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the Sacred oyle”:
An Object-Centred and Sensory
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of Charles I**

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Abstract: Following the Reformation in Scotland, and subsequent royal efforts to shape Scottish worship, there was palpable tension between the London-based Stuart rulers and their northern kingdom. Consequently, the fact that both ritual actions and the use of material culture within Holyrood Abbey for the Scottish coronation of Charles I in 1633 attracted criticism from contemporary commentators, and subsequent historians, is hardly surprising. Yet, the inclusion of anointing—an act which had increasingly been criticised by Presbyterians—and the acquisition of a new “Vessel containing the Sacred Oyle” did not appear to generate contemporary criticisms or even much in the way of comments. This article undertakes an object-centred and sensory analysis to offer clear evidence for a multi-sensory climax created around the moment that the ampulla was used in the act of anointing in Charles’s coronation. The fact that this did not generate criticism raises important questions about Scottish attitudes towards anointing and its role in kingship more generally in the early modern period. In closing, this article reflects on such issues to consider why the ampulla, and the anointing it facilitated, did not arouse the same anger or fear from the Scottish Presbyterian audiences as other elements of the ceremony.

Keywords: material culture; anointing; Charles I; coronation; Scotland; Scottish; sensory; ritual

The Scottish coronation of Charles I took place in 1633—over seven years after Charles’s accession in 1625 and his English coronation in 1626—and witnessed the creation of a gold ampulla, now housed in the National

¹ I would like to thank Amy Hayes and the anonymous reviewers for their useful comments and suggestions on the article, attendees to papers given on this topic at Kings and Queens 10 (2021), RSA Dublin (2022), the University of Edinburgh’s Material & Visual Culture in the 17th and 18th Centuries Research Cluster (2023) for their comments and questions, and the RSJ volunteer editing and production team. Any errors herein are my own.

Museum of Scotland, for the anointing oil **[Figure 1]**.² Ritual actions at the coronation attracted criticism from contemporary commentators, as well as in subsequent historiography, including perhaps most famously Charles’s off-script decision to kneel at the doorway of Holyrood Abbey.³ Moreover, in several accounts of contemporaries, material culture—and its use within the church particularly—was linked to superstition and “poperie”. John Spalding, an Episcopalian, and an anonymous history of Scotland thought to be associated with David Calderwood, a Presbyterian, both record concerns about the richly decorated stage in Holyrood Abbey in 1633. Dressed as it was with tapestries, candles, a crucifix that “was curiously wrought” and an image of the Virgin Mary, they claimed that the stage was worryingly suggestive of an altar—a feature removed from Scottish post-Reformation Presbyterian churches—and the reverence offered by Charles and some officiating clerics to objects, such as the cross and Virgin image, also caused some alarm.⁴ Yet, the object which inspired this article—the gold ampulla containing sacred oil for anointing—seems not to have attracted the same level of attention either at the time or since.⁵ This is all the more intriguing as following the Reformation in Scotland, the ritual act of anointing the king or queen had faced direct challenge. In the last Scottish coronation prior to 1633—that of Anna of Denmark, queen to James VI, in 1590—the king had had to fight vociferously with his own Presbyterian-dominated clergy to retain the act of anointing for Anna, due to the perceived associations with superstition and the fact that it symbolised the divine ordaining of a monarch, which ran counter to Presbyterian efforts to divide church and state.⁶ Consequently, the fact that Charles’s coronation not only included anointing but also led to the acquisition of a new “Vessel containing the Sacred Oyle”—and that neither the object nor the actions associated with it generated contemporary criticisms or even much in the way of comments—raises important questions about Scottish attitudes towards anointing and its role in kingship more generally in the early modern period. This article will undertake an object-centred

² National Museum Scotland (NMS hereafter), H.KJ 164. **[Figures 1–5]**; “Coronation Ampulla of Charles I,” *Explore NMS*.

³ For further discussion of this, see: Shaw, “St Giles’ Church and Charles I’s Coronation,” 496–497.

⁴ Spalding, *The History of the Troubles*, 17–18; National Library Scotland (NLS hereafter), Wodrow Quarto IX, fol. 334v.

⁵ NMS, H.KJ 164. See also: “Coronation Ampulla of Charles I,” *Explore NMS*. Following the acquisition of the ampulla, the following largely descriptive piece was produced: Stevenson, “Charles I’s Coronation Ampulla”, 237–241. See also: Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 56–58.

⁶ Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 5:95–96. See also: Meikle, “Anna of Denmark’s Coronation,” 279–294; Dean, “Crowns, Wedding Rings and Processions,” 312–313.

and sensory analysis to better understand how the ampulla was used and interacted with during the coronation as a previously unexplored means of reflecting upon these questions.



Figure 1: Ampulla (full view), National Museum of Scotland, H.KJ164 © National Museums Scotland

The ampulla is a relatively unassuming pear-shaped vessel, that stands at just 12.5 centimetres in height and weighs “three and three-quarter ounces and six quarters” of

refined gold, with a double pouring spout, a decorative foot, and a Latin inscription [Figure 1].⁷ Very rarely does an historic object offer explicit information about its specific use in the past. Yet, the ampulla’s inscription clearly announces that it was used as a receptacle for holy oil to anoint Charles I—King of the Scots, England, France, and Ireland—at the church of the Holy Rood in Edinburgh on 18 June 1633. In doing so, it boldly claims its place at the centre of the ritual of king making in seventeenth-century Scotland. However, despite this helpful self-identification, and its importance as a key surviving part of the material legacy of Scottish kingship, the ampulla is still something of an enigma. Unlike the honours of Scotland—including the surviving crown, sceptre, and sword which have medieval provenance but were remodelled in the 1530s—or the royal robe used by Charles, which was made anew for James V in 1538—the ampulla was purchased and/or created for the coronation of Charles I, even though Scottish monarchs had been anointed since at least 1331.⁸ Despite previous discussions of the Scottish coronation of Charles I, and even some analysis of the ampulla within these, the ritual objects used in the coronation have not taken centre stage.⁹ This article seeks to place the ampulla at the core of the analysis. In doing so, it addresses previously unasked questions about the ampulla’s creation—particularly the reasons it was required when anointing was not a new ritual, the way it was used (beyond its own claims) within enacting or recognition rituals in 1633, and the wider sensory nature of ceremonial in which the object featured to reflect on why—considering the level of critique around other aspects of Charles actions during his visit—it did not come under the same scrutiny of observers.

Charles I’s abilities as a monarch have been much debated, particularly due to his reign ending in civil war and regicide, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that a diversity of opinion exists around the extent to which Charles was successful, or not, in representing royal authority through cultural means—including visual, textual and ritual modes of communication—both in England and in Scotland. Formerly influential scholarship, which presented Charles as a king “detached from his people” who did not engage with public forms of communication, has been convincingly challenged as too simplistic by Kevin Sharpe. He presents ample evidence of the range of ways—textual, aural and material—

⁷ NMS, H.KJ 164. The weight is recorded at the time of purchase and this weight was confirmed as the weight of the surviving object by Lindsay McGill (former curator at National Museums Scotland): National Records of Scotland (NRS hereafter), E25/19/91.

⁸ The surviving Scottish honours are housed at Edinburgh Castle.

⁹ Dougal Shaw has considered the anointing with reference to the ampulla being fashioned of gold and the possible implications of this: “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 57–58.

that Charles presented and re-presented his image of kingship in public spaces.¹⁰ Sharpe is certainly no apologist for Charles’s failings, but he argues that Charles’s “obsession with order and regulation” extended to rituals—like the touching of the king’s evil in England—illustrating both concerns about the manner in which these were performed and a keen awareness of the role of ceremony and ritual played in forging and re-forging relations with the public.¹¹ Sharpe, Catriona Murray and Giovanna Guidicini also illustrate that the supposed failings in representational activities of later Stuart monarchs must take account of the rapid changes occurring in the seventeenth century. The explosions in printed discourse, increased use of public statuary and the wider changes to performative entries in early modern Europe all influenced the public dialogues between monarchs and their realms, and recognising this has led to a shift in the narrative towards one that is more reflective of those elements that Charles could not control.¹²

In a Scottish context, there has been a propensity towards criticism of how Charles’s interest in ritual manifested during his Scottish visit of 1633. In 1901, John Stuart proclaimed that Charles’s Scottish coronation was “a careless massacre of the allegorical and historical rites.”¹³ More recently, Dougal Shaw insinuated a similar lack of appreciation for Scottish traditions when stating that Charles “based his extraordinary Scottish coronation on English liturgy” and, in a separate article, centres much of his argument around those things which Charles did to “enrage radical Calvinists in the audience.”¹⁴ There is also a critical edge to Guidicini’s analysis of the 1633 entry as one which, in comparison to earlier early modern Scottish entries, was marked by a “blatant disregard for spatial conventions and for the traditional language of negotiations.”¹⁵ Siobhan Keenan’s recent work on Charles’s progresses (including that to Edinburgh in 1633), however, offers a different perspective. She develops Sharpe’s approach by weighing up how far Charles engaged in dialogue and communication, as well as considering Charles’s aims and the relative success of the performative displays when cast in this light.¹⁶ As work on spatial analysis and locational setting by Shaw and Guidicini has illustrated, taking

¹⁰ Sharpe, “Sacarilization and Demystification,” 111–112; Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 135–276.

¹¹ Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 230–234.

¹² Sharpe, “Scarilization and Demystification,” 99–115; Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 230–234; Murray, “Raising Royal Bodies,” 359–365; Guidicini, *Triumphal Entries and Festivals*.

¹³ Stuart, *Scottish Coronations*, 140.

¹⁴ Shaw, “St Giles’ Church and Charles I’s Coronation,” 497; Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 55.

¹⁵ Guidicini, *Triumphal Entries and Festivals*, 34–35.

¹⁶ Keenan, *The Progresses, Processions and Royal Entries of King Charles I*, 27–28, 34, 41–42.

varied analytical approaches to the ceremonial occasions of 1633 offers opportunities to uncover insights into the relations between the king and his northern realm as they tussled over details of the events. In doing so, they illuminate the challenges of navigating varied expectations, disharmonious religious outlooks, and issues of precedence and tradition.¹⁷ This article furthers these discussions and debates through material and sensory analysis. However, before doing so, it will outline the methodology that has been embraced herein.

Methodology

As Adrienne Hood argues, while historians might incorporate material evidence to support an analysis primary focused on documents, they rarely “begin our research with objects or use them as an integral form of evidence.”¹⁸ In the case of Charles’s coronation, the lure of going straight to the documentary evidence is particularly strong due to volume of extant material when compared to pre-Reformation Scottish coronations. The royal, parliamentary, heraldic, burghal and kirk interest in the visit generated a proliferation of both official and unofficial documentary records discussing, prescribing, and recording elements of the ceremony.¹⁹ Amongst these are a number of orders of ceremony, which are of particular note due to the fact that no pre-Reformation documents of this type survive for Scotland.²⁰ Sharpe has demonstrated that Charles I was particularly interested in past precedence and tradition in his organisation of the Caroline court in England.²¹ A similar interest is reflected in his request of July 1628 for advice from his Scottish heralds on the “forms of the ancient coronation” of his northern realm.²² The resulting order of ceremony was penned by Jerome Lindsay, the Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1628 (hereafter, *Lindsay’s Forme*). This elicited a response from Whitehall—the coronation book drafted by William Laud, bishop of London, and later archbishop of Canterbury, which was sent back to Scotland in 1633 (hereafter, *Laudian order*)—and numerous other copies and versions,

¹⁷ Shaw, “St Giles’ Church and Charles I’s Coronation,” 481–502; Guidicini, *Triumphal Entries and Festivals*.

¹⁸ Hood, “Material Culture: the Object,” 176.

¹⁹ Orders of ceremony, include: Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–395; NRS, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r; NLS, Adv. MS. 33.7.10, fols 6–14r; Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fols 30–31; “The form of King Charles the I his Coronation in Scotland, June 11th 1633. Written with Mr Dell’s own Hand, Secretary to the Late Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Laud” in *Ceremonies, Form of Prayer and Services in Westminster Abbey*, 15–20. One of the best descriptions is that by Sir James Balfour of Denmiln, “Cap: 10 The Memorable & Solemne Coronatione of King Charles Crouned King of Scotland. At Holyrudhousse the 18 of Junij 1633,” NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fols 36r–42v.

²⁰ Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 44–51; Dean, *Death and the Royal Succession in Scotland*, 8–15.

²¹ Sharpe, “The Image of Virtue,” 239–244.

²² NRS, PC1/32, 35v–36r; Burton, *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, Second Series, 2:384–385.

including at least two by James Balfour of Denmiln, who was Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1633.²³ Consequently, a number of historians have analysed some or all of these texts to varying degrees and with a range of purposes.²⁴ However, the coronation also elicited a renewed interest in the objects associated with the Scottish coronation—the royal honours (including the crown, sceptre, sword and royal robe) and an ampulla to carry the anointing oil—by the king, Whitehall, and the Scottish individuals tasked with undertaking preparations for the ceremony.²⁵ These material things were crucial to the ritual activities that took place, so this article focuses on one of these objects—the ampulla—as the central and integral piece of evidence from which the rest of the discussion and analysis emerges.

Aspects of the materiality of Charles’s coronation and associated progress to Scotland have made an appearance in previous studies; for example, both Keenan and Shaw comment on material decorations of the altar and the vestments of the bishops.²⁶ However, as Hood suggests is the more common approach for historians, these are used largely as supportive examples within a host of other evidence rather than as the starting point for the discussion. The analysis underpinning this article draws influence from several material culture methodologies in its approach, including Jules Prown’s three-staged approach (object description, sensory and intellectual engagement, speculation), Giorgio Riello’s (particularly *history of* and *from* things) and Beverly Gordon’s ‘four zones’ of interaction (intimate, personal, social and public).²⁷ The latter has particularly inspired the direction taken. For Gordon, interaction with and thus responses to the material world are deeply intertwined with proximity to the object in question, as different senses were utilised dependent on this important detail. Her method primarily considers the tactile and the visual: tactility and physical interaction are associated primarily with zone one (intimate/ 0–40cm), with decreasingly physical appreciation in zone two (personal/ 40cm–120cm), whereas the visual can be associated with all four zones but with details becoming

²³ Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–395; NRS, Royal Letters, 1623–32, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r; “The form of King Charles the I his Coronation in Scotland,” in *Ceremonies, Form of Prayer and Services in Westminster Abbey*, 15–20; NLS, Adv. MS. 33.7.10, fols 6–14r; NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fols 30–31.

²⁴ Stuart, *Scottish Coronations*, 63–140; Lyall, “The Medieval Coronation Service,” 3–21; Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 51–55; Dean, “Crowning the Child,” 269–275.

²⁵ The opportunity to further research these objects arose from a project for Historic Environment Scotland (2016–2017) to provide an updated report on the royal honours of Scotland: Dean, *The Scottish Royal Honours*.

²⁶ Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 49–58; Keenan, *The Progresses, Processions and Royal Entries of King Charles I*, 49–52 (as part of wider discussion of 1633, 41–87).

²⁷ Prown, “Mind in Matter,” 1–19; Riello, “Things That Shape History: Material Culture and Historical Narratives,” 24–46; Beverly Gordon cited in Hood, “Material Culture: The Object,” 183–184.

increasingly inaccessible in the third and fourth zones (social, 120cm to 360cm, and public, 360cm to end of visual range).²⁸ In this article, this approach will be expanded to incorporate a wider spectrum of sensory interaction by adding aural and olfactory senses to vision and tactility.

Sensory engagement with the past is a growing area of early modern scholarship that offers much potential when considering ceremony and ritual.²⁹ Marcus Merriman has argued that ceremonies were designed as an “assault upon the senses.”³⁰ Contemporaries made active efforts to engage all the senses in such displays and sound, in particular, had the ability to resonate within all four zones and beyond. By exploring how sensory factors were utilised and manipulated in conjunction with the ampulla’s use in 1633, this article seeks to amplify our understanding of the ways in which people perceived and experienced the material world. To appreciate human interactions with the ampulla, textual accounts of its use in the coronation need to be explored alongside the physical attributes of the object itself. The most detailed account of the ceremony is that of Balfour of Denmiln, who was the Lord Lyon King of Arms, Scotland’s chief herald at the time.³¹ His record of the event is an interesting one as he was both a person of firm and convicted Presbyterian beliefs but also one who was largely loyal to the king.³² This puts him in a category of Scottish attendee who complicates a straightforward us-versus-them relationship between Charles and his Scottish people in which Charles purposefully sought to aggravate Presbyterian sensibilities. The Lyon King herald was central to the organisation of the events in Scotland and undertook prominent ritual roles within the ceremony, some of which appear unique to the Scottish ceremony, so he was in a pertinent position in terms of observing the negotiations around kingship ritual that were undertaken at the time and in his records of the event. Moreover, unlike many others, the ampulla features prominently in his account.

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²⁸ Beverly Gordon cited in Hood, “Material Culture: The Object,” 183–184.

²⁹ For example, see: Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume*; Matthias Range, *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronation*; Boer and Göttler, eds., *Religion and the Senses*; Dugan, “Scent,” 420–443; Christ, “Sensing Multiconfessionality,” 317–339.

³⁰ Merriman, *The Rough Wooings*, 28.

³¹ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fols 36r–42v.

³² Du Toit, “Balfour, Sir James, of Denmiln and Kinnaird, first baronet.” For further discussion of Balfour’s role and allegiances, see: Mann, “The Scottish Coronation of Charles II,” 80–82.

According to Balfour’s account, the number of people who came into direct or intimate contact with the ampulla was small: the “Goldin Ampule of Viale with the Sacred oyle” was carried by the Lyon King of Arms and the only other individuals to handle it directly were religious figures—the Dean of the Chapel and the Archbishop of St Andrews.³³ Charles would have been within an intimate distance of the ampulla, if it was used to directly administer the oil that it carried.³⁴ Due to its small size (12.5 cms), it would have been these people in the intimate zone who would have had the fullest appreciation for the materiality and visual details of the ampulla. The relatively simple pear-shaped vessel sits on a round stand and has a lid with two spouts facing in opposing directions moulded onto it, with variations in the gold colouring where these features have been moulded or soldered onto to the lid [Figures 1, 2 and 3].³⁵



Figure 2: Ampulla (horns of), National Museum of Scotland, H.KJ164 © National Museums Scotland

³³ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fols 38r–40v.

³⁴ The few Scottish records from the pre-Reformation period offer little information on the administering of holy oil or whether there was separate oil and chrism used, and even the records for 1633 lack specifics of how the oil was applied. Nonetheless, there is also no reference to the existence or use of an anointing spoon (as was the case in England) or any specific references to the archbishop decanting the oil onto his hands in 1633, so it may have been administered directly from the vessel.

³⁵ For a more detailed description of solder work: Stevenson, “Charles I’s Coronation Ampulla,” 239.



Figure 3: Ampulla (full view, top down), National Museum of Scotland, H.KJ164 © National Museums Scotland

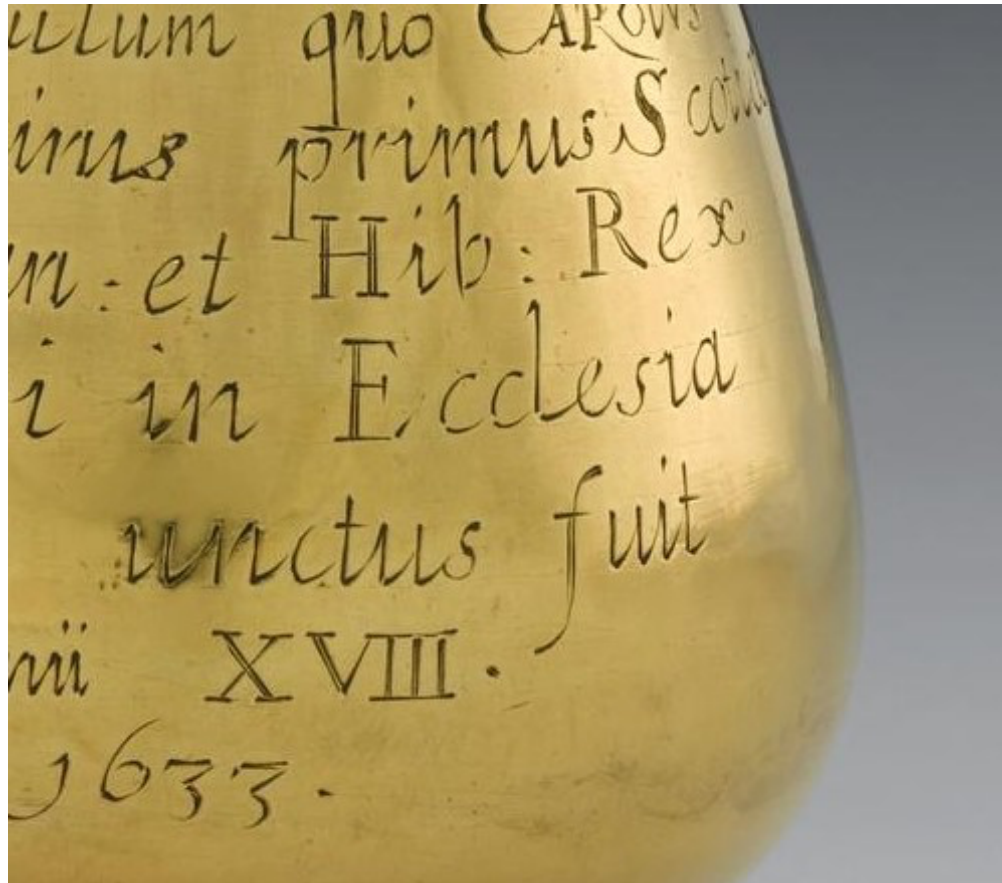


Figure 4: Ampulla (engravings on), National Museum of Scotland, H.KJ164 © National Museums Scotland

Above and below the Latin inscription are faint etched lines (see the end of the words ‘ecclesia’ and ‘Rex’, **Figure 4**) that indicate the work on this was undertaken carefully with efforts to maintain a consistent size to the lettering.³⁶ It is not clear if the engraving was done before the coronation or to commemorate it, but the extant guiding lines could imply that the addition was rushed with little time to buff off such indicators of the process of adding the inscription. Robert B.K. Stevenson also noted inconsistencies with the elegance of some aspects and others—such as the decorative foot—that appear rushed.³⁷ Other than the inscription and the simple markings around the foot, there is little decoration.

That such an important object for conveying the oil for anointing was relatively plain—lacking jewels or other embellishments—may seem incongruous with its purpose, especially when compared with other exemplars such as the eagle-shaped ampulla from

³⁶ NMS, H.KJ 164; NMS, “Coronation Ampulla of Charles I.”

³⁷ Stevenson, “Charles I’s Coronation Ampulla,” 239.

the English regalia.³⁸ The simple design may be a nod to the favoured simplicity of Presbyterian church plate, such as examples of the communion cups held by the National Museum.³⁹ However, this seems unlikely considering the wider material ornamentation of the coronation stage that aroused concerns of the Scottish commentators, as outlined in the introduction. The four-zone analysis offers potential reasons why its finer details were less important. Other than Charles and those who handled the object, there were few others who would have come into the intimate or personal zones (between 0cm and 120cm). Many of the participants and the congregation would largely have been in the social or public zones through most of the ceremony. Thus, for the majority all but the most obvious of details about this small object would have been lost, with only the potential of additional people being brought within the personal zone briefly as the ampulla entered the church or, as will be discussed later, due to giving their oaths to the enthroned king offering moments of closer observation. From this a few things are particularly striking, and these will inform the core of the remaining object analysis. First, the ampulla was most visible and accessible to larger numbers of the congregation as it travelled into the ceremonial space. Second, even when visible—considering the object’s small size—only dominant features would have been recognisable to most viewers, even within the personal zone. Consequently, due to this, considering other sensual connections or associations made with the object throughout the ceremonial performance is important to better understand the audience’s engagement, understanding, and response—or apparent thereof—to the object.

The ampulla’s journey into the ceremonial space appears not to have been quite as the *Laudian order* had outlined. It instructed that “the Vessel containing the sacred Oyl” was to be the main feature of the procession from the castle to the church, carried by the Lyon King of Arms supported by “two of his Brethern”—other heralds—and accompanied by sounding trumpets.⁴⁰ The order clearly gives prominence to the ampulla above and beyond that of the regalia in this procession from the presence chamber at Edinburgh Castle through the burgh to Holyrood, as it does not mention how the regalia should be

³⁸ Royal Collections Trust, “Ampulla, 1661, RCIN 31732,” *Collection Story*.

³⁹ Examples of communion cups: Mossman, “Communion cup, c.1585–1586,” NMS H.KJ 253; Lindsay, “Communion Cup, c.1596–1600,” NMS IL.2001.63.1; Kirkwood, “Communion cup, c.1617–1619,” NMS, X.2015.130.1. For accounts of the stage decoration, see Spalding, *The History of the Troubles*, 17–18; NLS, Wodrow Quarto IX, fol. 334v.

⁴⁰ “The form of King Charles the I his Coronation,” in *Ceremonies, Form of Prayer and Services in Westminster Abbey*, 16.

carried but has explicit instructions about the ampulla. However, various of the accounts of the actual procession to Holyrood focus on the nobles carrying the regalia and do not mention the ampulla or the heralds.⁴¹ Balfour’s account potentially explains this absence: he records that the ampulla was handed to the Lyon King at the door of the abbey by the Dean of the Chapel and then carried by the herald.⁴² While it seems to have been excluded from the urban procession, with associated opportunity to emphasise the importance of the anointing act that it facilitated, it was prominent throughout the church-bound ceremony. According to Balfour, it was carried in by the Lyon King, but only after the king was seated and the other regalia (carried by nobles) had already made their way to the east end of the church.⁴³

The ampulla’s journey through the church, following the king and the regalia, was a multi-sensory one. It was accompanied by an anthem sung by the choir that featured the words from Psalm 84, demanding that the congregation “[b]ehold O Lord our protector & Looke Vpone the face of thyne Anoynted.”⁴⁴ The sounds of the musicians, an organist, and a choir including “singing boyis” resonating around the church would have been as unusual in Scotland as the king kneeling at this time. The Reformation had seen a shift away from elaborate religious music toward what Jane Dawson describes “a congregational activity where words were dominant.”⁴⁵ Like many aspects of Charles’s coronation, this inclusion of a musical accompaniment undoubtedly did little to allay increasing fears about the king’s intentions for Scottish religious practice. Moreover, Balfour of Denmiln notes the importance of providing “ointment and the perfume” for the “sacring of his Majestie” meaning that those within the intimate and personal zones, and possibly beyond depending on the pungency of the oil, may also have been able to smell it as it made its traverse.⁴⁶ It is not known what specific oil was used, but the cost of the oil was high—significantly more so than the gold vessel itself—which speaks to oil that was likely of

⁴¹ Spalding, *The History of the Troubles*, 17; NLS, Wodrow Quarto IX, fol. 334r.

⁴² NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 37v. Shaw suggests that the ampulla was carried by Rummler to Scotland and was foisted upon Balfour, who was not expecting a gold ampulla (all previous references are to a silver vessel), see below: “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition”, 57–58.

⁴³ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 37v.

⁴⁴ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 38r.

⁴⁵ Dawson, *Scotland Re-Formed*, 227. The reference to musicians and choir comes from Balfour: NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 38r. Evidence for the singing boys and the organist comes from the financial information, where Humphrey Watson receives for his services as an organist and his son, Robert, for ‘being ane singing boyis in the chapel royal’, along with payments to the son of John Anderson and two sons of John Melville for their part in the choir, see: NRS, E25/19/117–119.

⁴⁶ NRS, E34/52/9.

foreign origin and prepared especially for the occasion.⁴⁷ For Charles’s coronation at Westminster in 1626, a specific oil mixture was prepared by his physicians and included oil of “Been” from Spain infused with oils of orange blossom and jasmine then mixed with drops of cinnamon oil, ambergris and other spiced aromatics over a low heat, before the addition of rosewater.⁴⁸ The purchase and preparation of the ampulla and oil in 1633 was put in the hands of “our trustie welbeloued John Wolfgang Rumler,” who was an apothecary in the courts of both Charles and his father, so it may be that the ampulla’s content shared these same ingredients.⁴⁹ As Dugan notes, Protestants were fervent in their rejection of olfactory ways of “knowing God,” such as the use of incense in church liturgy.⁵⁰ Consequently, the use of such strongly scented oil and its associations with Catholic practices had the potential to lead to this small object being treated with revulsion.

This ceremonial arrival of the king, regalia, and ampulla into Holyrood was not, however, a carbon copy of that which occurred in Westminster. In the records of Charles’s coronation in Westminster in 1626, the sacred oil and the royal robes were not carried in the procession to the church but laid at the altar in advance.⁵¹ Thus, there seems to have been an effort in Scotland to focus attention on the ampulla. Equally, there is little to suggest that the ampulla was handled by a secular herald in London. Even in the *Laudian order* the Lyon King of Arms was singled out to carry the ampulla in the Scottish ceremony and, even if these orders were not carried out to the letter, Balfour’s account of the event puts the ampulla in the hands of the Lyon King. This insertion of a secular heraldic figure as the bearer of this potent religious object and its contents into the ceremony was prescribed in the Scottish order of ceremony (*Lindsay’s Forme*) that had been sent to Whitehall in 1628.⁵² Whether having the Lyon King herald carry the ampulla was an

⁴⁷ The oil cost £40, whereas the gold receptacle was £14, 9 shillings NRS, E25/19/92.

⁴⁸ Wordsworth, *The Manner of the Coronation*, 4. Wordsworth explains in his introduction to this text that oil of “Been”, from the ben-nut of the horseradish tree, was an inodorous base oil used by perfumers, see: xxi–xxii.

⁴⁹ NRS, E25/19/92. Rumler was granted the office apothecary to the royal household in 1625 and had been entrusted, at great expense, with the embalming of James VI’s body in preparation for death, and his annual payments in the English records (rather than Scottish) suggest that he was largely resident in England: Bruce, *Calendar of State Papers*, 549; *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, 1627, 378. While he is mentioned in later accounts and papers as an apothecary ordinary, he continues to provide the king with apothecary items into 1640s.

⁵⁰ Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume*, 27–32 (quote at 29); Dugan, “Scent,” 430.

⁵¹ “The Coronation Order of King Charles I,” 247–249; *Manner of the Coronation of King Charles*, 10–13.

⁵² NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fols 38r–v; Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–5; NRS, Royal Letters, 1623–1632, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r.

invention or drawn from earlier traditions, it seems to be uniquely Scottish in origins and there was a long tradition of secular actors taking prominent roles in pre-Reformation Scottish coronations.⁵³ Yet, if the arrival and journey of the ampulla in the hands of a secular heraldic figure was a concession to Scottish traditions (at least as presented by the heralds), having the church ringing with a choral anthem pounding out the words of Psalm 84 as the king, regalia, and ampulla entered the space was an assertion of Anglican preferences.

This processional entrance put the ampulla in the spotlight, and all eyes were—at least were supposed to be—focused on the object’s traverse. The choice of gold for the receptacle with its metallurgical qualities, such as the shimmer and glow in candlelight and intermittent daylight through windows, would have been a widely accessible feature across all the proximity zones. Shaw argues that the choice may have been a calculated one—even deliberately withheld for maximum impact as the Lyon King was presented with the ampulla at the abbey church’s door—as the *Laudian order* (that sent in advance to Scotland) identifies that the sacred oil be “put in some Silver Vessel” rather than gold.⁵⁴ In the English coronation two receptacles were used—a silver one for “simple oil” and gold one for the chrism, which was strongly associated with Catholic rituals such as the unction of the clergy—thus meaning the use of gold could have been designed to make explicit links to the use of the chrism.⁵⁵ Such messaging, as Shaw comments, relied on a relatively informed understanding of the ritual actions prescribed in the relevant orders of ceremony.⁵⁶ However, it is important to note that beyond the well-informed heralds, whose business it was to present and stage-manage the Scottish coronation, many Scots—particularly those who would have been ritual actors in the personal zone—were also concerned about the privilege and tradition encapsulated in the ceremonial of 1633.

Such concerns are not only found in the provision of a Scottish order of ceremony but are evidenced in individual complaints to have specific privileges recognised through direct negotiation with Whitehall. For example, the sword from the regalia was at the centre of an exchange of letters between the king, the privy council, and the earl of Erroll,

⁵³ For example, the role of the Earl of Fife as the noble who enthroned the king had been a consistent feature from at least the thirteenth to fifteenth century, see: Dean, *Death and the Royal Succession*, 235–237 (summarised here, discussed in more detail through chapters 1 to 3).

⁵⁴ “The form of King Charles the I his Coronation in Scotland,” in *Ceremonies, Form of Prayer and Services in Westminster Abbey*, 14.

⁵⁵ Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 56–58.

⁵⁶ Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 58–59.

who was also the hereditary Constable of Scotland, and who felt that his traditional ceremonial role had been ignored in the *Laudian order*.⁵⁷ As in the choice of location for the ceremony, petitioning Charles on matters relating to his visit were often “designed to appeal to Charles’s susceptibilities.”⁵⁸ In this instance, the Privy Council wrote in a manner that spoke to king’s known concerns for a ceremony that “may be performed in good order to your Majesteis contentment and for the credite of your Majesteis ancient kingdom” and emphasised the honourable and ancient heritage of the Constable and the historic service of his forebears.⁵⁹ Balfour’s account records the Constable girding the king with his sword in the bestowal of the honours following the anointing, so it appears this appeal to Charles was successful.⁶⁰ As well as offering direct evidence of negotiation between Whitehall and Edinburgh in the preparations the coronation of 1633, this also indicates the importance of tangible connections between people and objects in ritual action that were firmly rooted in identity and understanding of self in the past and present.

Beyond the use of gold, when putting the physical object at the centre of the analysis and considering what would be observable by the majority within the social and public zones of interaction, it has one unusual and striking feature: the two spouts emerging from the lid for pouring its contents. The spouts are prominent in the design, taking up over a third of its height, making this an obvious feature that was likely to have been recognisable and understood at a greater distance. This design is markedly distinct from English and French coronation ampullae, both of which had a single neck to dispense their contents.⁶¹ Scottish monarchs had been anointed since at least 1331, after Robert I secured the right to unction and coronation from the pope shortly before his death in 1329, so there must have been some kind of vessel to administer the oil previously.⁶² Yet, as outlined earlier, this ampulla was acquired and/or designed for this coronation. Charles chose to wear the royal robe of his Scottish ancestors and to use the existing Scottish

⁵⁷ It is important to note that the specifics about the girding of sword are absent from *Lindsay’s Forme* and the *Laudian order* just follow suit in being vague and naming no one specifically.

⁵⁸ Shaw, “St Giles’ Church and Charles I’s Coronation,” 493.

⁵⁹ NRS, PC5/4, fols 228v–229v.

⁶⁰ NLS, Adv MS, 33.2.26, fol. 41r.

⁶¹ The English ampulla that was fashioned after the Restoration was fashioned to represent an eagle and the eagle’s head was a lid removed to pour contents from the neck: Royal Collections Trust, “Ampulla, 1661,” RCIN 31732. The illustration (both medieval and early modern) of the French *ampoule* also depict a single-necked vessel: van Maerlant, “The dove of the Holy Spirit bring the Ampoule of Saint Remigiud”; Wellcome Library no. 18412i.

⁶² Dean, *Death and the Royal Succession*, particularly 95–96, 99–102.

honours, even though the regalia items required significant repair due to damaged components, so this raises questions as to why a new ampulla needed to be made, and why it was made in this unusual shape.⁶³ The reason may have been due to the loss or even purposeful destruction of the previous vessel, but it could also have been to relay a specific message or replace objects that were deemed unsuitable by Charles and Whitehall.

Looking to what the Scots had outlined as former practice may offer some level of insight. *Lindsay's Forme* and the other surviving variants on this order of ceremony, which claimed to be based on medieval precedents, refer to two vials or “pigges” (jugs) for the carrying and administering of the anointing oil.⁶⁴ The use of the term “pigge” is particularly interesting, as the definition of this word is an earthenware jug or crock, and this sounds like a domestic object.⁶⁵ Only one of the three Scottish orders refers to them this way, and the same order of ceremony fails to include the word “holy” in relation to the oil and talks about the preaching of the minister rather than the giving of a sermon.⁶⁶ This all speaks to a downplaying of the divine nature of the act of anointing by Balfour, or the person whose record he was copying. The other two versions, including another copied by Balfour as well as the one that was delivered to Whitehall, do refer to the oil as holy. Yet, the objects that were used were just recorded as “tuo Vialls” with no specifics about these being made of precious metal or any other defining characteristics that suggest these were specifically made for the purpose or that would raise them above domestic-style objects as might be expected.⁶⁷ Consequently, if objects matching this description had been used historically and did survive, it is unlikely that Charles and Laud would have deemed them suitable for holding anointing oil.

The Scottish orders also refer to two vessels for the oil. In all three orders of ceremony, it instructs that these two vessels should be carried by the Lyon King of Arms, who transferred them to two secular officials—the hereditary Marischall and Constable—

⁶³ NRS, E34/52/8. Balfour of Denmiln was tasked with inspecting the honours ahead of the coronation in April 1633 and his report of their condition indicates that the crown was missing several jewels, the sword had ‘faltes’ on the blade and the scabbard, and the effigies on the sceptre were damaged and its sizeable rock crystal was held in place with wire as its fixings were broken. For more on the history of the royal honours and the royal robe, see: Dean, *The Scottish Royal Honours*.

⁶⁴ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 30r; NLS, Adv. MS. 33.7.10, fol. 8v; NRS, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r; Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–394.

⁶⁵ “Pig, Pyg, Pigg(e),” *Dictionary of the Scots Language*, accessed 19 January 2025, https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/pig_n_2.

⁶⁶ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.7.10, fol. 8v.

⁶⁷ “Viall,” *Dictionary of the Scots Language*, accessed 19 January 2025, <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/viall>.

who subsequently handed these to two separate bishops at the point of anointing.⁶⁸ The involvement of two vessels for the oil, and indeed two bishops, in the Scottish orders is quite striking. While the use of two vessels might indicate the use of oil and chrism in earlier ceremonies, the dearth of evidence for the specifics of how anointing was undertaken in Scotland between 1329 and 1567, and what exact substances were used, means that such a presumption is too large a one to make.⁶⁹ The necessity for two vessels for oil may have more practical origins when looking at the roles of those named as responsible for anointing in the papal bull granting the Scots the right to crown and anoint their kings in 1329: the bishops of St Andrews and Glasgow.⁷⁰ From 1331, the bishop of St Andrews was most often named as the officiant who anointed the ruler, but not exclusively so and the inclusion of two vials to be delivered to two bishops may have arisen from the contested supremacy between the episcopal sees of St Andrews and Glasgow that existed in previous centuries.⁷¹ Indeed, the order of ceremony with the potentially oldest provenance, possibly copied from a fifteenth-century original, and *Lindsay's Forme* note that two bishops anointed the king from either side (one doing the right and one the left) in unison while offering prayers.⁷² Neither the *Laudian order* or Balfour's account of the event have two bishops involved in the actual act of anointing, so this seemingly unique Scottish element was not retained.

The provision of two spouts on the ampulla used by one bishop might have been linked to the prescribed ritual that had previously required two bishops, which could then be associated with negotiation between former traditions and contemporary desires of the king. Conversely, Adrienne Hynes has followed Stevenson in speculating that the double spouts represent horns and thus could be linked to biblical references to the early anointing of kings with a “horn of oil.”⁷³ Such biblical connotations reflect specific references to ancient biblical kings Samuel and David in the archbishop of St Andrews words spoken at the point of anointing in the ceremony of 1633.⁷⁴ At this climactic point in

⁶⁸ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 30r; NRS, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r; Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–394.

⁶⁹ Dean, *Death and the Royal Succession*, passim.

⁷⁰ “X. Letter of John XXII to Edward II about the Oil of Coronation,” in Wickham Legge, *English Coronation Records*, 69–76.

⁷¹ Dean, *Death and the Royal Succession*, 256–266.

⁷² NLS, 33.7.10, fols 8v, 14r; NRS, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r; Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–4; Lyall, “The Medieval Coronation Service,” 14–15.

⁷³ Hynes, “The Jacobite Challenge: Coronation Ampulla of Charles I,” *National Museums Scotland YouTube*; Stevenson, “Charles I's Coronation Ampulla,” 239–240.

⁷⁴ NLS, Adv. MS. 33.2.26, fol. 40r.

the ceremony, which was undertaken at the east end of the church, a canopy was held over the king throughout the anointing further obstructing visual engagement with the ampulla and its ritual use. Consequently, these words would have been important for the wider audience in the social and public zones. Martin Berntson suggests that “Old Testament rulers were frequently used as role models for early modern Protestant kings” and were frequently deployed in propaganda to equate such rulers with saviours of their people by leading them in the new religion.⁷⁵ Indeed, in a sermon at the coronation of Scotland’s first Protestant king, James VI, in 1567, John Knox employed the Old Testament narrative of Joash and his mother Athalia, queen of Israel, who was deposed for various crimes, and whose son was raised by his people to take the kingdom and church on a brighter path. As Lynch has argued, Knox repurposed the scriptural story in this case to provide justification of the actions of the Protestant lords who had removed Mary, James VI’s mother, from power in favour of James, who—like Joash—was a child.⁷⁶ Yet, such Old Testament references had to be carefully and sensibly deployed within the ritual to avoid implicit connections with the Pope, as well as emphasising the fact that king’s power came from God directly rather than being mediated by ecclesiastics.⁷⁷ This was not the case in 1633. The words chosen by the archbishop of St Andrews were about Samuel anointing David with oil as other kings and prophets had been anointed, and these accompanied the actions of this premier ecclesiastic anointing the king’s hands as the first stage of the unction ritual.

It is unclear how the ampulla’s double spouts or horns were used at the critical moment of administering the oil. Moreover, it was unlikely to be something that many—other than those within the intimate zone of proximity—were able to witness with much clarity, and even the archbishop’s words may have been lost on those at the furthest distance from the ritual. Yet, there were other sound-driven means of making sure the connotations were not lost on those in the social and public zones. The anointing ceremony was accompanied by further musical interjections with another anthem that proclaimed: “Zadocke the preist and Nathan the propheit Anoynted Solomon king and all ye people reioyced.”⁷⁸ Handel’s eighteenth-century orchestral work, composed for the coronation of George II in 1727, has become synonymous with this anthem but *Zadok the Priest* or *Unxerunt*

⁷⁵ Berntson, “Our Swedish Moses and Saviour,” 147–168.

⁷⁶ Lynch, “Scotland’s First Protestant Coronation,” 190–191.

⁷⁷ Amundsen, “The Nordic Zion,” 77–80, 85–90.

⁷⁸ NLS, Adv MS 33.3.26, fol. 40r.

Salamonem had been a traditional English coronation choral piece from as early as Anglo-Saxon times.⁷⁹ *Lindsay's Forme* (1628) does not include any references to hymns, anthems and music (beyond occasional mention of trumpets), but such omissions were not reflective of the medieval precedence sought by Charles in his request for the “ancient” ceremonies of Scotland.⁸⁰ Prior to the Reformation, impressive choral pieces produced by the Chapel Royal were performed at sixteenth-century Scottish coronations, such as the work of Robert Carver performed at the coronation of James V in 1513.⁸¹ Thus, it is likely that these omissions from *Lindsay's Forme* were consciously made to reflect the significant shifts in religious practice and liturgy in Scotland since 1560. Seventeenth-century England, on the other hand, witnessed the rise of the accompanying choral anthem. Figures such as Thomas Tomkin—the organist and choral master of the Chapel Royal during Charles reign—produced prolific volumes of sacred music for royal occasions, including Charles's Westminster coronation in 1626, and Tomkins possibly accompanied Charles to Holyrood in 1633.⁸² Musical instruments—including more than one organ—were brought from London to accompany the anthems that punctuated the ceremony, such as *Zadok the Priest*, and to be used in the Chapel Royal.⁸³ This further emphasises the fact that such musical interventions in sacred spaces had not been witnessed in Scotland for many decades due to the marked shift towards unaccompanied congregational singing of psalms. Whether or not the audience could see the horns of the ampulla as act of anointing took place, there was no doubt that the musical and choral accompaniment to these actions carried an explicit and widely understood message to the audience in every zone of interaction.

Sound was not the only sense that was harnessed: both the royal robe and the velvet cap within the crown were scented with “musk of sivett amber [and] spucett of Rossis” according the receipt of Robert Hucheson, the perfumer to his majesty.⁸⁴ Shortly after the anointing with oil from the ampulla—which as previously explored was also likely made of a mixture of pungent aromatic scents—the king was invested with his royal robes and subsequently with his sword, spurs, crown and sceptre accompanied by further prayers.

⁷⁹ Hughes, “Music of the Coronation over a Thousand Years,” 82–83.

⁸⁰ NRS, PC5/4, fols 138v–139r; Lindsay, “Forme of the coronatioun,” 393–395.

⁸¹ Dean, *Death and the Royal Succession*, 206. For more on Scottish Chapel Royal: Reid-Baxter, “James IV and Robert Carver,” 235–252.

⁸² Rose, “Thomas Tomkins 1575?–1656,” 89–105; Range, *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations*, 37–43.

⁸³ Shaw, “St Giles' Church and Charles I's Coronation,” 488.

⁸⁴ NRS, E25/20/20.

Once Charles was enthroned in all the regalia—including the scented items—each of the ecclesiastic and secular lords of the realm came and knelt before the king and made an oath to him and then kissed the king’s left cheek. It is not clear where the ampulla would have been at this stage, but one presumes it sat in pride of place of the decorated communion table (that resembled an altar) near the throne, putting a significant number of audience members very briefly in the personal zone of proximity to it as they made their oath. Moreover, as they did so, they would have inhaled the heady mixture of scents from the royal attire and even the anointing oil on the king’s skin.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both ambergris (grey amber or amber musk) and “spirit of rose” were commonly used to perfume gloves of the elite, so they would not necessarily have been unusual to the elite oath givers.⁸⁵ Yet, these scents also carried complex associations. Amber, in particular, was often associated with rosaries and tactile object-centred Catholic prayer practices, as well as with Mary I of England’s efforts to generate an “aroma of power” associated with her Catholic mother.⁸⁶ Dugan argues that rosewater, and particularly distilled damask rose scents, overtook “Catholic incense” in Tudor England as a smell intimately associated with post-Reformation royal power.⁸⁷ References to provisioning Holyrood ahead of the coronation refer to the provision of chamber pots “and others for easments” during coronation, along with the high volume of people packed into the church in heavy ceremonial robes in June, speak to a host of practical reasons for the use of scented robes.⁸⁸ However, at this critical moment, as audience members moved forward to make their oath in close proximity to the king, the combination of scents was likely designed to mark out Charles’s royal body as different and divine following his anointing with the oil from the ampulla.⁸⁹

There is clear evidence for a multi-sensory climax created around the moment that the ampulla was used in the act of anointing in Charles’s coronation and in the ritual actions that followed it. These offer various examples in which Anglican practices and Charles’s distinctive efforts to emphasise the God-anointed nature of his kingship would have been expected to come into conflict with Scottish seventeenth-century sensibilities. There were certainly efforts to engage in a dialogue about ceremonial precedence and traditions in Scotland and some concessions appear to have been made in relation to the

⁸⁵ Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume*, 126–142; Robinson, “An old and faithful servand,” 19.

⁸⁶ Dugan, “Scent,” 433.

⁸⁷ Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume*, 45–60, particularly 49–50.

⁸⁸ NRS, PC1/35, fol. 107r; Burton, *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, Second Series, 5:115.

⁸⁹ Dugan, “Scent,” 436.

ampulla and beyond. Yet, the connotations associated with “horns of oil” and early biblical kings, the use of gold and its implicit references to the chrism and its sacramental overtones, the use of musical and choral interventions rooted in Anglican anthems and accompanied choral performances, and the scent associations all could, or even should, have been other ways of “enraging Presbyterian sensibilities”, if that was indeed Charles’s aim. However, if this was the case, such responses were muted, and other criticisms took precedence. The concluding section of the article will reflect on why the ampulla and anointing did not arouse the same anger or fear from the Scottish Presbyterian audiences that might have been expected.

Anointing a Ruler in Post-Reformation Scotland: A “Filthy Papist Superstition”?

Shaw suggests that the messaging associated with the ampulla and anointing—in particular, the use of gold for the vessel—was more subtle than other ritual statements, like the kneeling, and required a highly informed audience to have the desired effect.⁹⁰ Yet, as explored herein there were many in the audience with an acute sense of what should be expected in terms of tradition and precedence, as well as what was acceptable and what was not. An object-centred sensory analysis also demonstrates that, even where the visual details may have been hard to perceive, the aural and olfactory associations enhanced and amplified the role of the object and its contents at critical moments, which suggests that the messaging associated with the ampulla would have been as obvious to much of the audience as the unscripted kneeling. Moreover, the centrality and multi-sensory impact of the ampulla and the anointing in 1633 sit comfortably with a narrative in which Charles sought to maintain a distance and mysticism around his kingship through visual, physical, and (one might add) sensory, rather than verbal, means.⁹¹ It also echoed wider religious policies underpinned by Laudian ideals centred around the “beauty of holiness” that aimed to create “a decorous separation of the sacred and the secular.”⁹² These were all things that—in relation to other key material and ritual inclusions—caused friction, concern, and vocal criticism. Why, then, was the ampulla and anointing not fuel to this fire?

Sebastien Olden-Jørgensen argues that for Calvinists “such sacramental or quasi-sacramental ritual was at best without any significance and potentially a filthy piece of

⁹⁰ Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 58–59.

⁹¹ Others speak specifically to Charles’s preference for the visual over the verbal: Keenan, *The Progresses, Processions and Royal Entries of King Charles I*, 48; Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 250–252.

⁹² Quotes from: Lake, “The Laudian Style,” 161–185; Keenan, *The Progresses, Processions and Royal Entries of King Charles I*, 42–44. See also: Spicer, “What kinde of house a kirk is,” 81–103; Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 253.

papist superstition.”⁹³ While Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly has recently illustrated that, despite confessional differences across Europe, there was a tacit acceptance of kings undertaking a transformative ceremony upon accession that raised them above others through the act of anointing, even where a king chose to crown himself to better illustrate that only God, and not the church or a cleric, made him king.⁹⁴ Thus, it could be argued that the lack of outcry against the ampulla and the anointing was rooted in either a tacit acceptance of such action or that the celebratory emphasis on anointing was an insignificance that needed no further comment. However, neither would appear to match up with some of the Scottish attitudes towards James VI’s desire to include anointing in the coronation of Anna of Denmark in 1590 nor with the rejection of anointing in the next and last Scottish coronation in 1651.

David Calderwood, the Presbyterian author of *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, records that there was much debate around Anna’s coronation: in particular, whether it could take place on the Sabbath and whether it should, and if so how, include an anointing.⁹⁵ Ultimately, Anna was anointed on the hand, forehead and neck by Robert Bruce, a minister. However, the ministers of Edinburgh—including Bruce—had previously declared that, due to anointing being a “superstitious rite among Christians, borrowed from the Jewes,” if it was undertaken it was as a civil action not a religious one with Bruce acting as a secular individual at the king’s bequest and not in his capacity as a minister, and a declaration to this effect would be made in the ceremony.⁹⁶ Nor was this the first debate about whether anointing should be undertaken, as Michael Lynch and Jane Dawson both indicate that John Knox and other ministers protested against the inclusion of anointing in 1567, when crowning James VI as an infant.⁹⁷ In 1651, when Charles II underwent his coronation at Scone, the ampulla was not reused as no anointing occurred. Alastair Mann argues that the Covenantors who raised Charles II to the throne viewed the act of anointing not only as papist superstition but also a sign of the state or ruler holding power over the kirk.⁹⁸ The coronation sermon of Robert Douglas, moderator of the commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and minister of St Giles in Edinburgh, given in 1651 offers an extended commentary on the various reasons why

⁹³ Olden-Jørgensen, “Ceremonial Interaction Across the Baltic around 1700,” 243–51, particularly 249.

⁹⁴ Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Religion and Confession,” 135–50, at 137–139.

⁹⁵ Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 5:95.

⁹⁶ Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 5:95–96.

⁹⁷ Lynch, “Scotland’s First Protestant Coronation,” 192–193; Dawson, *John Knox*, 272.

⁹⁸ Mann, “The Scottish Coronation of Charles II,” 88.

anointing of kings with oil should not be used in a covenanted Presbyterian realm. The association with bishops and rejected hierarchy that remained, even in some Protestant realms such as England was central to this: “now by the blessing of God, popery and the prelacy are removed: the bishops as limbs of the Antichrist are out to the door; let the anointing of kings with oil go to the door with them, and let them never come again.”⁹⁹ In this trajectory of criticism, resistance, and then ultimately removal, when the Scottish Covenanting political forces were in the position to dictate such, the idea that its inclusion, particularly at the hand of a bishop, was insignificant in 1633 seems unlikely.

With the additional context of Charles’s efforts to reassert adherence to the Five Articles of Perth, first laid down but not successfully enforced by his father, which included a reintroduction of kneeling for communion, and Charles’s proactive Arminian or Laudian emphasis on the role of bishops within the liturgy of the Church of Scotland, it is perhaps even more surprising that the role of the archbishop in the anointing did not appear to attract any rumblings of discontent.¹⁰⁰ As Laura Stewart has demonstrated, the reintroduction of kneeling in communion was a particular bone of contention, which had spiralled into widespread resistance to the Five Articles of Perth despite the other four being considered far less contentious, during the reign of Charles’s father.¹⁰¹ Consequently, Charles’s unscripted kneeling in the coronation undoubtedly ripped the scab off an unhealed wound. Yet, unlike this ritual act, and the bishop’s vestments and items such as the “curiously wrought cross,” which were unexpected or appear to have been pushed upon the Scots, the inclusion of the ampulla and anointing with oil by an archbishop had been prescribed and sanctioned by the Scots in the order of ceremony that they had sent to Charles. This textual representation of the “ancient form” of the Scottish kingmaking ceremony offers evidence that the Scots doctored their records of ceremonial traditions to present a more palatable version of the coronation, stripped of many aspects reminiscent of their Catholic past, but they did not remove the anointing by a bishop nor the vessels to carry the oil.

Ultimately, the sparseness of details in the Scottish order of ceremony offered room for interpretation on both sides. This object-centred sensory analysis of the ampulla and its role in the ceremony has illustrated that Charles took advantage of any ambiguities to

⁹⁹ Douglas, “Coronation Sermon at Scone,” 348–385, quote at 356.

¹⁰⁰ For text of the articles, see: “Ratification of the Five Articles of the General Assembly of the Kirk held at Perth in the month of August, 1618,” MacIntosh et al., *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 1621/6/13.

¹⁰¹ Stewart, “The Political Repercussions of the Five Articles of Perth,” 955–1230.

manipulate material and multi-sensory means of positioning himself above all others in ways that could have been designed to “enrage” his Presbyterian northern populus. Nonetheless, it has also been demonstrated that the ampulla’s arrival and movement through the church in the hands of a secular figure, the manner that the royal honours were invested, and possibly even the shape of the object, suggest pronounced indications of aspects of Scottish tradition (as communicated to Charles) being fed into the ceremony in 1633 via the order of ceremony and the subsequent negotiations between Whitehall and Scotland. Consequently, when it comes to the ampulla and the anointing oil it carried, this cannot be seen as an example of a monarch simply “riding rough-shod” over Scottish traditions.¹⁰² For those who designed the ceremony—and even those who observed it—the ampulla, its contents, and the ritual action they facilitated were worthy of inclusion, for they were offered as core element of their “ancient forme” of kingmaking in Scotland.

The inclusion of the ampulla and anointing oil may have been to placate Charles’s expectations or to avoid having such a potentially divisive ritual foisted upon them. Yet, acts of reverence to other material things—such as the cross—generated vocal concerns due to divergent theological understandings around the use and interaction with material objects within worship that led to targeted iconoclasm across Europe.¹⁰³ With Charles taking substantial liberties to build a multi-sensory climax around the use of the ampulla, and its transformative qualities, the apparent silence of the Scottish critics speaks volumes about that which generated the most cause for concern. Whether this was more than tacit acceptance is debateable point, but an anointing with oil from the ampulla was, despite the reverence offered to it, a one-off, and one that many Scots recognised as a historically important part of recognising their king. Conversely, those aspects that were openly criticised had the very real potential to impact the everyday religious worship of everyday Scottish people.

¹⁰² Shaw, “Scotland’s Place in Britain’s Coronation Tradition,” 58; Shaw, “St Giles’ Church and Charles I’s Coronation,” 497.

¹⁰³ Van Bruaene, “Embodied Piety,” 36–58; Ivanič, “Early Modern Religious Objects and Materialities of Belief,” 322–338.

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