

# THE SELF-CORONATIONS OF IBERIAN KINGS: A CROOKED LINE

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## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the practice of self-coronation among medieval Iberian Castilian kings and its religious, political, and ideological implications. The article takes Alfonso XI of Castile self-coronation (1332) as a central event, and establishes a conceptual genealogy, significance, and relevance of this self-coronation, taking Visigothic, Asturian, Leonese, and Castilian chronicles as a main source, and applying political theology as a methodology. The gesture of self-coronation has an evident transgressive connotation which deserves particular attention, and could throw some light upon the traditional debate on the supposed “un-sacred” kingship of Castilian kings<sup>1</sup>.

## KEY WORDS

Coronation, Unction, Castile, Monarchy, Political Theology.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Coronatio, Unctio, Castella, Monarchia, Theologia politica.

Historians have always been fascinated by the quest for origins. Alfonso XI of Castile and Peter IV of Aragon's peculiar and transgressive gestures of self-coronation in the fourteenth century are very familiar to us, narrated in detail as they are in their respective chronicles<sup>2</sup>. Yet, their ritual transgression makes us wonder why they acted in this way, whether there were any precedents for this particular gesture, and to what extent they were aware of the different rates at which the anointing and coronation ceremonies were introduced into their own kingdoms, in their search for justification of the self-coronation<sup>3</sup>.

All indications suggest that Peter the Ceremonious looked to Alfonso XI's self-coronation, performed in 1332, just four years before his own one in 1336. It is clear that King Peter was familiar with the different forms of royal installation ceremonies performed by his predecessors in the Crown of Aragon, but also that he took the specific gesture of crowning himself from his royal Castilian neighbour. Based on this premise, the aim of this article is to establish a conceptual genealogy

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2. The relation of Alfonso XI's ceremonies of knighting, anointing, and self-crowning: *Crónica del rey Don Alfonso el Onceno*: chap. 120-121, *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Diego Catalán. Madrid: Gredos, 1977: 506-510. Pere el Ceremoniós' self-coronation is narrated in: Pere el Ceremoniós. "Crònica", *Les Quatre Grans Cròniques: Jaume I, Bernat Desclot, Ramon Muntaner, Pere III*, ed. Ferran Soldevila. Barcelona: Selecta, 1971: II, 10-12 and 1025-1026.

3. The specific subject of the self-coronation must be approached under the general light of royal coronations. For an excellent bibliographical comment on medieval coronations, see: Bak, Janos M. "Introduction: Coronation Studies-Past, Present, and Future", *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 and their respective *ordos*, see: Bouman, Cornelius A. *Sacring and Crowing. 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; Jackson, Richard A. *Ordines coronationis Franciae: Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995; for its connection with political and legal theory: Kern, Fritz. *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956; Maitland, Frederic W. *Roman Canon Law*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1968; Ullmann, Walter. *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*. London: Methuen, 1969; for the political theology and the overall reception of the medieval state, see: Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *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 Iberian ones, see: Schramm, Percy E. *A History of the English Coronation*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1937; Strong, Roy. *Coronation: A History of Kingship and the British Monarchy*. London: Harper Collins, 2005; Richardson, Henry G. "The Coronation in Medieval England: The Evolution of the Office and the Oath". *Traditio*, 16 (1960): 111-202; Kantorowicz, Ernst H. "Inalienability: A Note on the Canonical Practice and the English Coronation Oath in the Thirteenth Century". *Speculum*, 29 (1954): 488-502; Ward, Paul L. "The Coronation Ceremony in Medieval England". *Speculum*, 24 (1939): 160-178; *Ceremonial de la Coronación, unción y exequias de los reyes de Inglaterra*, ed. Eloisa Ramírez. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2008; for French coronations: Jackson, Richard A. *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: Kantorowicz, Ernst H. "Oriens Augusti-Lever du roi". *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963): 117-177.



for Alfonso's self-coronation, from Visigothic, Asturian and Leonese sources to practice in the Kingdom of Castile, to reflect on the precedents for this gesture that transgressed from the more established rite of kings being crowned by the bishops, and why they progressed (or regressed) into the practice of self-coronation during the fourteenth century.

I am aware of the quantity and quality of the bibliography of Castilian and Aragonese coronations<sup>4</sup>. Yet it is also evident that there are no monographic works devoted to the specific gesture of Iberian self-coronation, a singular ceremony even in medieval Europe, not to say in all history, until Napoleon crowned himself Emperor. Considering the particularity of this approach to self-coronations, and my emphasis on the comparative genealogy of these ceremonies rather than a particular account of any one of them, I am going to focus on the Iberian evolution from Wamba's anointing in 672 to Alfonso XI's self-coronation in 1332.

## 1. The origins of royal unction: the Visigothic Kingdom

Both coronation and unction rites have relevance within royal ceremonies, although they have to be clearly distinguished, because their political, ideological, and religious meaning and implications are very different. In spite of the transferences of temporal and spiritual spheres and rituals that started at the time of Constantine, Western Roman emperors were never anointed or crowned. Their installation ceremony never had a religious dimension. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Byzantine emperor did not introduce the practice of coronation until Leon I was crowned by the Bishop of Constantinople in 457. After that event, the practice of coronation was expanded among the Germanic monarchies from the sixth century, culminating in the imperial coronation of Charlemagne in 800.

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4. A complete story of Aragonese coronations in: Palacios, Bonifacio. *La coronación de los reyes de Aragón, 1204-1410*. Valencia: Anubar, 1975. See also: Palacios, Bonifacio. "El Ceremonial", *Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón. II. Transcripción y estudios*, ed. Vicente de Vera. Saragossa: Diputación General de Aragón, 1992: 105-133; Centellas, Ricardo. "Pedro IV. Ceremonial de consagración y coronación de los reyes de Aragón", *Aragón. De reino a comunidad. Diez siglos de encuentros*, ed. Antonio Angulo. Saragossa: Diputación General de Aragón, 2001: 190-191; Yeves, Juan Antonio. "De la unción a la coronación. Ceremonial de la consagración y coronación de los reyes y reinas de Aragón", *Maravillas de la España Medieval. Tesoro sagrado y monarquía. I. Estudios y Catálogo*, ed. Isidro Bango. León: Junta de Castilla y León, 2000: 95-96; Pérez, Olga. "De la unción a la coronación. Libro de la coronación de los reyes de Castilla y Aragón", *Maravillas de la España Medieval...*: 97-98; Pérez, Olga. "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): 317-334; Schramm, Percy E. "Der König von Aragon. Seine Stellung in Stadtsrecht (1276-1410)". *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 74 (1955): 99-123. There are no systematic Studies for Castilian coronation, but Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, Teófilo Ruiz, Peter Linehan and Juan Manuel Nieto Soria, among others, have analysed with detail this subject in the publications I quote forward.



The coronation ritual was ceremonially established and liturgically consolidated through the Pontifical of Pope Leo III (795-816)<sup>5</sup>.

The rite of unction, in turn, had another trajectory of expansion<sup>6</sup>. It was introduced after the coronation, since the first monarchy to practise it was the Visigothic, based on Isidore of Seville's theories, the Councils of Toledo's resolutions, and Bishop Julian of Toledo's historical writings. Thus, the Visigothic king Wamba seems to have been the first European king to be anointed, in 672<sup>7</sup>. A century later, the unction ceremony spread from the Visigothic kingdom to France (the first to receive it were Charlemagne's sons, Pepin and Louis), and then to some Anglo-Saxon monarchies and to the Byzantine Empire<sup>8</sup>. The unction ceremony would finally arrive in Rome with the anointing of Charlemagne's son Charles, which is also described in the Pontifical of Leo III<sup>9</sup>. Thus, Rome did not take this ritual from its own tradition, but from the Frankish kings, who in turn got it from Visigothic tradition<sup>10</sup>.

A key event in this story is King Wamba's anointing ceremony in Toledo, in 672<sup>11</sup>. The ceremony is narrated in Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae*, an exaltation of *rex Gothorum* that functions as a historical narrative, exposition of a *speculum principum* and also *exemplum* illustrating some doctrinal truths. Some historians argue that Wamba (672-680) was the first Visigothic king, and consequently the first European king, to be anointed. Yet other specialists, such as Peter Linehan, posit that Wamba's was not the first royal anointing that Toledo had witnessed,

5. Duchesne, Louis. *Le Liber Pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire*. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955-1957: I, 6-7.

6. On the origins of royal anointing, see: Enright, Michael J. *Iona, Tara and Soissons. The Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual*. Belin: De Gruyter, 1985 and the contributions of the collective volume *Le sacre des rois: actes du Colloque international d'histoire sur les sacres et couronnements royaux Reims 1975*. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1985. For Pepin's anointing, see: Stoclet, Alain. "La 'Clausula de unctione Pippini Regis': mises au point et nouvelles hypothèses (Planches I-VII)". *Francia*, 8 (1980): 1-42; Stoclet, Alain. "La 'Clausula de unctione Pippini regis'..." vingt ans après". *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 78 (2000): 719-771; Cantarella, Glauco Maria. "Le sacre unzioni regie", *Settimane di studio della Fondazione del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2007: 1291-1334.

7. The practice of royal anointing and the consequent introduction of the king-making ritual with a liturgical form has to be distinguished from the date at which a fixed rite is established and written down as an *Ordo*, as Schramm argued in his study on Anglo-Saxon *Ordines*: Schramm, Percy Ernst. "Der Souveränitätsgerdanke in den mittelalterlichen Krönungsordines", *Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm*, ed. Peter Classen. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1964: I, 72. See also: Nelson, Janet L. "The Earliest Surviving Royal *Ordo*: Some Liturgical and Historical Aspects", *Authority and Power. Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on his Seventieth Birthday*, eds. Brian Tierney, Peter Linehan. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1980: 29-48, especially, 29.

8. Duchesne. *Le Liber Pontificalis*...: 38, and the long justificative notes 34-35.

9. Duchesne. *Le Liber Pontificalis*...: 6 and 38, note 35.

10. A good synthesis of the itinerary of the first anointments and coronations during the late Antiquity and High Middle Ages in: Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*...: 38, n. 43-45.

11. Julián, Obispo de Toledo. *Historia Wambae*: cap. 3-4 (*Sancti Iuliani Toletanae Sedis Episcopi Opera, Pars I*, ed. Wilhelm Levison. Turnhout: Brepols, 1976). This chronicle was written about 675. A detailed and instructive account of Wamba's inauguration and anointment in: Teillet, Suzanne. *Des Goths à la nation gothique: Les origines de l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VIIe siècle*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984: 607-617. See also: Sacchi, Samuele. *Modelli di regalità di area iberica durante il VII secolo: tra i concili di Toledo e il pensiero isidoriano*. Pisa: Università degli Studi di Pisa (PhD Dissertation), 2011.



based on his insistence on being anointed at the *sedes antike* —that is, Toledo<sup>12</sup>. Michel Zimmermann argues that the practice of this ceremony could have started in 633<sup>13</sup>. Claudio Sánchez Albornoz asserts that the unction was an established *traditio* among Visigothic kings, but we cannot know from when<sup>14</sup>. In any case, all agree that Julian's is the first description and historical narration that we have of a royal anointing in Spain or anywhere else in the West<sup>15</sup>.

Wamba, and perhaps some of his ancestors, considered anointing to be a means of strengthening his royal authority, which was frequently threatened by aristocratic plotting. In an unprecedented decision, they adopted the Biblical ritual of royal unction, in parallel with the usual practice for Episcopal anointments. Saint Isidore, who had a remarkable influence on Visigothic political thought and practice, stated in his work *De ecclesiasticis officis* (written between 598 and 615) that

*Sed postquam dominus noster, verus rex et sacerdos aeternus, a Deo patre caelesti ac mystico unguento est dilibutus, iam non soli pontifices et reges sed omnis ecclesia unctione crismatis consecratur, pro eo quod membrum est aeterni Regis et sacerdotis. Ergo quia genus sacerdotale et regale sumus, ideo post lavacrum unguimur ut Christi nomine censeamur*<sup>16</sup>.

This would be the first *written* evidence we have on the anointing of kings, but we do not have any *practical* evidence until Wamba, in 672 —that is, some decades after Isidore's work. Wamba's anointing in Toledo was narrated by Bishop Julian of Toledo in his *Historia Wambae*, written about 675 —that is, only a few years after the events:

*Wamba princeps, quem digne principari Dominus voluit, quem sacerdotalis unctionem declaravit [...]. (E)t tamen dilato unctionis tempore usque in nonodecimo die, ne citra locum sedis antiquae sacraretur in principe. [...] (O)portunum esset et sacrae unctionis vexilla suscipere et longe positorum consensus ob praelectionem sui patientissime sustinere. At ubi ventum est, quo sanctae unctionis vexillam susciperet, in praetoriensi ecclesia, sanctorum scilicet Petri et Pauli, regio iam cultu conspicuus ante altare divinum consistens, ex more fidem populis reddidit. Deinde curbatis genibus oleum benedictionis per sacri Quirici pontificis manus vertici eius refunditur et benedictionis copia exhibetur, ubi statim signum hoc salutis emicuit. Nam mox e vertice ipso, ubi oleum ipsum perfusum fuerat, evaporatio*

12. Linehan, Peter. *History and the historians of medieval Spain*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993: 56. Wamba is one of the Iberian medieval kings whose figure and personality has generated more narrative and legendary accounts around him: Ward, Aengus. *History and Chronicles in Late Medieval Iberia. Representations of Wamba in Late Medieval Narrative Histories*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

13. Zimmermann, Michel. "Les sacres des rois wisigoths", *Clovis: histoire et mémoire. Le baptême de Clovis, son écho à travers l'histoire*. Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 1997: I, 9-28.

14. Sánchez, Claudio. "La 'ordinatio principis' en la España goda y postvisigoda", *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965: 712.

15. It seems to be that other European monarchies started this practice not before the end of the eighth century: Bloch, Marc. *Les rois thaumaturges: étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*. Paris: Colin, 1961: 464 and following.

16. Isidorus Hispalensis. *De ecclesiasticis officis, Sancti Isidori Episcopi Hispalensis*, "De crisma", II, 26 (25), ed. Christopher M. Lawson. Turnhout: Brepols, 1989: 106.



*quaedam fumo similis in modum columnae sese erexit in capite, et e loco ipso capitis apsis visa est prosilisse, quod utique signum cuiusdam felicitatis sequuturæ speciem portenderet*<sup>17</sup>.

This transposition of an Episcopal ceremony into one of royal enthronement would long endure in both Western and Eastern tradition. For sure, the foundation of this transference of spiritual to political sphere may be found some centuries before, at the beginning of the fourth century, when the Emperor Constantine adopted some of Christianity's spiritual symbols<sup>18</sup>. Yet, beyond these evident precedents, a closer connection with Wamba's anointment can perhaps be found in the figure of the Emperor Theodose, who was acclaimed Augustus in 379 and was born in Cauca, Galicia, in the Northwest of the Iberian Peninsula.

Theodose became a model for future Hispanic rulers, particularly in the period of Visigothic Spain. The Orose's *Historiarum adversus paganos* (written about 416-417) played an important role in the transposition and translation of Theodosian subjects and political meanings for Visigothic kings<sup>19</sup>. Orose, like Theodose, seems to have been born in Hispania, in the city of either Braga or Tarragona. He highlighted in his chronicle a vision of Hispania as a unitary whole (using the word in the singular), rather than a group of Roman provinces, an approach that would enhance Visigothic unity in the Iberian Peninsula during the sixth and seventh centuries. He stressed the idea that the Roman *Imperator* was surrounded by a religious aura, even in the pagan period, and this was particularly potent in Hispania<sup>20</sup>. It may well have facilitated the sacralisation of Theodose, who is considered by Saint Augustine as the ideal Christian *imperator*<sup>21</sup>, and is referred to by Rufin of Aquileé as *Princeps religiosus*<sup>22</sup>. This *Imperator Christianus* and *Princeps religiosus* could then easily appear

17. Iuliano, episcopo Toletano. "Historia Wambae regis", *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum*, ed. Wilhelm Levison. Hannover: Hahn, 1910: V (*Passiones Vitaeque Sanctorum Aevi Merovingici*), 218-220 (chap. 2-4).

18. Bardill, Jonathan. *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2011; Odahl, Charles Matson. *Constantine and the Christian Empire*. London: Routledge, 2004.

19. Fontaine, Jacques. "Romanité et hispanité dans la littérature hispano-romaine des IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles", *Assimilation et résistance à la culture gréco-romaine dans le monde ancien*, ed. Dionisie Pippidi. Bucarest: Editura Academiei, 1976: 301-322, especially, 310. On the Orose's influence on several key political concepts of the Roman and Visigoth Iberia, see the very documented chapter of: Teillet, Suzanne. "Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...": 112-160.

20. Robert, Étienne. *Le culte impérial dans la péninsule ibérique d'Auguste à Dioclétien*. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1958. For a general view of the entire Empire, see: Beaujeu, Jean. *La religion romaine à l'apogée de l'Empire*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1955.

21. Augustinus. *De Civitate Dei*: 5, 25-26.

22. Aquileiensis, Rufinus. "Historia Ecclesiastica", *Patrologiae. Cursus completus*. Paris: J. P. Migne Editorem, 1845: XXI, chap. 461-540. The same title applied to Theodose in: Augustinus. *De Civitate Dei*, 5, 26 (San Agustín. *La ciudad de Dios*, ed. Miguel Fuertes Lanero. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1977: I, 303-305); Ambrosius. *De obitu Theodosii*, ed. Otto Faller. Vienna: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, 1962. See also: Duval, Yves-Marie. "L'éloge de Théodose dans la Cité de Dieu (V, 26, 1)". *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 4 (1966): 142-143; Gaudemet, Jean. *L'Église dans le monde romain (IV<sup>e</sup>-V<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. Paris: Sirey, 1967: 493-494.





as ancestor and model of the anointed Christian Visigothic kings, since the chronicler Julian of Toledo would apply this same title to Wamba some centuries afterwards<sup>23</sup>.

Some authors have even argued that the Iberian succession of religious princes (the *Imperator Christianus* Theodose and the *Princeps religiosus* Wamba) would culminate in the title of *Catholic Monarchs* attributed to Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. This idea, which was discussed among Roman Cardinals at the end of the fifteenth century, is adopted by several early modern Castilian historians, who looked for continuities in the “Crown” of Spain, from the Visigoths to Castilians, and then to the Habsburgs, despite the dynastic ruptures<sup>24</sup>.

Beyond these hypothetical continuities or discontinuities, and the fact that Theodose’s praises are an evident projection of Constantine’s acclamation as Christian Emperor<sup>25</sup>, this Emperor emerges as the natural precedent for Wamba’s symbolic gestures, as the Hispanic Emperor praised for being “friend of Goths” and *Princeps religiosus*. This obviously corresponds to a very long classical tradition of the “good Prince” as legitimate ruler, expounded among others by Xenofonte and Cicero<sup>26</sup>. This pagan-classical tradition is interestingly superimposed onto the Christian-Biblical one, profusely expounded by Eusebius and Gregory the Great<sup>27</sup>. Thus, just as the “good Emperor” Theodose would wisely and bravely fight against the “bad *tyrannus*”, so Wamba would do the same against the eventual enemies of the kingdom<sup>28</sup>. Beyond the moral (“bad king”) and religious (“prosecutor of the Church”) significance, the other traditional meaning of the word *tyrannus* is “usurper”.

This last meaning, used by Amine Marceline, Pacatus, Hegesipe and Hieronymus, will have lots of implications in the Visigothic kingdom, which has a long tradition of usurpations and threats to the king, and it is used specifically in this sense in

23. Wamba is called *Princeps religiosus* thirteenth times in the *Historia Wambae* and in the eleventh council of Toledo (675) is called five times the same way, without applying to him any other title (Teillet, Suzanne. “Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...”: 600).

24. The discussion among some Roman Cardinals about the title of Catholics Kings applied to Fernando and Isabel in 1496, ordered by Pope Alexander VI, is described and analyzed in: Fernández, Álvaro. “Reyes Católicos: mutaciones y permanencias de un paradigma político en la Roma del Renacimiento”, *Roma y España. Un crisol de la cultura europea de la Edad Moderna*, Carlos José Hernando, ed. Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, 2007: 133-154; Saavedra, Diego. *Corona gótica, castellana y austriaca*. Madrid: Biblioteca Autores Españoles, 1861; Teillet, Suzanne. “Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...”: 83.

25. At the end-fourth century the chroniclers applied to Theodose what at the beginning of the century the chroniclers had applied to Constantine: Eusebius. *Historia ecclesiastica*: 9. 9; Pamphili, Eusebii, “Opera Omnia”, *Patrologia graecae. Cursus completus*. Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857: XX, col. 819-830); Lactance, Jacques Moreau. *De la mort des persécuteurs*. Paris: Cerf, 1954: I, 1 and 52.

26. This tradition is Stoicist in its origins: Beaujeu, Jean. *La religion romaine...*: 73-75.

27. Teillet, Suzanne. “Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...”: 346-349.

28. On the Greek roots of the word *tyrannus*, see: Gaudemet, Jean. *Institutions de l'Antiquité*. Paris: Sirey, 1967: 152-156; on the pejorative meaning of the Latin word *tyrannus*, see: Béranger, Jean. “*Tyrannus*. Notes sur la notion de tyrannie chez les Romains particulièrement à l'époque César et de Cicéron”. *Revue des Études Latines*, 13 (1935): 85-94; Hellegouarch, Joseph. *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la République*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972: 561-562.



Julian's *Historia Wambae*, at the end of seventh century<sup>29</sup>. Thus, the antithesis between *Princeps religiosus* and *tyrannus*, created some centuries before, will revive in Julian's narrative, in which the exemplary life of the King, Wamba, who fights against the usurper Paul, is the medieval transposition of Theodosie's fight against the tyrants Maxim and Eugene as narrated by Rufin, which is in its turn inspired by Constantine's fight against the tyrants Majence and Licinius, narrated by Eusebe<sup>30</sup>. Finally, the phrase *Princeps religiosus* means both legitimization and piety. If the legitimate sovereign humbly submits to God, he will receive divine favour and reinforce his power and authority. Finally, it is interesting to note that Wamba took the model from the classical Roman period, while his predecessor Leovigild had taken as a model the Byzantine emperor Justinian. In any case, the sovereigns of Toledo always wanted to appear as successors of Roman emperors<sup>31</sup>.

Considering these precedents, it is no surprise that, in terms of political practice and symbolism, Wamba's inauguration and anointing ceremony meant more to some contemporary and later commentators than the Third Council of Toledo, which is a singular proof of its relevance. Toledo in 589 was not ready for development as the kingdom's ceremonial capital, since its primacy still appeared precarious. And, to be sure, the most relevant Visigothic royal ceremony was the anointing rather than the coronation. Subsequent chroniclers would talk about the Visigothic king "crowned into the kingdom", based on Isidore's account of Spain's first Catholic monarch<sup>32</sup>. Yet Isidore was using a metaphor rather than describing an historical event. It was not a real coronation—which otherwise would have been mentioned in the narration of Wamba's enthronement ceremony—but a vivid image, similar to the royal sceptre<sup>33</sup>.

One of the key questions is why Wamba (or one of his recent predecessors) decided to consolidate his authority and power specifically with the anointing ceremony rather than other symbolic rites. During the first half of seventh century, particularly in his *Sententiae*, Isidore of Seville, following in his turn the ideas of Gregory the Great, argued that the Christian king's sovereignty came from the kings of Israel rather than the emperors. He makes references to King Saul and King David rather than the emperors, even after the latter became Christians. Christ ("the anointed") took upon himself the dignity of royalty, inheriting the Hebrew idea of kingship. He thus became the model and foundation of Christian kingship, since both Jewish kingship and priesthood had disappeared after his birth. Isidore

29. Teillet, Suzanne. "Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...": 92 (n. 394).

30. Duval, Yves-Marie. "L'Éloge de Théodose...": 171.

31. Fontaine, Jacques. *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne Wisigothique*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1959.

32. Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 387, who quotes: Isidorus Hispalensis. *Historia Gothorum* (about 725): chap. 52 ("Regno est coronatus"); Lucas of Tuy. *Chronicon Mundi* (about 1230): 50, 8; and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Bishop of Toledo. *De Rebus Hispaniae* (about 1240s): II, 15.

33. Teillet, Suzanne. "Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...": 541; Reydeller, Marc. *La Royauté Dans la littérature latine de Sidone Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981: 536-539.





proclaims in his *Chronicle*: *Cessante regno ac sacerdotio Iudaeorum dominus Christus ex virgine nascitur*<sup>34</sup>.

Since Christian kingship and priesthood cannot be split, royal and sacerdotal Christian kingship always have to be together. There begins, then, a certain parallelism between Bishop and King, and a transference of certain symbols and liturgies (Bishop's anointing among them) naturally emerges. Due to the spread of the ideas of Gregory of Tours, Gregory the Great, and, particularly in Hispania, Isidore of Seville, the symbol of *rex-sacerdos* ("king-priest") would soon emerge in the Visigothic kingdom. Several years after Isidore's death, King Wamba would be anointed in a solemn ceremony in 672. In addition, this political-theological practice would prove to be an important heritage for the subsequent Iberian dynasties, particularly those of Castile. The consecrated king confirms his royal function, while the consecrated bishop confirms his sacerdotal function.

The introduction of royal unction would definitely consolidate the religious dimension of Visigothic monarchy, justified by the fourth Council of Toledo (633), with the related activity of Isidore of Seville, and some of King Receswinthe's texts<sup>35</sup>. As the third Council of Toledo (589) had confirmed the imperial origin of the Visigothic king's power, so the fourth Council of Toledo confirmed its divine origin. The election of the king became a very solemn act, in which both the nobles and the bishops of the kingdom participated. Thus, the election of Wamba had as a consequence two ceremonies that conveyed both sides of the tradition: the *acclamatio*, as a remembrance of the imperial election; and the anointing, as a mirror of his power's divine origin. The *sacramentum* (oath) accompanying these two ceremonies confirmed the desire of the king to be truthful to God and to his subjects.

The *Historia Wambae*, a historical panegyric and exemplary narration of Wamba's ascendancy and domination, is in reality a *speculum principum*, a mirror of princes. Just as his predecessor Receswinthe (653-672) embodied the zenith of the transposition of imperial ideology, so Wamba represented the progress of the religious tendency—Biblical and ecclesiastical—as the monarchical ideal inspired by Gregory the Great. Wamba took the model from the Biblical kings and Christian bishops rather than the Roman emperors. He appears in the *Historia Wambae* as a successor to the Old Testament kings rather than the inheritor of the Roman emperor. The parallels drawn with the Jewish King Saul are constant in the chronicle, both in terms of personal virtues and military activities. He renounced the title of emperor used by the Visigothic kings up to his predecessor Receswinthe, in order to adopt, instead, the title of *religiosus* king.

Thus, Wamba adopted the Jewish tradition of royal unction, which had its parallel in the Christian bishops' unction, but until then had no precedents in the temporal sphere. Wamba appears in Julian's narrative as the sacred and religious king rather

34. Isidorus Hispalensis. *Chronicle*, 237, quoted in: Teillet, Suzanne. "Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...": 508.

35. Isidore argues that the royal power is originated by a commitment between the duties of the king and his subjects: see specially the canon 75 of the fourth Council of Toledo.



than the powerful or military king. He confirmed his sacred dimension thanks to the royal unction he received at the beginning of his reign.

Wamba's installation ceremony basically comprises the *electio*, which gives political legitimacy to the king; the *sacramentum*, a specifically Visigothic ceremony linking the king with his subjects; and the *anointing*—the last two in the context of the new religious ceremony of enthronement, separate from the election. There is consequently no mention of other rites in the inauguration, such as the coronation or the elevation, which was the ceremony practised in the Frankish kingdoms but which seems to be unknown to (or not practised by) the Visigothic kings<sup>36</sup>. Thus, the anointing would have been seen as a way of increasing the solemnity of the king's entrance and confirming his sacred dimension. The rich doctrine behind this practice of unction is graphically conveyed by some texts of the Visigothic liturgy preserved in later manuscripts<sup>37</sup>.

As Isidore of Seville explains in his *Etymologies*, the royal unction has a clear parallel with the double unction, royal and sacerdotal, of Israel, which is a figuration and image of Christ's unction and, consequently, of Christian unction: baptism. He explains that the Visigothic king wears a purple mantle as an external sign of his unction, which confers on him "the royal name and sovereign"<sup>38</sup>. Other contemporary monarchies used external signs for royal entrance, such as the "elevation" or the coronation, but the unction expresses a sacramental reality (an external sign that effects what it means) rather than a merely symbolic meaning. The infusion of the royal oil is accompanied by the sign of the cross, traced by the Bishop on Wamba's head<sup>39</sup>.

The unction confers on the king the two dimensions of King David's two successive anointings: the internal and constitutive (performed by Samuel), and the external and declarative (performed by Judah's men)<sup>40</sup>. The royal unction, theoretically elaborated by Isidore of Seville and performed by Wamba, appears as a sacramental transposition of Biblical unction and liturgically adapts the rite

36. Yet there are also other reasons to think that coronation was practiced by Visigothic kings, at least after Wamba, since there is a Ceremonial Book elaborated in the tenth century in Leon that seems to be a copy of other elaborated at the first year of Wamba as king, see: Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 708; Pérez, Justo. "Antifonario de León. El escritor y la época". *Archivos Leoneses*, 8 (1954): 300 and following; Vives, José. "En torno a la datación del Antifonario legionense". *Hispania Sacra*, 8 (1955): 115-144.

37. Deswarte, Thomas. *De la destruction a la restauration. L'idéologie du royaume d'Oviedo-León (VIIIe-XIe siècles)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003: 184-187.

38. *Et sicut nunc regibus indumentum purpurea insigne est regiae dignitatis, sic illis unctio sacri ungenti nomen ac potestatem regiam conferebat* (Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologies*, 7, 2, 2; Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologies*, eds. Stephan A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Olivier Berghof. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2006: 155).

39. See a detailed description of Wamba's unction in: Teillet, Suzanne. "Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...": 607-611.

40. The first David's unction in I Reg. 16, 13; the second in II Reg. 2,4. See: de Pange, Jean. *Le roi très chrétien*. Paris: Fayard, 1949; Reydellet, Marc. *La royauté dans la littérature latine. De Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1981.



of baptismal confirmation<sup>41</sup>. The Jewish sacerdotal and royal unction now has its parallelism with the new Christian-Visigothic Episcopal and royal unction<sup>42</sup>. There are also many parallels between Visigothic royal and episcopal ceremonies of *ordinatio*. This ceremony was originally separate from unction, since the solemn installation of the king was practised by the Merovingian kings and contemporary Byzantine emperors, and it is therefore plausible that Visigothic kings practised it too, before the incorporation of the unction ceremony by Wamba. The election properly embodies the fact of the attribution of sovereignty, with the successive *sacramentum* and unction representing both the confirmation and sacralisation of royalty. Wamba was elected in Geriticos (a province of Salamanca) as a consequence of Receswinthe's decision, but he waited for nineteen days before his unction. This delay was perhaps spent preparing the new ceremonial of the unction, to be used as precedent for succeeding kings, but it could also have been due to many other more substantial reasons<sup>43</sup>.

With this new ceremony of unction, the Church becomes the necessary intermediary between God and the new king. It is not only the people who confirm the king's authority with the *sacramentum*, but also the Church, which confirms the king's charisma and link with God (*non est potestas nisi a Deo*, Rom. 13, 1) with the anointing.

## 2. The restoration of the anointing after the islamic invasion: Tenth-Century Asturias

Historians differ on the interpretation of the effects of the Islamic invasion of Iberia from 711, and on the extent to which that year can be considered an absolute or relative rupture with tradition. In any case, the political scenario shifted radically, and Christian societies could only survive as structured organizations under the kingdom of Asturias in the West and the Pyrenean provinces in the East. After the eighth century, the imaginary genealogical-ideological line linking the anointing of Wamba with Alfonso XI's self-coronation takes a turn towards Asturias, rather than to the Pyrenees. It followed a path that would connect the future Crown of Aragon with the ambiguity of Frankish-Visigothic tradition, rather than with the properly Visigothic one —or, at least, the kings of Aragon and counts of Barcelona

41. Nelson, Janet L. "National Synods, Kingship as Office and Royal Anointing: an Early Medieval Syndrome". *Councils and Assemblies*, 7 (1971): 41-59, especially, 52.

42. The apparition of the Episcopal unction remains uncertain: Batiffol, Pierre. "La liturgie du sacre des évêques dans son évolution historique". *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, 23 (1927): 733-763, especially, 745-749.

43. Teillet, Suzanne. "Vers une présentation favorable des Goths...": 611-613; Orlandis, José. "La Iglesia visigótica y los problemas de la sucesión al trono en el siglo VII". *Settima Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo*. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studio sull'Alto Medioevo, 1960: I, 333-351, especially, 343 and 350.



would not regard Visigothic ceremonial tradition as the basis for their political practices<sup>44</sup>. Castilian kings, for their part, would feel that they were the successors of the Visigothic kings, following Asturias-Leon-Castile as their main line of tradition.

Critics agree that the most probable restoration of the unction ceremony after the Islamic invasion took place during king Ordoño II's (914-924) enthronement. The reprise of the anointing tradition under Ordoño II at the beginning of tenth century is one of the clearest links of the Astur-Leonese dynasty with the Visigothic one. There is also documentary evidence (as distinct from chronicle sources) of other Leonese kings being anointed after Ordoño II, such as Ramiro II (931), Bermudo II (982), and Fernando I (1038)<sup>45</sup>.

Some authors, such as Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, argue that the unction ceremony was also performed before Ordoño II, specifically with Alfonso II (829) and Alfonso III (866); but he only gives historiographical evidence from works elaborated some centuries afterwards rather than documentary sources<sup>46</sup>. Yet the "documentary" evidence that exists is not sufficiently convincing, since all of it is historiographical. It is always difficult to know which of the sources mentioning the anointing of Leonese kings are the most accurate, but in general the documentary are more credible than the historiographical ones, since the latter are usually more conditioned by the spirit of the chronicles own times than that of the times they are dealing with. In any case, based on the historicity of Ordoño II's unction, we can conclude that two and a half centuries after Wamba's unction, this ceremony re-emerged with the purpose of strengthening the religious and spiritual dimension of royalty<sup>47</sup>.

Certainly, in the complex identity process that connects Christian peninsular monarchies with Visigothic tradition, the *Chronica of Alfonso III* or *Chronica Visigothorum* is an important link. This text took Isidore of Seville's *Historia Gothorum*'s tradition, as promoted by Alfonso III (866-910) in unambiguously setting Asturias' neo-gothic orientation, and created a very influential narrative of the battle of Covadonga. The *Chronica of Alfonso III* includes the earliest reference to the restoration the anointing of Visigothic kings after 711. Certainly the author of the *Chronica of Alfonso III* gives royal unction a very relevant place, since he begins his chronicle with the narration of Wamba's anointing, based on Julian's *Historia Wambae* account. Historians agree that the accounts of Alfonso II and Alfonso III's anointings are subsequent false

44. Abadal, Ramon d'. *Dels visigots als Catalans. La hispania visigòtica i la Catalunya visigòtica*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1969: I.

45. Sánchez, Claudio. "La sucesión al trono en los reinos de León y Castilla", *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965: 687; Sánchez Albornoz. "Ordinatio...": 723-724, where he gives the specific documental and historiographical references.

46. Sánchez provides, in: Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 724 (n. 98), historiographical evidences for the royal unction of Leon and Castilian Kings, in which Alfonso II and Alfonso III are included; but he seems to contradict himself in: Sánchez, Claudio. "Sucesión...": 687 (n. 148), where he provides documental evidences that the first king anointed is Ramiro II (944), that is, after Ordoño II. Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 719). See also: Schramm, Percy E. *Las insignias de la realeza en la edad media española*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1960: 1-63.

47. Deswarte, Thomas. *De la destrucción...*: 181-183.



interpolations in the chronicle, precisely in order to provide Ordoño II with relevant precedents for the practice of unction<sup>48</sup>. Yet, authors disagree on the continuity of this practice among Ordoño II's successors, but there is an agreement that it is at least intermittently practised<sup>49</sup>. In any case, all of them agree that the re-emergence of the royal unction from Ordoño II, and the proliferation of historical narratives stressing its ceremonial relevance, mean an increasing and progressive return to the religious dimension of royalty.

### 3. Unction and coronation in Eleventh- and Twelfth-century Leon-Castile

However, in a typical expression of this crooked-line story, this sacred turn would enjoy little continuity in Iberia. In fact, Hispanic kings would soon be recognized throughout Europe for their reluctance to be anointed or crowned. John of Paris, in his defence of *anti-hierocratism*, declared that kings were kings even without unction and that in many Christian countries, such as Hispania, the anointing of kings was not practised at all<sup>50</sup>. There are also similar testimonies by the Scottish John Balliol and Gerald of Wales<sup>51</sup>. Indeed, Portugal never crowned its kings and Navarre introduced coronation and unction only after 1257, and they were only rarely and intermittently practised<sup>52</sup>. The kings there were physically raised by others, in an echo of ancient Germanic tradition. As we will see, Castilian kings soon abandoned the coronation ritual, and would practise it only in isolated cases. Aragon did not introduce the ceremony until 1204, and, after some interruptions to the practice, it became a self-coronation in 1328 with Alfons the Benign. Yet paradoxically, as

48. Linehan, Peter. *History and the historians...*: 146-147.

49. Linehan argues that the unction becomes an exceptional rather than an ordinary practice (Linehan, Peter. "León, ciudad regia, y sus obispos en los siglos X-XIII". *El Reino de León en la Alta Edad Media*, 6 (1994): 409-457, especially, 423-428 and 433. Deswarte optes for a more permanent continuity of the practice (*De la destruction...*: 183).

50. Paris, John of. *De potestate regia et papale*: chap. 18: *Unde in novo testamento non legimus quod sacerdotes imungere debeant reges nec etiam observatum in omnibus regibus christianis, ut patet in regibus Hispanorum* (Leclercq, Jean. *Jean de Paris et l'ecclésiologie du XIIIe siècle*. Paris: Vrin, 1942: 229). See also: Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997: 326; Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 443.

51. Gerald of Wales states in his *De instructione principis*: *Scotorum autem principes, qui et reges dicuntur, sicut et Hispaniae principes, qui nec coronari tamen consueverunt nec inungi, bonos quidem et sanctos fuisse fama praedicat* (quoted in: Linehan, Peter. *History and the historians...*: 390).

52. For Kings of Portugal's debate on their eventual anointment and crowning, see: Linehan, Peter. "Utrum reges Portugalie coronabantur annon", *2º Congresso histórico de Guimarães. Actas do Congresso, II. A política portuguesa e as suas relações exteriores*. Guimarães: Camara municipal de Guimarães, 1996: 389-410 (reprint in: Linehan, Peter. *The Processes of Politics and the Rule of Law*. Aldershot: Ashgate-Variorum, 2002) who denies it, against: Mattoso, José. "A realza de Afonso Henriques", *Fragmentos de uma composição medieval*. Lisbon: Estampa, 1993; Mattoso, José. "A coroação dos primeiros reis de Portugal", *A memória da nação*, Francisco Bethencourt, Diogo Ramada Curto, eds. Lisbon: Sa da Costa, 1991. For Navarra: Lacarra, José Maria. *El juramento de los Reyes de Navarra (1234-1329)*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1972.



we have seen, Iberia was where the practice originated —or, more correctly, was adapted from Biblical Israel— with the custom of royal unction being developed under the Visigoths, and transmitted from there to the French and Anglo-Saxon monarchies and to the Byzantine empire<sup>53</sup>.

Nevertheless, the originality of this period lies in the fact that for the first time the ceremony of unction is associated with the coronation. The first iconographic testimony of the royal crown (*diadema*) in the kingdom of Leon appears in a miniature in Ferdinand I's (1037-1065) psalter<sup>54</sup>. Such iconographic sources proliferated during the first half of the twelfth century, particularly among the miniatures in which the kings of Asturias and Leon were shown with the crown, sceptre and throne as attributes of power<sup>55</sup>. Following this iconographic evidence, some historians have argued that the coronation ceremony was associated with unction from the very origins of the Asturian monarchy<sup>56</sup>. But the documentary and iconographic evidence of the presence of the crown does not confirm the existence of a specific ceremony of coronation until the eleventh century, with Ferdinand I<sup>57</sup>. And, more interestingly, it is in mid-eleventh century when the crown seems to really emerge as a relevant sign of royal authority. There are two pieces of evidence for this: one iconographic and the other documentary.

The miniatures composed at this time assign an unquestionable relevance to the crown. In 1055, the scribe Fructuoso was commissioned by King Ferdinand I to elaborate a Book of Hours. He inserted some miniatures. There is an amazing "capital" in the form of a rich crown; and the king appears in other miniatures wearing a big crown. This image sharply contrasts with the *Codice Vigilano*, in which some Visigothic kings (Chindasvinto, Recesvinto, Égica) and a Leonese queen and kings (Urraca, Sancho, Ramiro) are all represented without a crown: they (the Visigoths) wear a mitre or (in the case of the Leonese) an halo. This image was elaborated in 975, some decades before Ferdinand's Book of Hours, which could be proof that the crown was not yet consolidated as a sign of authority and majesty

53. On the Visigothic origins of coronations, see: Deswarte, Thomas. "Le Christ-roi: autel et couronne votive dans l'Espagne wisigothique", *Églises et pouvoirs*, Bruno Béthouart, Jérôme Grévy eds. Boulogne-sur-Mer: Maison de la Recherche en sciences humaines "Palais Impérial", 2007: 71-83.

54. Galván, Fernando. "La representación de la unction regia en el antifonario de la catedral de León". *Archivos Leoneses*, 49 (1995): 135-146, especially, 143.

55. Díaz, Manuel C.; López, Fernando; Moralejo, Serafín. *Los tumbos de Compostela*. Madrid: Edilán, 1985: epigraph "Láminas", I-VI and VII-XXII; Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 725. The Kings of Leon appear with crowns in the miniatures of *Codex Vigilamus*, in Fernando I's *Liber Horarum*, in: *Liber Testamentorum* of Oviedo, and in *Libro de estampas* of Leon. See: Gómez-Moreno, María Elena. "Las miniaturas del Antifonario de la Catedral de León". *Archivos Leoneses*, 8 (1954): 305; Menéndez, Gonzalo. *Sobre miniatura española en la Alta Edad Media*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1958: 9, 33, 45 and 55.

56. Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 720 and following; Galván, Fernando. "La representación...": 143.

57. Domínguez, Jesús. *La miniatura española*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1930: I, láminas 26 ("Codex Vigilanus seu Albeldensis" kept in El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, f. 428, about 976, in which appear Chindasvinto, Recesvinto and Egica above; the Leon queen Urraca and Kings Sancho and Ramiro in the middle; and three scribes below), and 34 ("Diurno de Fernando I", kept in Santiago de Compostela. Biblioteca de la Universidad, f. 3r (the scribe Fructuosus between King Fernando I and Queen Sancha), and f. 7v (the initial) about 1055. See also: Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 725 (n. 100).





—or at least that it had less relevance than the religious symbols of the mitre and halo. It is very important here to note the date the codices, miniatures, and images were elaborated, rather than that of the monarchs whose image is being shown<sup>58</sup>.

The documentary evidence for the consolidation of the crown as a sign of authority and power in the age of Ferdinand I is the ceremony of *de-coronation* he underwent at the end of his reign, in order to die poor and penitent. The *Historia Silense* relates that the king:

*Vocavit ad se episcopos et abbates et religiosos viros, et ut exitum suum confirmarent, una cum eis ad ecclesiam deferretur, cultu regio ornatus cum corona capiti imposita. Dein fixis genibus coram altario Sancti Iohannis et sanctorum corporibus beati Ysidori confessoris Domini et sancti Vincentii martiris Christi clara voce ad Dominum dixit: Tua est potentia, tuum regnum, Domine; tu es super omnes reges, tuo imperio omnia regna celestia, terrestria subduntur; ideoque regnum quod te donante accepi, acceptumque quandiu tue libere voluntati placui rexi, ecce reddo tibi: tantum animam meam de voragine istius mundi ereptam, ut in pace suscipias deprecor. Et hec dicens exiit regalem clamidem qua induebatur corpus et deposuit gemmatam coronam qua ambiebatur caput, atque cum lacrimis ecclesiae solo prostratus, pro delictorum venia Dominum attentius exorabat. Tunc ab episcopis accepta penitentia, induitur cilicio pro regali indumento et aspergitur cinere pro aureo diademate; cui in tali permanenti penitentia duobus diebus vivere a Deo datur<sup>59</sup>.*

Yet this increasing presence of the crown in iconographic and historiographical sources does not confirm the existence of a *ceremony* of coronation. The first ceremony of coronation seems to be that of Alfonso VII in 1111. Certainly, the *Historia Silense*, composed at the beginning of the twelfth century, describes the coronation of Ordoño II, one and a half centuries before that of Alfonso VII. But some historians argue that this account is an invention of the chronicler, inspired by the Carolingian precedent reported by Eginhard in his *Vita Karoli*, in order to strengthen precisely the tradition recovered by Alfonso VII. Beyond the evident precocity, given their Visigothic precedents, of Asturian, Leonese and Castilian kings in unction and coronation practices, regarding Alfonso VII as the first Castilian king to be enthroned with a coronation ceremony is a chronology that fits better with the general tendency of European monarchies, which were tardy in reintroducing

58. This is the strange anachronism in which Sánchez Albornoz seems to fall in: Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 725 (n. 100), giving the same historical value to a miniatures elaborated in very different dates, and so in different contextual circumstances: 976 (*Codex Vigilanus* of Albelada), 1055 (*Fernando I's Book of Hours* of Compostela), 1126-1129 (*Liber Testamentorum*, Oviedo), and twelfth century (*Libro de las estampas*, from Leon), all of them compiled in: Domínguez, Jesús. *Miniatura española*: I, Lam. 26 (*Vigilano*), 34 (*Book of Hours*), 70-75 (*Liber Testamentorum*), and 77 (*Libro de las estampas*). For a more general approach, and particularly the relationship between images and liturgy, see: Palazzo, Eric. *L'Évêque et son image. L'illustration du pontifical au Moyen Âge*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999 (particularly the chapter "Les sacres et les couronnements...": 253-305).

59. *Historia Silense*, ed. Francisco Santos. Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1921: 90-91; and ed. Justo Pérez de Urbel and Atilano González Ruiz-Zorrilla. Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Medievales, 1959: 208-209. The emphasis are mine. *Historia Silense's* English edition in: Barton, Simon; Fletcher, Richard. *The World of the Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000: 9-64.



this rite<sup>60</sup>. The *Historia Silense* chronicler's description of Ordoño II is certainly very expressive:

*Ceterum Gracias rex postquam ultimam presentis vite clausit horam, ad Ordonium Christi belligerum successio regni divino nutu pervenit. Omnes siquidem Yspanie magnati, episcopi, abbates, comites, primores, facto solemniter generali conventu, eum acclamando sibi regem constituunt; impositoque ei diademate a XII pontificibus in solium regni Legione perunctus est*<sup>61</sup>.

Nevertheless, this account is contextually more suggestive of the time when it was written (the beginning of the twelfth century) than the time it describes (the beginning of the tenth century), which would confirm the hypothesis that this episode of Ordoño II's coronation was an artificial intercalation. But, in any case, these ceremonies would have been restored at some time between those two periods. Moreover, as we will see in the next section, it was precisely at the beginning of twelfth century when the turn towards *self-coronation* occurred.

The coronation of Alfonso VII took place in Santiago de Compostela in 1111, as narrated in the *Historia Compostellana*<sup>62</sup>. The king, still a boy, was anointed and crowned (*aureo diademate coronatum*) by Bishop Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela, in the church of Santiago<sup>63</sup>. This coronation was urged by the historical circumstances surrounded it —namely, the minority of Alfonso and the desire of his mother Queen Urraca to consolidate his future sovereignty— but this event also served as a relevant precedent for succeeding royal generations<sup>64</sup>. In fact, the coronation of 1111 was followed by a repetition of the ceremony in 1126 (*aureo diademate coronatum*<sup>65</sup>), on the occasion of the death of the king's mother, Queen Urraca, and by the celebration of the Imperial King's enthronement in 1135 (*imposuerunt super caput eius coronam ex auro mundo et lapidibus pretiosis*)<sup>66</sup>. The recovery of an attribute of royal power (the crown) used by the Roman emperors and then the Visigothic kings is a proof that the temporal dimension of the Asturian and Leonese monarchy was growing all the time<sup>67</sup>. The spread of coronation ceremonials at the beginning of the

60. Bronisch, Alexander Pierre. "Krönungsritus und Kronenbrauch im Reich von Asturien und León". *Studi Medievali*, 39 (1998): 327-366, especially, 338, 349-358 and 365-366.

61. *Historia Silense*...: 37-38.

62. *Historia Compostellana*, lib I, chap. LXVI; ed. Emma Falque Rey. Turnhout: Brepols, 1988. See also: Deswarte. *De la destruction*...: 206.

63. Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 726 (n. 106).

64. Reilly, Bernard F. *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982: 73.

65. *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, ed. Luis Sánchez. Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Medievales, 1950: 5.

66. *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*...: 55-56.

67. On the using of Crown in the Roman Empire, see: Chastangol, André. *L'évolution politique, sociale et économique du monde romain de Dioclétien à Julien: la mise en place du régime du Bas-Empire*. Paris: Sedes, 1985: 170-174; on Visigoth kingdom, see: Valverde, María R. "Simbología del poder en la monarquía visigótica". *Studia Historica: Historia Antigua*, 9 (1991): 139-148.



twelfth century in Iberia, the Ceremonial of Cardeña among them, was a natural consequence of the restoration of this ceremony<sup>68</sup>.

#### 4. Self-coronation as usurpation in Twelfth-Century Castile

The beginning of the twelfth century also witnessed the introduction of a new subject into the narratives: the unorthodox ceremony of self-coronation. Two chronicles (the *Historia Silense*, about 1115, and Bishop Pelagius of Oviedo's chronicle, about 1118) also introduced the narration of a certain unexpected and unorthodox rite practiced by the usurper Paul (the enemy of the Visigothic King Wamba) and the violent King Sancho II, the enemy of his brother Alfonso VI, who eventually succeeded him as King of Castile. That new rite was self-coronation. Pelagius of Oviedo recounts that, in 1072, the usurper-king Sancho II, after having defeated his brother Alfonso VI, "himself placed the crown on his head in Leon":

*Post hec Sancius rex coepit dimicare contra fratrem suum Adelfonsum [VI] regem. [...] Tunc Sancius rex cepit regnum fratris suis Adefonsi regis, et imposuit sibi in Legione coronam, et fuit homo formosus nimis, et miles strenus. Perlustravit vero Asturias, Gallaeciam, sed et Portucalem. Regnavit autem annos VI et interfectus est extra muros Zemore, quam obsederat, ab uno milite nomine Velliti Ayulphi per prodicionem, et sepultus est in Castella in monasterio sancti Salvatoris de Osma*<sup>69</sup>.

Although Sancho II receives some praise in the chronicle, the gesture is unquestionably seen by Pelagius as a sign of usurpation, as Paul, the Duke of Narbonne, who fought Wamba four centuries before, is described in the *Historia Silense* as a usurper for having been named king after having placed the crown on his own head:

*Nichilominus tempore Bame gloriosissimi regis ferocitas Francorum prostrata dignoscitur. Cum enim Paulus quidam, cui Bamba rex Narbonensis provincie ducatum tradiderat, cupiditate imperandi in superbiam elevaretur, adeo ut imposito sibi diademate rex appellaretur, auxilio Francorum fretus apud Nemaunsum [Neumaso, town] rebellavit. Yspanus rex egre ferens, delectis equitibus cum quibus in expeditione erat, Neumaso quantocius properat; denique fuis fugatisque Francis obsedit urbem, captamque ex parte*

68. *Ceremonial de Cardeña*, ed. Francisco de Berganza, *Antigüedades de España*. Madrid: Francisco del Hierro, 1721: II, 681-684. Some hypothesis on the ultra-Pyrenean origin of this ceremonial, and its eventual use in Leon and Castilian coronations, in: Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 731-734.

69. *Crónica del obispo Don Pelayo*, ed. Benito Sánchez. Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando, 1924: 78. For Sancho II self-coronation, see: Bronisch, Alexander Pierre. "Krönungsritus...": 357; Deswarte, Thomas. *Destruction...*: 206; Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 398. Reilly argues that the act of self-coronation was not an act of arrogance but of the negative of Bishop Pelayo de León of taking part in the ceremony (Reilly, Bernard F. *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI, 1065-1109*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988: 63); but this not seems to be the spirit of the chronicler's annotation, nor the meaning of the context in which this gesture is articulated — with Sancho II just having dominated his brother Alfonso after long time of fighting.



*ad solum usque destruxit. Sed et ipsum Paulum vinctum deferens, subdita suo dominio Narbonensi provincia, ad Toletum alacer revertitur. Scripta sunt hec in libro beati Ysidori, quem inter alios XIII a se editos de Vandalorum et Suevorum Gotorumque gestis diligenter composuit*<sup>70</sup>.

It is certain that the compiler of the *Historia Silense* knew the account of Paul's self-coronation, fixed some centuries before in Julian's *Historia Wamba*. Julian always defines Paul as "tyrannus", in contraposition to the religious King Wamba. After reproaching Paul for profaning the old Visigothic treasury in order to take Reccadedus' crown for his own coronation, Julian's account of Paul's self-coronation goes as follows:

*Cumulaverat enim nefandissimus ipse Paulus peccato peccatum [royal usurpation plus profanation], dum tyrannidi adiungeret sacrilegium. Nam, ut quidam sapiens dicit: "nisi sacris ecclesiis intulisset spoliū, non esset, unde suum floreret aerarium". Unde factum est, ut vasa argenti quamplurima de thesauris dominicis rapta, et coronam illam auream, quam divae memoriae Reccaderus principis ad corpus beatissimi Felicis obtulerat, quam idem Paulus capati suo imponere ausus est, tota haec in unum collecta studiosius ordinaret secernere et devotissime, prout cuique competeat ecclesiae, intenderet reformare*<sup>71</sup>.

The same parallelism between the transgression of self-crowned Castilian kings and that of usurping Visigothic kings is expounded by the chronicler Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, Archbishop of Toledo, who stated in his history of Spain (about 1245) that Sancho II crowned himself, and in his history of the Arabs that kings had crowned themselves in the Visigothic period<sup>72</sup>.

These two transgressive gestures (Paul's and Sancho's self-coronations) are contrasted with the behaviour of Ferdinand I (1037-1065), who appears as a legitimate king who respects the rules of ascension to power, accepting the crown conventionally, (supposedly) being crowned in 1038 and named king:

*His peractis, praefatus rex Fredenandus venit, et obsedit Legionem, et post paucos dies cepit eam, et intravit cum multitudine maxia militu, et accepit ibi coronam, et factus est rex in regno Legioni et Castella. Tunc confirmavit leges quas socer eius rex Adelfonsus Legioni dedit, et alias addidit, quae sunt servandae. Rex iste fuit homo bonus, et timens Deum, genuitque ex predicta Sancia regina filios, Urracam, Sancium, Adefonsum, Garseam et Geloiram. Fecit ergo magnas cedas in sarracenos, et per unumquemque annum accepit constituta tribute a regibus eorum*<sup>73</sup>.

70. *Historia Silense*...: 5-6; ed. Pérez de Urbel and González...: 117.

71. Toledo, Julian of. *Historia Wamba regis*, chap. XXVI, ed. Levison...: 240-241. See also: Deswarte. "Le Christ-Roi...": 76.

72. Toledo, Rodrigo of. *Historia De Rebus Hispaniae*, VII, 20: *sibi trium regnorum imposuit diadema* (ed. Juan Fernández. Turnhout: Brepols, 1987); of Toledo, Rodrigo. *Historia Arabum*, chap. 9: *more rerum Gothorum sibi imposuit diadema* (ed. José Lozano. Seville: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1974); Linehan, Peter. *History and historians*...: 398 and 392.

73. *Crónica del Obispo Don Pelayo*, ed. Sánchez Alonso...: 71.



Thus, the gesture of self-coronation is seen, at least during the twelfth century, as a transgression of a natural receipt of authority, rather than a legitimate practice of kingly autonomy.

By the end of the twelfth century, the rites of unction and coronation, though only intermittently practised, were well established in the kingdom of Castile. Some authors have argued that this is probably the most important sign of the transition from an elective to a hereditary monarchy<sup>74</sup>. Yet, perhaps more interesting for the aims of this article, the balance and intermittency between unction and coronation witnessed by Leonese and Castilian kings from the ninth to the twelfth century (from Ordoño II to Alfonso VII) is a key theological-political event, which would have a profound influence in the two next centuries.

## 5. The consolidation of the practice of self-coronation in Fourteenth-Century Castile

If the beginning of the twelfth century witnessed the self-coronation narrative turn, things were still more radical, in terms of apparent secularisation of royal ceremonial practices, from the thirteenth century. From that time on, the chroniclers remove every mention of anointing from their narratives, eventually describing the enthronement ceremonies simply as coronations. They posthumously desacralise the Castilian monarchs. The crown soon becomes a symbol of temporal sovereignty, which could be used by the kings independently of the bishops with the rite of self-coronation —a gesture the latter could obviously not perform. In addition, the chronicler Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada suggests, in his narration of Ferdinand I's coronation, that it was to the acclamation of the aristocracy rather than to action by the Bishop that Ferdinand had owed his throne<sup>75</sup>.

To be sure, we do not have evidence of coronations or the unction of Alfonso VII's successors, Enrique I (1214-1217) and Fernando III (1217-1252). Neither Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada's chronicle, *La Crónica Latina de los reyes de Castilla*, nor *La Crónica General* say anything about these coronations<sup>76</sup>. We have only indirect word of Alfonso X's (1252-1284) installation ceremony, which probably consisted of a simple traditional gesture of "elevation"<sup>77</sup>. Peter Linehan has convincingly argued that Alfonso X's self-coronation in 1252, narrated by Antonio Ballesteros, based in turn on the Marqués de Mondéjar's 1700s account, was a historiographical creation induced by the specific historical context of Spain at the beginning of the eighteenth

74. Sánchez, Claudio. "La sucesión...": 687.

75. Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 398.

76. Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 734.

77. See the letter from Jofré de Loaysa to King Jaume I of Aragon (Archivo de la Corona de Aragón. Cancillería. Cartas Reales. Jaime I, 17) and the sober narration of Alfonso X's elevation in his own chronicle: *Crónica de Alfonso X el Sabio según el Ms. II/2777 de la Biblioteca del Palacio Real (Madrid)*, ed. Manuel González. Murcia: Academia Alfonso X el Sabio, 1999: 4.



century, rather than thirteenth-century historical reality<sup>78</sup>. This is a classic presentist-anachronistic approach, and standard practice in all-purpose historiography<sup>79</sup>.

Finally, Alfonso X's son, Sancho IV (1284-1295), was crowned by four bishops at Toledo Cathedral in 1284<sup>80</sup>. Significantly, it was the first coronation in Castile since 1111: Alfonso VII's 1135 imperial coronation was, in some sense, reiterative, or at least bearing an imperial rather than a properly monarchical meaning<sup>81</sup>. Interestingly, during the second half of the thirteenth century, the figure of Wamba was being re-constructed thanks to appropriation by Alfonso X and the spread of the *Poema de Fernán González*<sup>82</sup>. Sancho IV's coronation was a gesture full of political significance, aimed at strengthening the king's legitimacy before his father Alfonso X's other preference in the person of Alfonso de la Cerda. This decision once again contradicts the idea that the coronation had only a secondary symbolic meaning<sup>83</sup>. Sancho IV's son and successor, Ferdinand IV (1295-1312), was not crowned or anointed. His chronicler does not refer specifically to the coronation or anointing ceremonies, but to a more general ritual of enthronement when he was nine years old, in the central altar of Toledo Cathedral, in 1295:

*Pusieronle ante el altar mayor en la Iglesia mayor de Toledo, e rescibieronle por rey e por señor, e él juró de guardar los fueros a los fijosdalgo, e a todos los otros del su reyno. Otrosí lo juró por él la noble reyna Doña Maria, su madre*<sup>84</sup>.

78. Linehan, Peter. "The Accession of Alfonso X (1252) and the Origins of the War of the Spanish Succession", *God and Man in Medieval Spain. Essays in Honour of J.R.L. Highfield*, Derek W. Lomax, David Mackenzie, eds. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1989: 59-79, especially, 60-61 (reprinted in: Linehan, Peter. *Past and Present in Medieval Spain*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1992). See also: González, Manuel. *Alfonso X el Sabio*. Barcelona: Ariel, 2004: 44-46; O'Callaghan, Joseph F. *El rey sabio. El reinado de Alfonso X de Castilla*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1999: 48.

79. It is useful to visit some theoretical reflections about the weight of the presentism in history and historiography. See for instance: Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985; Gaddis, John L. *The Landscape of History. How Historians Map the Past*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Wood, Gordon S. *The Purpose of the Past. Reflections on the Uses of History*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2008.

80. "Crónica de D. Sancho": IV, 1. *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla: desde Don Alfonso El Sabio, hasta los católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell. Madrid: Atlas, 1953: I: 69b. Gaibrois, Mercedes. *Historia del reinado de Sancho IV de Castilla*. Madrid: Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 1922-1928: V-VI. On the political implications of Sancho IV's first coronation, see: Linehan, Peter. "The Politics of Piety: Aspects of the Castilian Monarchy from Alfonso X to Alfonso XI". *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 9 (1985): 385-404, especially, 389-391. Actually, this was the first coronation of Sancho IV, since he was crowned two times: Nieto, José Manuel. *Sancho IV, 1284-1295*. Palencia: La Olmeda, 1994: 55-57.

81. During the thirteenth century, some chroniclers such as Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada turned Alfonso VII's Imperial coronation into self-coronation. Yet, I do not take this argument as central in this paper, since this historiographical move has evident "Imperial" implications—which would give Alfonso's coronation a more strong "ecclesiastical" dimension—rather than properly "royal" or "monarchical". See: Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 463-465.

82. Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 483-486.

83. Nieto, José Manuel. *Iglesia y poder en Castilla. El episcopado, 1250-1350*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1988: 59.

84. "They placed before the high altar in the main Church of Toledo, and received such as a king and lord, and he swore to keep the privileges to nobleman and to others of his kingdom. The noble queen





The archbishop of Toledo was present at the ceremony, but he was only a “qualified” observer. Things seem to follow, at least for once, a progressive line towards secularisation. Nevertheless, the line’s crooked tendencies soon reasserted themselves. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Castile experienced another turn in coronation ceremonies, with the appearance of a new ceremonial, complementary to the “Ceremonial de Toledo”, and elaborated around the 1280s. This new ceremonial was probably commissioned by the same Alfonso XI (1312-1350) who had relatives in Portugal, and it was elaborated by a Portuguese Bishop of Coimbra (1319-1333) called Ramon, and written around the 1320s<sup>85</sup>. Alfonso XI followed this ceremonial in his installation, which basically consisted of the three successive ceremonies of knighting, anointing and coronation<sup>86</sup>. This ceremonial confirms that the coronation was at the core of the ceremony, since the part of the text devoted specifically to the ceremony, starts:

*Aquí es pintado et figurado como el Rey se va coronar, et como van con él todos sus fijos d’ algo, et como entran por la puerta de la çiudad, et como los obispos con su cleriçia lo sallan a recebir con grand processión (...) Et esto faran en el dia que el Rey ouiere [hubiere] de seer sagrado [ungido]*<sup>87</sup>.

Alfonso’s self-coronation is narrated in the *crónica del rey Alfonso Onceno*<sup>88</sup>. The chronicler explains that the king wanted to be knighted and crowned because he was determined to make his kingdom great:

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donna Maria, his mother swore also by him”. *Crónica de Fernando IV de Castilla*, chap. 1. *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla: desde Don Alfonso El Sabio, hasta los católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, ed. Cayetano Rosell. Madrid: Atlas, I: 93). See also: Benavides, Antonio. *Memorias de don Fernando IV de Castilla*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1860: I, 2; González, César. *Fernando IV de Castilla (1295-1312)*. Vitoria: Colegio Universitario de Álava, 1976: 31.

85. On this document, which is usually called “El ceremonial de El Escorial” because is kept in this Monastery, see: Sánchez, Claudio. “Un ceremonial...”: 741-742; Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...: 584-592*; Nieto, José Manuel. “Los libros de ceremoniales regios en Castilla y Aragón en el siglo XIV”, *El ceremonial...: 177-194*; Carrero, Eduardo. “Architecture and Liturgical Space in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The *Libro de la Coronación de los reyes de Castilla*”. *Hispanic Research Journal*, 13/5 (2012): 466-486; Pérez, Olga. “Ceremonias regias...”: 317-334.

86. The transcription and some interesting comments son the ceremonial in: Sánchez, Claudio. “Un ceremonial inédito de coronación de los reyes de Castilla”, *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965: 739-763 (transcription of the ceremonial in: 753-763).

87. Sánchez, Claudio. “Un ceremonial...”: 756.

88. On Alfonso XI’s self-coronation: Linehan, Peter. “The mechanization of ritual: Alfonso XI of Castile in 1332”, *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali*. Jacques Chiffolleau, Lauro Martines, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, eds. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull’alto Medioevo, 1994: 309-327; Ramos, María del Pilar. *Reafirmación del poder monárquico en Castilla: la coronación de Alfonso XI*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1983; Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...: 584-601*.



*E por que este Rey era buen ome en el su cuerpo, tovo por bien de resçebir la honra de la coronación e otrosí la honra de la cavallería, ca avia voluntad muy grande de hazer por la honra de sus reynos*<sup>89</sup>.

This text allows us to compare the ceremonial rubrics that were supposed to be followed with Alfonso's actual performance on the day of his coronation. He did not in the event follow the ceremonial he himself had commissioned. Peter Linehan expresses well the contrast between the "should be", as planned by the ceremonial, and the "what really happened", as narrated by the chronicle:

Nowhere is the contrast between their two perceptions of the king's place in society, the bishop's and the chronicler's, more startlingly apparent than in their accounts of what ought to have and what really did happen on the occasion of the knighting of Alfonso XI<sup>90</sup>.

Alfonso XI was first knighted by the mechanical arm of the automated Saint James in Santiago (25 July 1332)<sup>91</sup>, then anointed at the Monastery of Las Huelgas (Burgos) in August of that same year<sup>92</sup>, in front of the same mechanical sculpture (moved from Santiago to Burgos for the occasion<sup>93</sup>), before finally crowning himself in that very ceremony. The automated Saint James enabled the King of Castile, both in Santiago and Burgos, to assert his independence of all earthly powers both spiritual and secular<sup>94</sup>. Yet the discordance between the El Escorial Ceremonial and the ritual followed by Alfonso XI in his installation ceremonies is particularly striking at the moment of coronation, immediately following his anointing. The chronicler explains that:

*Et desde que el Rey fue ungido, tornaron al altar el Arzobispo e los Obispos e bendixieron las coronas que estaban en el altar. E desde que fueron bendichas, el Arçobispo arredrose del altar,*

89. *Crónica del rey Don Alfonso el Onceno*, chap. CXX-CXXI, ed. Diego Catalán, *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*. Madrid: Gredos, 1977: 507.

90. Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 592. A very interesting comparison between Bishop Ramon's *Ordo* and Alfonso XI's *Chronicle* in: Linehan, Peter. "The Politics of Piety...": 391-393.

91. *y el rey armose de todas sus armas [...] e tomó él por sí mesmo todas las armas del altar de Santiago, que gelas non dio ninguno; e ficeron llegar la ymagen de Santiago que estava ençima del altar al rey, e llegose el rey a ella, e fizo que le diese una peçoçada en el carrillo. E desta guisa recibió cavalleria este rey don Alonso del apóstol Santiago* (*Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Catalán...: 507).

92. *e descosieron al rey el pellote e la saya del onbro derecho, e unjolo el arzobispo en la espalda derecha con olio desdicho quel arzobispo tenía para esto* (*Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Catalán...: 510).

93. *y el rey partió de la çibdad de Santiago, e fue al Padrón otrosí en romería, por que en aquel lugar aportó el cuerpo de Santiago* (*Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Catalán...: 507).

94. About the automated Santiago and its function in Alfonso XI's knighting and anointment: Linehan, Peter. *History...*: 592-593 and 598-599, and: Linehan, Peter. "Alfonso XI of Castile and the Arm of Santiago (with a Note on the Pope's Foot)", *Miscellanea Domenico Maffei dicata*, Antonio García, Peter Weimar, eds. Goldbach: Keip, 1995: 121-146 (reprint in: Linehan, Peter. *The Processes of Politics and the Rule of Law*. Aldershot: Ashgate-Variorum, 2002), The sculpture-machine of Santiago is today still visible in the cloister of the church of the Monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos.



*e fuese asentar a su façistor; e los Obispos eso mesmo cada uno se fue asentar en su lugar. E desde el altar fue desenbargado dellos, el Rey subió al altar, e tomó su corona de oro con piedras preciosas e de muy gran presçio, e púsola en la cabeça: e tomó él la otra corona, e púsola a la Reyna, e tornó fincar los ynojos ante el altar, segund de que antes estava: e estovieron ay hasta que fue alçaron el cuerpo de Dios. E después que el cuerpo de Dios fue alçado, el Rey et la Reyna fuéronse a sentar cada uno en su lugar; et estuvieron así, las coronas en las cabeças, hasta la misa acabada*<sup>95</sup>.

Yet the ceremonial had planned the ceremony otherwise:

*Et después que el Rey fuese fecho cavallero de Santiago, en senyal de mayor gloria, el que dixiere la missa le ponga una mitra obispal en la cabeça, et sobre la mitra la corona real et diga esta oración: Accipe signum glorie diadema Regni coronam imperii*<sup>96</sup>.

There is no mention of the mitre in the chronicler's account. Peter Linehan argues that mitres belonged to a wider world than Castile had ever known, just as the entire ceremonial evoked scenes which the wider world had not witnessed since the age of Alfonso VII. Alfonso XI (or, rather, the *narration* of Alfonso XI's installation ceremonies) revived practices which the popes had been striving to remove during the previous two centuries<sup>97</sup>. This idea strengthens my belief that Alfonso XI of Castile's and Peter IV of Aragon's self-coronations, performed in 1332 and 1336 respectively, were not uncalculated or naïve gestures but strategic, premeditated and calculated secularised rites in order to gain self-sufficiency in their sovereignty. For his part, Alfonso XI surely also had in mind Alfonso IV of Aragon's coronation, performed four years earlier, in 1328, in which the role of the ecclesiastics was kept to a minimum<sup>98</sup>. Within a period of eight years (1328-1336), the Peninsula witnessed three highly magnificent and sumptuous coronations, two of them executed in a self-performed manner.

Circumstantially, perhaps the effective performance of Alfonso XI's gesture was favoured by the difficult situation of Pope John XXII in Avignon, but in any case

95. The archbishop and the bishops turned to the altar after the king being anointed, and they blessed the crowns that were on the altar. The archbishop, after the benediction of the crowns, left the altar and was settling to his lectern, at the same time that the bishops were to each place. And as soon as they left the altar, the King went there, and took his crown made of gold with very expensive gemstones, and put it over his head: and he took the other crown, and set it to the Queen, and knelt in front of the altar, such as he was before; and they were there until the Body of God was raised; and they rested thus, with the crowns over their heads, until the Mass was over". *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Catalán...: 510 (see also: ed. Rosell, *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla*...: I, 233-235). A more sober narration is given in the Poem of Alfonso XI: *El muy noble rey aquel día / su corona fue tomar / la reyna donna María / y la fizo coronar* (ed. Yo Ten Cate. *El poema de Alfonso XI*. Madrid: Bermejo, 1956: 111, chap. 392). This sobriety is compatible with the hypothesis, argued by Diego Catalán, that the Poem would be a versified abbreviation of the Chronicle: Catalán, Diego. *Poema de Alfonso XI. Fuentes, dialecto, estilo*. Madrid: Gredos, 1953: 10 and 16.

96. And, after being done knight of Santiago and in sign of the most glory, who was saying Mass, must put over the Episcopal miter over the head, and the crown over the Episcopal miter and he must such prayer: *Accipe signum glorie diadema Regni coronam imperii* (Sánchez, Claudio. "Un ceremonial...": 762-763).

97. Linehan, Peter. *History and historians*...: 601.

98. Muntaner, Ramón. *Crònica*, chap. 295, ed. Ferran Soldevila...: 936.



this could not have been reason enough to justify or legitimise such a gestural transgression. In addition, when Benedict XII replaced John XXII as Pope in 1334, he maintained a closer watch on Spanish affairs, but he was not able to prevent Peter IV of Aragon's self-coronation in 1336.

After Alfonso XI, his son Enrique II Trastámara (1367-1379) was also crowned at the Monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos. The chronicler says that king *coronose allí por Rey* and then he received the homage of the nobles through the kissing of his hands, a feudal tradition that had been restored to the coronation ceremony at some uncertain time before<sup>99</sup>. Juan I (1379-1390) was also crowned and the chronicler used a parallel expression: *él* (the king) *se coronó*<sup>100</sup>. If the restoration of the feudal tradition of the homage of the nobles was a substitute for the former sacred oath, then this would be "another" sign of the secularisation of the Castilian monarchy<sup>101</sup>. This turn from the religious *sacramentum* to feudal-profane homage, begun at some time in the thirteenth century, would also explain the abandonment of the practice of unction after Alfonso VII, only for it to be restored, paradoxically, by Alfonso XI during the fourteenth century—just as Alfonso VII's coronation had recently been revived by Sancho IV in 1284. Faith was not failing, and the sacred meaning of the ceremonies remain, but the monarchy was increasing its autonomy more and more with respect to the Church, its power in the face of the nobility, and its tendency towards autocracy<sup>102</sup>.

## 6. Conclusion

The period between Constantine and Charlemagne witnessed the transposition of Christian doctrine into an imperial and monarchical ideology. During the next centuries, the Iberian Peninsula experienced the manifestations of this transference in the ritual forms and its different symbolic liturgical meanings, transformations, and political uses. Where Wamba wanted to be anointed to consolidate and legitimate his power and authority in the seventh century, Alfonso XI wanted to avoid being anointed so as to gain autonomy from the spiritual sphere and to strengthen his authority in the fourteenth century. Alfonso's self-coronation, and the consequent

99. López, Pedro. *Crónica del rey Don Pedro*, ed. Eugenio de Llaguno, Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1875: 540.

100. Nieto, José Manuel. *Ceremonias de la realeza. Propaganda y legitimación en la Castilla Trastámara*. Madrid: Nerea, 1993: 28; Suárez, Luis. *Historia del reinado de Juan I de Castilla*. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma, 1977: I, 26-27.

101. On the feudal tradition of the *besamanos*: Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 734-736. Yet the new studies are stressing the long tradition of the *besamanos*, and its very particular nature: Fernández, Álvaro. "Los símbolos del poder real", *Catálogo de la exposición de Los Reyes Católicos y Granada. Monasterio de San Jerónimo (Granada)*, Alberto Bartolomé and Carlos J. Hernando, eds. Granada: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2005: 37-58.

102. Maravall, José Antonio. *La oposición política bajo los Austrias*. Barcelona: Ariel, 1972: 156-157; Sánchez, Claudio. "Ordinatio...": 737; Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 430. See, *contra*: Nieto, José Manuel. *Fundamentos ideológicos del poder real en Castilla (siglos XIII-XVI)*. Madrid: Eudema, 1988: 62 and 67.



reduction of the sacralisation dimension of the ceremony, confirms the increasing monarchical aspiration of secularisation and the growing tension between both temporal and spiritual spheres.

Nevertheless, as we have tried to show in this article, this royal autonomy or secularisation should not be viewed as a “progressive-lineal” evolution. There were many breaks and ups-and-downs in this supposed progression. On the one hand, this crooked line demystifies the idea of a supposed “theocracy” from Visigothic Spain that would survive in the Spanish Habsburg monarchy and largely mark the whole development of Spain, until the twentieth-century Francoist regime. But it also denies (or at least moderate) the typical Spanish “special way” (“Spain is different”), in this case the experience of a radical royal secularisation (or the “un-sacred” monarchy) lacking in other classic European monarchies such as those of France and England<sup>103</sup>.

As a consequence of this variation in the models of unction and coronation among Iberian kings, critics have oscillated between the thesis of sacralisation and the thesis of un-sacred and secularisation. Perhaps they have not stressed enough the ruptures in each of the two eventual developments, focusing instead on the continuities, looking for a lineal evolution. I would argue that it would be very useful to apply to this historical problem the hypothesis of political-theology, well established in political philosophy but absent from historiographical debate<sup>104</sup>. This could help explain the meaning of the ritual ceremonies of royal installation, particularly unction and coronation, and their ability to transfer certain sacred categories to the secular sphere. This approach avoids the excessive polarisation (sacralisation vs. secularisation) into which the history of symbolic meaning in medieval Iberian monarchies is prone, and allows us to analyse the whole process in terms of eventual and maintained transferences of certain sacred categories to the secular sphere, and vice-versa<sup>105</sup>.

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103. As the Bloch's classic book showed long time ago: Bloch, Marc. *Les rois thaumaturges...*

104. As well known, Ernst Kantorowicz used this concept for his great study on the theory of the king's two bodies (*The King's Two Bodies...*). The concept was coined by Carl Schmitt at the beginning of the twentieth century. En excellent approach to the meaning of Schmitt's concept of political theology in: Herrero, Montserrat. *El nomos y lo político: la filosofía política de Carl Schmitt*. Pamplona: Eunsa, 2007: 341-418.

105. Certainly, José Manuel Nieto Soria (“Origen divino, espíritu laico y poder real en la Castilla del siglo XIII”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 27/1 (1997): 43-100, especially, 97-98) has argued for the hypothesis of the “transference”, taken from Kantorowicz idea of “Mysteries of State”, and more properly (although he did not quote it) from Carl Schmitt's idea of “political theology”, although he has not developed further these hypothesis and he has written extensively on the thesis of Castilian monarchy sacralisation rather than properly the transposition of sacred realities into the temporal sphere. By the other side, other historians have sustained the theory of the secularization of Castilian monarchy, which sharply contrast with other European royal lineages, starting for the neighbour Portugal and Aragon: Ruiz, Teófilo F. “Une royauté sans sacre: la monarchie castillane du Bas Moyen Age”. *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 39 (1984): 429-453; Linehan, Peter. *History and historians...*: 426 and following; O'Callaghan, Joseph. *El rey sabio...*: 47-49; Rucquoi, Adeline. “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos: fundamentos de la realeza en España”. *Relaciones. Estudios de historia y sociedad*, 13 (1992): 55-83. For the “process of secularization” of the Crown of Aragon, see: Palacios, Bonifacio. “Los actos de coronación y el proceso de “secularización” de la monarquía catalano-aragonesa (siglos XIII-XIV)”, *État et église dans la genèse de l'état moderne*, Bernard Vicent, Jean-Philippe Genet, eds. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1986: 113-128.

