



*Inauguration and Liturgical
Kingship in the Long Twelfth
Century: Male and Female
Accession Rituals in England,
France and the Empire*

Johanna Dale

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Inauguration and Liturgical Kingship in the Long Twelfth Century: Male and Female Accession Rituals in England, France and the Empire. By Johanna Dale. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press in association with The Boydell Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-903153-84-0. xv + 292 pp. £60.00.

The cover image of Johanna Dale's book, taken from Petrus of Ebulo's *Liber ad honorem Augusti* (1195-1197), nicely illustrates the author's main theme: that of inauguration and liturgical kingship. The image shows the German King Henry VI galloping off to St Peter's basilica in Rome, where the pope, who stands in front of the church, is waiting for him. Stripped of his green *bliant*, mantle, spurs, and sceptre, the king's hands are first washed, after which his right arm is anointed and he is invested with a sword. Wearing his mantle again, Henry receives from the pope the rod, ring, and crown. Through this ritual of inauguration, Henry VI is no longer merely a king, but has also become the Holy Roman emperor. Dale's study of liturgical ceremonies in the making of the king/emperor and queen/empress in England, France, and the Empire shows that the paradigm of the desacralisation of kingship in the long twelfth century should not be accepted at face value.

Inauguration ceremonies have been written down in royal and imperial *ordines*, which are often contained within pontificals—Dale's analysis of liturgical kingship starts with this material. In Chapter 1 she discusses *ordines* from England, France, and the Empire and goes to great lengths to explain the challenges these texts pose, which is especially beneficial to those unfamiliar with this genre. We should, for example, keep in mind that these texts “provide only a framework, and the performance of a ceremony would have required recourse to other sources” (27). It is problematic to try to connect a specific *ordo* to an actual ceremonial usage, since a comparison of the material reveals that *ordines* are transnational texts that contain generalized phrases. Dale illuminates this in Tables 1 and 2, concerned with the distribution of prayers in the seven royal and five imperial *ordines* she selected. An analysis of the spoken and sung words in the *ordines* shows that they are imbued with biblical vocabulary in which Old Testament male and female figures serve as models for twelfth-century kings/emperors and queens/empresses in the making. By including queens' inauguration ceremonies, Dale underscores women's pivotal role in the making of kingship, to which marriage and motherhood were crucial.

Women's presence in *ordines* is further evident in Chapter 2, which deals with the ritual acts themselves, as is evidenced by rubrics, and items of regalia, making this chapter also relevant to medievalists concerned with material culture. From the rubrics for male and female inauguration, Dale concludes

that despite the diversity in anointing practices, they had parallels with ecclesiastic practice, which enabled kings in England, France, and Germany to “associate their kingship with episcopal and sacerdotal qualities” (76). An analysis of queens’ regalia—crown, ring, and sometimes sceptre—reveals parallels with nuptial imagery, which is also present in twelfth-century Marian iconography. This “intermingling of nuptial and inaugural imagery in Marian devotion also provided kings with a spouse modelled on the celestial queen, which could only enhance their claims to rule in Christ’s image” (98). Dale supports this claim by investigating medieval interpretations of the Song of Songs, in which the bride (*Sponsa*) is likened to the Virgin Mary. Here, she could have discussed the coronation miniature from the Gospel Book of Henry the Lion and his wife Matilda, daughter of King Henry II and Queen Eleanor. While Dale uses this image (Plate 3) to show that items of regalia can have allegorical meanings, she fails to notice the representations of *Sponsus* and *Sponsa*, who are depicted in the upper corners of the same folio and appear in this manuscript nine times in total, including in the Tree of Jesse where they are depicted for the first time. In fact, the Gospel Book of Henry and Matilda is deeply concerned with fertility and dynasty, aspects that the female *ordines* also address. This is one of the reasons for attributing the book not merely to Henry the Lion—as Dale does—but also to Matilda, who like her husband is represented twice.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on chronicles and annals, adding to the picture of royal consecration by incorporating elements that are absent from *ordines*: participants, places, and dates. Even though narrative sources from all three realms often give brief descriptions of royal and imperial inaugurations, their clerical writers almost always mention celebrant and location, which are the key signifiers of legitimate inauguration. A brief analysis of text and images of the *Liber ad honorem Augusti* would have been welcome in this section: what does its author include and fail to include, and what may we infer from this? Studying the dates of consecration, the author concludes that king/emperors were often inaugurated on liturgical feast days and that this contributed to liturgical kingship. The narrative sources also reveal tensions between monarchs and archbishops (including popes) and shed light on female inauguration. Dale speculates that the practice of consecrating a queen before her marriage may indicate that her consecrated state made her a worthy partner (116).

Leaving no written source unmined, in Chapter 5 royal and imperial charters are analysed for the use of royal titles, references to ancestors (providing secular legitimacy), *dei gratia* formulas (providing liturgical legitimacy), and visual elements (for example, size of parchment, script, monogram). Dale notes that Frederick Barbarossa’s diplomas have

sophisticated *arengae*, while Henry II's Angevin charters contain no signs of liturgical inspired preambles (176). At the same time, the study of eschatols makes clear that the "Plantagenet image of kingship was not so far removed from that of the Capetians or Staufen" (190).

This assertion is corroborated by Dale's study of seal impressions (Chapter 6 and Appendix 4) in which she underlines their mobile nature and their visibility to an elite audience. Through an analysis of seals' iconography and legends as well as their attachment to parchment, both their commonalities and differences in the three kingdoms under discussion become evident. Despite their variations, on the kings' seals the rulers are all represented enthroned and holding regalia. Yet, instead of favouring an interpretation of this image as that of earthly rule, Dale advises readers to view it as symbolizing Christomimetic kingship. By analogy, queens' seals—the round ones in Germany with enthroned queens/empresses as well as the *ogival* French and English ones with standing queens—are full of Marian symbolism with their throne, crown, sceptre (topped with a bird and/or orb), rod, and fleur-de-lis. My only quibble here is that while it is true that the seals of French queens were often appended to documents related to the management of their own estates and rarely to charters issued by their husbands, it seems reductive to consider the queens' matters as "personal affairs" (209). Given that in the central Middle Ages power and rule were personal, we could also label the king's dealings as personal concerns, or alternatively view the queen's affairs as also involving the kingdom.

To medievalists working on kings/emperors and queens/empresses, rituals, and material culture, Dale offers an exciting mix of primary sources. Given the importance of the material aspects of some sources, the reader would have benefitted from colour images and details of some of the *ordines*, charters, and seals in order to fully appreciate the importance of rubrics, monograms, and items of regalia. That said, with this book Johanna Dale invites us to rethink the notion of desacralized kingship and queenship in England, France, and the Empire, while also reminding us of the importance of rituals in the making of kings and queens. Christomimetic kingship and Marianmimetic queenship was not something that 'simply' happened to kings and queens, but a highly orchestrated position created through inauguration ritual and the selection of liturgical feast days, which was constantly reaffirmed through phrases used in charters and seal iconography.

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