coronation, a fact that has complicated the process of identifying individual rulers.⁴¹ Since several Israelite kings had two names--the "birth name" and the "regal name"--Roland de Vaux believes that it is likely, though not certain, that the kings of Judah received a new name when they succeeded to the throne.⁴²

This practice of assigning a new name at the time of the king's enthronement is also well attested in other parts of the world. The new name or title added to the Siamese king's personal name after his coronation was inscribed on a golden plate and was "neither known nor understood by the common people."⁴³ Similarly, during the Japanese enthronement rite the emperor receives a new name--the era

38 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 46; cf. also John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 102.

39 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 246.

40 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 246.

41 Geo Widengren, "The Sacred Kingship of Iran," in *La rexalia sacra/The Sacred Kingship (Studies in the History of Religions 4)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), p. 255-56.

42 Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), p. 108.

43 Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, pp. 38, 85, 88, 102, 103, 125.

title.⁴⁴

Kings were not the only ones to receive new names. Biblical history is replete with examples of men (and in one case, a woman) who received new or changed names, frequently in association with a transition (usually, though not invariably, of a spiritual nature) in their lives. Thus Abram became Abraham,⁴⁵ his wife Sarai became Sarah,⁴⁶ Jacob was renamed Israel,⁴⁷ and Joseph became Zaphnath-paaneah.⁴⁸ In the New Testament, Jesus gave Simon the name Cephas (whose Greek reflex is Peter),⁴⁹ while Saul took on the Latin name Paul, indicative of his role as missionary to the Gentiles.⁵⁰ The receipt of a new name is promised to all the faithful in Revelations:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.⁵¹

Rebirth

Rebirth rituals--which include acting as one who is new to the world, being swallowed by a monster, acting like a

44 Ellwood, *The East of Kinnabir*, p. 152.

45 Genesis 17:5

46 Genesis 17:15

47 Genesis 32:28.

48 Genesis 41:45

49 Matthew 16:17-18; John 1:42.

50 The name Paul is first mentioned at Acts 13:9, at the beginning of his first missionary labors among the Gentiles.

51 Revelations 2:17.

newborn babe, being endowed with divine qualities, going through a burial ceremony, or simply being reawakened--are frequent concomitants of coronation ceremonies. Rebirth is also implicit in certain of the other elements of the coronation ceremony: ablution, anointing, giving of the new name, and the bestowal of a garment. Thus in Egypt, according to Samuel A. B. Mercer, the "ritual act of ablutions--washing and sprinkling--symbolized new birth."⁵² In the view of Tor Irström, the idea of death and rebirth may provide the explanation of the custom of the king assuming a new name upon his accession to the throne.⁵³ In ancient Babylon, during the period of the Late Empire, the king's death and rebirth were probably portrayed on the fifth day of the great Akitu (New Year) Festival, when the king was divested of his royal insignia and apparel, ritually humiliated, and reinstated.⁵⁴ Henri Frankfort remarks on this event, "It is . . . clear that his renewed investiture with the insignia of royalty signified a renewal of kingship."⁵⁵

There may be an intimation of the notion of rebirth in the accounts of the ancient Israelite kings. It is

52 Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 350; cf. Blackman, "An Ancient Egyptian Foretaste of the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration," pp. 138-141.

53 Irström, *The King of Gods*, pp. 57, 58; cf. van Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 5.

54 Aage Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p. 26.

55 Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 320.

recounted of Saul that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul following his anointing, whereupon he became a new man. Similarly, the spirit of the Lord came upon David immediately following his anointing to be king.⁵⁶ In later Jewish tradition, the association of coronation with rebirth became explicit: in the Talmud it is said that the king becomes on the day of his coronation "like a one year old babe who has not known the tasted sin."⁵⁷

Creation

The time of the king's coronation was frequently associated with the creation of the world. This is particularly apparent in ancient Egypt. There, the crown prince's accession to the throne took place on the morning following the death of the former king, a moment chosen not merely to secure as easy and peaceful a dynastic succession as possible, but also because of its religious significance. By ascending to the throne in this manner the crown prince "actualized the mythic deed of the sun-god, his ideal father, who in mythic times climbed the primeval hill, thus causing the day to break."⁵⁸ The installation of the Indian

56 1 Samuel 10:6, 10 (Saul); 1 Samuel 16:13 (David).

57 Midrash, Samuel 17; Babylonian Talmud Yoma 22b, cited in Raphael Patai, "Hebrew Installation Rites," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 20 (1947): 170.

58 Bleeker, *Egyptian Eschatology*, p. 95. It is also interesting to note the consistency with which the recitation of the creation account is found in temple ritual in the ancient Near East. Hugh Nibley, in his luminous study of the Egyptian background of the Joseph Smith papyri, *The Messages of the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1975), p. 131, notes that the creation

king, the RAJAGUYA, included the recreation of the universe.⁵⁹ And according to A. M. Hocart, the installation ceremony of the Fijian king was called the "creation of the world," "fashioning the land," or "creating the earth."⁶⁰

Procession

As part of many coronation ceremonies the king toured his kingdom and received homage from his subjects, a procession which many times followed the course of the sun.⁶¹ In ancient Egypt from the time of Menes, each pharaoh paraded ceremoniously around a fortified wall, and the ritual came to be called "the procession round the wall."⁶² Similarly, after Solomon had been anointed as king of Israel, a procession went with the new king from the

story constitutes a focal point in Egyptian religious literature and in the temple ritual; see further E. A. E. Reymond, *The Mythical Origin of the Egyptian Temple* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), pp. 273-85, who shows that the creation account played a major role in the temple liturgy at Memphis. Similarly, the Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation account, was recited in the Akitu-house in Babylon in the course of the Akitu (New Year's) festival, and possibly on other occasions as well; see F. Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1921), p. 136, ll. 279-284, and W. G. Lambert, "Myth and Ritual as Conceived by the Babylonians," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 13(1968): 106. While it is uncertain that the creation account of Genesis (1:1-2:4a) was used in the temple ritual of Israel before the Babylonian exile, a reference in the Mishna (Ta'anit 4:2-3) clearly indicates that one of the responsibilities of the courses of laymen (lanuha ma'amad) in the post-exilic temple was to read sections of the Genesis account while the Levites and priests performed the sacrifices.

⁵⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 39; cf. Heisterman, *The Ancient Indian Coronation*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 189-90; cf. Eliade, *Myth and*

sanctuary to the throne, whereupon he took his place on the throne and received the obeisance of the officials and the royal princes.⁶³ During the Babylonian Akitu festival (in which the king played a central role, although it was not a coronation rite ~~per se~~) a procession took place, in which the statue of the god left the city temple, embarked on a ship, and made a journey to the Akitu-house, afterwards returning to his temple on the same boat. The participation of the king in the ceremony was essential, and it is clear that the populace joined in and found it a period of great joy and feasting.⁶⁴ This element of the coronation rite is also found in the ceremonies of India, Cambodia, Siam, Japan, Fiji, and Africa.⁶⁵

Garment

Kings are commonly clothed with special garments during their coronations. Some of our best evidence for this feature of accession rites is found in accounts of enthronement ceremonies in South and East Asia. In India the king is invested with two garments and a mantle at the time of his coming to the throne. Similarly, in Cambodia

Realist, p. 39.

61 Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 80; 85; Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Coronation*, pp. 55, 62, 137; Quaritch Wales, *Siam's State Ceremonies*, p. 107.

62 Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 351; cf. Theodor H. Gaster, *Incantations* (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 80.

63 1 Kings 1:40, 53.

64 H. W. F. Saks, *The Greatness That Was Babylon* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), p. 384.

65 Gaster, *Incantations*, p. 98; Irschman, *The King of Ganda*, p. 72; Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 77, 80, 82.

the king's ministers traditionally place a red mantle with gold embroidery on the king's shoulders during his coronation.⁶⁶ There is a similar ceremony for the Siamese king. The king was given a white robe symbolic of purity for his ceremonial bath of purification and anointment. Following this ceremonial bath the king withdrew, reappearing shortly thereafter in his full royal robes, including the gold embroidered *gha-nua*, or Siamese national lower garment and a gold embroidered robe or long tunic.⁶⁷ During the enthronement ceremony for the Japanese emperor, clothing in a royal garment also plays an important part.⁶⁸

In medieval and modern European accession rites, clothing in regal garments plays a central role. One of the oldest preserved Christian coronation ceremonies is the Spanish rite, during which the king

dierobes, and is arrayed in white vestments designed with special openings to admit of the anointing. The Archbishop of Pamplona proceeds to anoint him in front of the high altar according to the custom, but unfortunately what the custom is is not specified. The king after the anointing changes his raiment for precious vestments, and returns to the high altar. The archbishop then proceeds with the accustomed prayers.⁶⁹

The evidence for clothing in royal robes at the coronation ceremonies in the ancient Near East is somewhat

-
- 66 Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 74, 77, 81-82.
67 Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, pp. 74, 77.
68 Eliwood, *The Feast of Kingship*, p. 2.
69 Woolley, *Coronation Kings*, p. 135.

less certain. However, according to Bleeker, the *h*h *á*d (Sed festival), the main festival of the king in ancient Egypt, should be translated "the festival of the garment, in the sense of re-investiture. . . This accords with what has already been established: one of the central rituals--if not the main one of the festival--is the king's donning and wearing the *á*d robe of archaic design."⁷⁰ "By donning the *á*d robe," Bleeker notes in another study, "the king renewed his office."⁷¹

Possibly there was a rite of investiture at the coronation of the Israelite king similar to that at the Sed festival; and the royal robe may have looked like the garment of the high priest, which is described in great detail in Exodus 28.⁷²

Crown

The root sense of coronation implies that the king is crowned, and indeed, this is a central part of many, though by no means all, accession rites. In ancient Egypt the king was given the two crowns of upper and lower Egypt. The red crown of Lower Egypt was a "flat cap, with spiral in front and tall projection at rear," while the white crown of Upper

70 Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals*, p. 120.

71 C. J. Bleeker, "Features of the Ancient Egyptian Religion," in *The Rainbow: A Collection of Studies in the Science of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), p. 125.

72 Helmer Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Chicago: A. R. Allenson, 1956), p. 13.

Egypt was "tall and conical with a knob at the top."⁷³ There is no direct evidence concerning the receipt of a crown by the Israelite king at the time of his enthronement, but the high priest's crown (described in Exodus 28) may reflect the type used by the king. The Persian king's dress also included a cap, described in detail by Dhalla:

The cap was made of stiffer material, and was higher than that worn by any of (his) subjects. It assumed a broader circular shape, as it reached the flat top, and a blue fillet (or band), spotted with white, encircled it at the bottom.⁷⁴

In his study of coronation ceremonies among African tribes, Irstram found nineteen tribes where the king was crowned. These crowns included bands of cloth or cow-hide, caps, and actual metal crowns.⁷⁵ The Siamese crown was "a cone of several stages terminating in a spire,"⁷⁶ whereas in India it was a gold plate.⁷⁷ In Japan, on the other hand, it is not proper to speak of a "coronation," since the emperor received no crown.

Conclusion

73 K. A. Kitchen, "Crown," in *New Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1962), p. 280-81; cf. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (London: Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 481, 571.

74 Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilization*, p. 258.

75 Irstram, *The King of Ganda*, pp. 56-57, 71-72.

76 Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, 95.

77 Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 80.

Some general observations concerning enthronement ceremonies are warranted: 1) Although the actual elements of the coronation ceremonies of the various cultures under study may differ substantially from each other, and although no one people has a coronation ceremony that reflects in all its particulars the pattern described above (much less the full complement of elements listed in Appendix A), there are still sufficient similarities in the rites to justify their comparison. 2) Much of what is contained in the ceremonies of enthronement seems distinctly foreign to the thought and forms of twentieth-century man, as indeed it should, since the pattern is widely attested in antiquity, and appears to derive from it. 3) The coronation rites are intimately linked with the priesthood. Those carrying out the coronation rites are nearly always of sacerdotal rank, and even the king himself is generally of priestly grade or is endowed with priestly power. 4) The site of the coronation ceremonies is nearly always sacred space. In many of the cultures where coronation ceremonies are attested, the temple serves as the site of the ceremony, given its position as sacred space par excellence. In others, a church or some other sanctuary was chosen, which strengthened the

association of the enthronement rites with the sacred considerably. Access to this sacred space, be it temple, church, or other area, is generally restricted, at least during the time of the coronation liturgy.

Appendix A

1. **Austerities.** Previous to their coronation, some kings prepared themselves for the ceremony through fasting, remaining in solitude, or some other act of discipline.

2. **Secrecy.** The coronation ceremony, which often contained religious secrets known only to the initiated, was frequently guarded in order to prevent the entrance of the uninitiated.

3. **Reverence.** During the coronation ceremony itself, those who were allowed to attend were expected to maintain a discrete silence.

4. **Humiliation.** During certain ceremonies, the king became the butt of practical jokes, sneers, derision, "grotesque and fantastic puns," and was sometimes even the object of a severe beating.

5. **Promises.** In another important constituent of the coronation ceremony, "the king is admonished to rule justly and promises to do so."

6. **Gods.** A feature particularly evident in ancient coronation ceremonies but found less often in modern ones is the impersonation of the gods by priests or other officials.

7. **Ablution.** During this part of the coronation rite, the king was ceremonially washed.

8. **Anointing.** A feature of the ceremony which generally followed the ablution was the anointing of the king with oil.

9. **Sacrifices.** Animal sacrifice frequently attended

the installation rituals of the king. Human sacrifice is also attested, but only rarely.

10. Jubilation. Numerous coronations end with ritual rejoicing that was frequently accompanied by acclamations such as "Long live the king!"

11. New Name. In the course of the coronation ceremonies the king generally acquired a new name, often either a title or the name of a predecessor.

12. Rebirth. During many coronation rituals, some act suggesting the rebirth process was performed: acting as one who is new to the world, going through a burial ceremony, being ritually reawakened, or acting like a newborn babe.

13. Creation. The coronation ceremony was thought of as a time of new creation, a day like the day on which the world was created. This intimate association of coronation and creation was often ritually expressed by the ceremonial repetition of the creation account.

14. Combat. This is often a ritual combat or "sham fight," which is a fight or battle enacted in a ritual in order to illustrate a battle told of in myth; the result of this battle is the (temporary) destruction of the cosmic order or of the life of the community.

15. Marriage. A "sacred marriage" between the king and his consort frequently accompanies the other rituals associated with the coronation, and in some rituals is its final act.

16. Procession. The coronation ceremony generally

included a ritual procession, either around the sacred site of the king's enthronement or through his realm, in order that the king might receive homage from his people.

17. **Garment.** In the course of the enthronement ceremony, the king was generally clothed with a garment endowed with special powers.

18. **Crown.** During the coronation rite, the king was frequently given a crown, cap, or some other head covering with sacred associations.

19. **Shoes.** In many coronations, the king puts on shoes or other footwear as a part of the rites.

20. **Regalia.** During the installation rites, the king receives various symbols of his regal power: a sword, a sceptre, or a ring.

21. **Throne.** The ritual enthronement of the king during the coronation ceremony is enacted even more frequently than the bestowal of the crown or the receipt of other regalia.

22. **Masks.** The use of masks by priests impersonating gods is attested in certain ancient royal rites.

23. **Communion.** In a number of coronation rites the king received food or drink of a ceremonial or sacramental nature.

24. **Feast.** In the course of most coronation rituals a feast was given for the king and all others attending the ceremony.

25. **Dominion.** In a number of cultures, the new king

performed a rite, such as taking a set number of ceremonial steps, touring the kingdom, or shooting an arrow.

26. Officials. In many cultures, officials were consecrated either in the course of the coronation ceremony or shortly thereafter.

27. Progression. In most of the coronation ceremonies under study, the king was permitted to be consecrated several times, progressing each time in the scale of kingship.

Appendix B

	FIJI ¹	INDIA ⁵	ENGLAND ¹⁰	SIAM ¹²	AFRICA ¹⁴	JAPAN ¹⁹	EGYPT ²⁷	ISRAEL ³⁴
1. Austerities		X	X	X	X	X		
2. Secrecy	X	X		X	X	X	x ²⁵	
3. Reverence	X				x ¹⁵	X		
4. Humiliation	X	x ⁶			X		x ²⁶	
5. Promises	X	X	X	X	X	x ²⁰		X
6. Gods					X		X	
7. Ablution	X	X		X	X	X	X	
8. Anointing		X	X		X		X	X
9. Sacrifice		x ⁷		x ¹³	X	x ²¹	x ²⁸	x ³⁵
10. Jubilation	X		X	X	x ¹⁶	X	x ²⁹	X
11. New Name		X		X	X	X	X	x ³⁶
12. Rebirth	X	X	X	X	X	x ²²	X	X
13. Creation	x ²	x ⁸					x ³⁰	
14. Combat	X	X	X	X	X		x ³¹	
15. Queen	x ³	x ⁹			X			
16. Procession	X	X		X	X	x ²³	X	x ³⁷
17. Garment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	x ³⁸
18. Crown	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
19. Shoes		X	X	X	X	X	x ³²	
20. Regalia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	x ³⁹
21. Throne		X	X	X	X	x ²⁴	X	X
22. Masks							X	
23. Communion	X	X	X		X	X		x ⁴⁰
24. Feast	X			X	x ¹⁷	X	x ³³	x ⁴¹
25. Dominion	X	X			X		X	x ⁴²
26. Officials	x ⁴		x ¹¹	X	x ¹⁸	X		
27. Progression	X	X	X	X				

Footnotes to Appendix B Chart

1. Arthur M. Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 76-77.
2. Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 188-90.
3. Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 104.
4. Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 113.
5. Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 77-81.
6. J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 156.
7. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 168, 200.
8. Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, p. 38.
9. Arthur M. Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 101.
10. Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 92-97.
11. Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 116-17.
12. H. G. O. Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, pp. 124-25.
13. Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, pp. 72-73.
14. T. Ingram, *The King of Ganda*, p. 56.
15. Ingram, *The King of Ganda*, p. 163.
16. Ingram, *The King of Ganda*, p. 74.
17. Ingram, *The King of Ganda*, p. 26.
18. Ingram, *The King of Ganda*, p. 38.
19. Robert Ellwood, *The Feast of Kingship*, pp. 151-52.
20. Benjamin W. Fleisher, ed., *Enthronement of the One Hundred Twenty-fourth Emperor of Japan*, p. 55.
21. Fleisher, *Enthronement*, p. 2.
22. Ellwood, *The Feast of Kingship*, pp. 151-52.

23. Fleisher, *Enihronamant*, pp. 4, 36.
24. Fleisher, *Enihronamant*, p. 24.
25. C. J. Bleeker, *Mithra and Ithra*, p. 36.
26. T. H. Gaster, *Ithra*, p. 81.
27. Hocart, *Kingship*, pp. 83-85.
28. S. A. B. Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 359-60.
29. M. A. E. Ibrahim, *The Chant of the Incense of Ka of Ediu*, p. 16.
30. C. J. Bleeker, *Egyptian Festivals*, pp. 84-85.
31. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, p. 128.
32. R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts*, p. 91.
33. Mercer, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, pp. 364-65.
34. Hocart, *Kingship*, p. 86.
35. 1 Samuel 11:15; 1 Chronicles 29:21-22.
36. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 108.
37. S. Skikzai, "King," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 volumes (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:14.
38. H. Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Chicago: H. and R. Allenson, 1956), 13.
39. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 226.
40. Geo Widengren, "Royal Ideology and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs," 208, 211.
41. 1 Chronicles 29:21-23.

42. 2 Kings 13:15-17.