The Abbey of Saint-Denis and the Coronation of the King of France

Elodie Leschot

Department of History of Art, University of Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland; elodie.leschot@unil.ch

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Abstract: Addressing the coronation issue in France always comes down to talking about Reims, its archbishop, its cathedral, and its Holy Ampulla. If these elements are indeed constitutive of the consecration ceremony, they only became so from the 13th century onwards. Before that, Reims had difficulty asserting its alleged prerogative to welcome the consecration's ceremony. The practice of "festival crowing", practiced by monarchs to assert their authority, did not indeed help the metropolitan Reims to assert its monopoly. In this context, Saint-Denis sought recognition of his rights to host the royal ceremony. Saint-Denis has always been intimately connected to the monarchy and hosted Pepin the first consecration, Pepin the Short and his heirs, in 754. In the 12th century, Abbot Suger's arrival at Abbey's head marked a new impetus for the Abbey in this race for prestige. The Saint-Denis church's reconstruction and its liturgical organization demonstrate the great project that the Abbey pursued through the hosting of the ceremony's coronation of the Kings of France.

Keywords: Abbey of Saint-Denis; festival crowing; Abbot Suger (1122–1151); coronation; consecration

1. Introduction

In the year of the Lord 1180, the second of the reign of magnanimous Philip, on the Ascension of the Lord, magnanimous Philip took the crown himself in the church of Saint-Denis again. Simultaneously, the venerable Queen Isabel, his wife [who was] the daughter of count Baldwin of Hainault, was anointed (William the Breton 2006, p. 122).

In this passage from his *Deeds of Philip Augustus*, William the Breton (c.1165–1225), the official biographer of the French King Philip II Augustus (1179/1180–1223), recounts the second coronation of the son of Louis VII (1137–1180) and the consecration of his young wife on 29 May 1180 at the Abbey of Saint-Denis.[1] The coronation took place a few months after the consecration and first coronation of the same king in Reims' cathedral on 1st November 1179. If the consecration was unique and could not be realized more than once, the coronation could be practiced as many times as the king wished. This practice of multiple coronations is still a blind spot of French research, lurking in the shadow of the king's anointing and first coronation, namely the *sacre*, which is traditionally perpetuated in Reims by the archbishop of the city (see Bony 2003, pp. 52–54; François 1985). Multiple coronations were common, and Philip Augustus carried on an already well-established tradition. The coronations of his great-grandfather Philip I (1060–1108), crowned four times, or his father Louis VII, of whom at least

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[1] The *Deeds of Philip Augustus* were composed between 1216 and 1220 and are in three parts: the first part is a summary of Rigord's chronicle, a monk of Saint-Denis; the second is William's chronicle proper, ending in 1214, and intended to celebrate the victory of Bouvines, which he attended; the third part is a continuation until 1219. On William's death, around 1226, this version was revised and extended by a monk from Saint-Denis until 1223, the date of Philip Augustus' death. See (Carpentier 1991).

three coronations are confirmed in Reims, Bourges, and Paris demonstrate this.[2] These coronations also show that Reims was not, in the 12th century, considered the only place for the crowning of the King of the Franks and that his archbishop was not the only prelate entitled to carry out this ceremony. This situation derived, on the one hand, from the multiple coronations tradition and, on the other hand, from Louis VI's (1108–1137) consecration in 1108 in Orléans by the Archbishop of Sens. For the first time since the advent of Hugues Capet (987–996), Reims' metropolitan was not going to carry out the ritual of the enthronement of the new monarch. This outrage has not gone unanswered by the clergy who sent emissaries to stop the ceremony, as Abbot Suger (1122–1151) reports:

> The archbishop then had no time even to take off his festive clothing after divine service when bearers of bad news from the church of Reims suddenly came before him. They brought letters of objection which, if they had arrived in time, would have prevented the royal anointing under the force of apostolic authority. The letters alleged that the first stages in the crowning of a king belonged by right to the church of Reims and that this prerogative had stood unimpaired and undisturbed from the time of Clovis, the first King of the French, whom the blessed Remigius had baptized. The letters further claimed that anyone who tried to violate this right by some rash enterprise would fall under perpetual anathema. By this pretext, they hoped either to stop the royal coronation or bring about peace for their archbishop, the venerable and worthy Ralph the Green, for he had incurred the severest and most dire enmity of the lord king when he had been elected and enthroned on the See of Reims without royal assent. However, the messengers came too late; so they were speechless at Orléans, but when they returned home they found their voices. Nevertheless, whatever they said, they reported nothing useful. (Suger 1992, pp. 63–64)

Yves of Chartres (1090–1116), bishop of Reims and close counselor of King Louis VI, responded to the archbishop of Reims' claims by writing to the Holy See and "to all the churches to which the protest of the Reims clerics would have reached."[3] In this document, intended to legitimize the consecration of Louis VI, Yves of Chartres went back to the Merovingians' coronation to prove that the archbishop of Reims had no primacy in this liturgical act.[4]

This affront marked the beginning of a long quarrel between the Archbishop of Reims and the one of Sens over royal's ceremonies. In this dispute between two essential prelates of France's Kingdom, another religious institution was also seeking its share of the spoils: Saint-Denis. Philip Augustus'

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[2] Louis VII was consecrated during his father's lifetime in Reims in 1131, see (Le Roy 1987); to Bourges December 25, 1137, see (Brown 1992, p. 46, n.181) and also on the occasion of the coronation of his new wife, Adela of Champagne at Notre-Dame of Paris in 1160, see: (Bautier 1987, p. 55).

[3] "Letters 189, *PL* 162, col. 193–196: "*Noverit sancta Romana Ecclesia, noverint omnes Ecclesiae, ad quas murmur Remensium clericorum pervenerit, nos in consecratione Ludovici regis Francorum nihil nostrum quaesisse, sed pro communi utilitate regni et sacerdotii consulte vigilasse*" translatable as "Let the Holy Roman Church know, let all the Churches know, they to whom the complaint of the clerics of Reims came, that we, in the consecration of Louis as King of the Franks, did not seek anything for ourselves but prudently watched over the common utility of the kingdom and the priesthood."

[4] Ibid., "*Si vero ad consuetudinem recurrimus, quae in exemplis maxime declaratur, respondemus ex verbis Augustini quia « ratio exemplis anteponenda est, cui tamen et exempla concordant.» Ecce rationem dedimus, quam apud eos aeque validam super hoc negotio inveniri non credimus. Addamus et exempla rationi concordantia. Sicut enim legitur in Gestis Francorum: «Diviso regno inter filios Lotharii, nepotes Clodovei, Charibertus et Guntrannus provincias Celticorum et Aquitanorum in regnum suum acceperunt, et alter eorum Charibertus, scilicet Parisius sedem regiam sibi posuit et usque ad fluvium Garunnam regnum suum extendit. Guntrannus vero Aurelianis sedem regiam sibi constituit et Burgundiam, quae Celticae pars est, in regnum accepit.» Isti quippe reges nullam a Remensi archiepiscopo benedictionem vel coronam acceperunt, sed et sacerdotibus provinciarum quas regebant, sublimati sunt et sacrati*", translatable as "But if we resort to custom, which is manifested mainly by examples, we answer in Augustine's words that 'reason must be placed before examples. For this reason, however, the examples also agree.' Here, we have given the reason, and we do not believe it is found in them in this case as well-founded. Let us add the well-founded at are cons. Let us with that reason as well. Indeed, as we read in the Gestes des Francs: 'The kingdom having been divided between the sons of Lothaire, grandson of Clovis, Charibert and Gontrand received for their kingdom the provinces of the Celts and the Aquitans and one of them, Charibert, installed for him the royal seat, namely in Paris and extended his kingdom as far as the river Garonne. For his part, Gontrand established the royal seat in Orleans for him and received for his kingdom, Burgundy, which is a part of the Celtic.' Certainly, these kings did not receive any blessing or crown from the Archbishop of Reims, but it was through the priest's provinces they ruled that they were raised and crowned."

coronation on the occasion of his wife's consecration in 1180 within the Abbey proves that the Dionysian clergy's actions were successful. The abbots who succeeded one another at the Abbey's head managed to position themselves as indispensable to the monarchy through numerous finely crafted political stratagems. The constructions undertaken by Abbot Suger (1122–1151) between about 1130 and 1144 are also to be seen in this light, since he created additional liturgical space in the church to highlight the holy relics and also to accommodate royal ceremonies. If several sources prove that taking the banner of the Vexin, or Vexillum, did indeed take place in the new space created in the 12th century, the consecration of a king never took place at the altar in the upper choir. However, the project was carried out with royal symbolism in mind, as analysis of the space's organization and of the context demonstrate. This project's reasons did not solely lie in a political or liturgical sphere but also in an interweaving of the two.

Our contribution will not analyze the divine coronation image in its ordinary sense but the design, construction, and reception of a liturgical space that can accommodate and make visible the coronation ceremony and its symbolic content. A space that has been designed for staging the "living image" and that is the ritual (Stollberg-Rilinger 2012, p. 17). Indeed, according to Gottfried Boehm, the image has to be understood as a logo, as a founding act of meaning (Boehm 2007, p. 29). Thus, the coronation ritual can be understood as the materialization of an immaterial concept (Boehm 2008, p. 3). Visibility plays an essential role in this process. Therefore, the new choir of Saint-Denis Abbey appears as an exemplary case, since space is precisely created to be seen.

2. Reims as the Coronations' Capital? A Look Back at Coronation Practices before 1223

The illustrious Reims tradition in the execution of this ceremony strongly marked the consecration, the coronation historiography, and Reims cathedral (Demouy 2008, 2016). Nevertheless, it was only with the *sacre* of Louis VIII (1223–1226) in 1223 that the supremacy of Reims and its metropolitan for the reception and execution of the coronation of the Kings of France was inaugurated. A monopoly that was never questioned afterward (Demouy 2008, 2016). The so-called prerogative that Reims defended relied essentially on Clovis' baptism (481–511) by Saint Remi (459–533) and his legend. According to this myth, the first King of the Franks would have been anointed with the help of holy chrism contained in a vial brought by the Holy Spirit himself.[5] This story was written for the first time by Archbishop Hincmar of Reims (845–882) in his Vita *Remigii* (Hincmar of Reims 1920, pp. 250–341). In his account, Hincmar took the opportunity to complete the baptism of Clovis with anointing and coronation (Isaia 2007, p. 157). In doing so, the archbishop sought to establish the monopoly of the Reims prelates to carry out the coronation ceremony, which did not date back to the 6th, but rather to the 8th century.

The consecration, or anointing, was a religious ceremony with its roots in the Old Testament, which was carried out for the first time at Pepin the Short (751–768) to legitimize its usurpation of power, thanks to the church (Bautier 1987, pp. 7–17; Close 2007). Pepin the Short was not consecrated in Reims, but the first time in Soissothes in 751 and a second time in Saint-Denis, three years later,

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[5] Hincmar of Reims (1920, p. 296): "*Cum uero peruenissent ad baptisterium, clericus, qui chrisma ferebat a populo est interceptus, ut ad fontem uenire nequiuerit. Sanctificato autem fonte, nutu diuino chrisma defuit. Et quia propter populi pressuram ulli non patebat egressus aecclesiae uel ingressus, sanctus pontifex, oculis ac manibus protensis in caelum, cepit tacite orare cum lacrimis. Et ecce ! subito columba niue candidior attulit in rostro ampullulam chrismate sancto repletam, cuius odore mirifico super omnes odores, quos ante in baptisterio senserant, omnes, qui aderant inestimabili suauitate repleti sunt. Accipiente autem sancto pontifice ipsam apullulam, speties colombae disparuit. De quo chrismate fudit uenerandus episcopus in fontem sacratum.*" Translatable as "As they [Remi and Clovis] had arrived at the baptistery, the cleric carrying the chrism was prevented from advancing by the people, so that he could not reach the vat. It was God's will that the chrism be lacking for the sanctification of the vat. And because the holy bishop could neither enter nor leave the church because of the crowd that had gathered, he raised his eyes to heaven, stretched out his hands and began to pray in silence, shedding tears. And suddenly a dove whiter than snow brought in its beak a small ampulla (bulb) filled with holy chrism, whose astonishing odor, far superior to all the perfumes that could be smelled in the baptistery, filled all those present with its incomparable sweetness. So the holy bishop took this little phial and the dove, or rather what was in the shape of a dove, disappeared. The venerable bishop poured this chrism into the holy basin."

with his heirs—Carloman (754/768–771) and Charlemagne (754/768–814)—by Pope Etienne II (752–757) himself (ibid., p. 13). For its part, Reims welcomed its first coronation in 816 with Louis the Pious (814–840). However, it was not the first consecration or coronation of the Emperor.[6] The desire to create a continuity with the Merovingian dynasty symbolically motivated this ceremony (Isaia 2007, p. 156). Despite his illustrious past, Reims had to concede his privilege to the metropolitan of Sens several times until the end of the 10th century (Bautier 1987, pp. 19–20). The accession to the throne of Hugues Capet (987–996) marked a turning point for Reims, since the former mayor of Paris had received the help of Archbishop Adalbero of Reims (969–989) to accede to the highest step of power (ibid., p. 52). Thus, Adalbero proceeded to the consecration of the Capetian dynasty's first monarch in 987. Although reluctant, he repeated the ritual for the young Robert II (987/996–1031) the same year (Bayard 1984, p. 61). After that, every consecration of Capetian kings took place in Reims except Louis VI (1108–1137) in 1108.

Though, the widespread practice of multiple coronations in the 11th and 12th centuries continued to displease Reims, which was forced to share its monopoly. Philip I (1060–1108) was thus crowned four times after his consecration in Reims and Louis VII (1137–1180) at least twice (1137 in Bourges and 1160 in Notre-Dame of Paris). In contrast to French research, which promoted the idea of multiple coronations aside in favor of the Reims' consecration, German researchers have been interested in describing this practice for the Empire and then for the Kingdom of France since the first half of the 20th century (Schramm 1935, 1936; Kantorowicz 1946, pp. 92–101; Brühl 1962). They pointed out several variations in the coronation ceremony and proposed a complex terminological distinction (Zupka 2016, p. 38).[7] Ernst H. Kantorowicz proposed a distinction between festive coronations and public performances. He stressed the significant difference between placing the crown on the monarch's head in a specific ceremony and a ceremony in which the king wearing the crown appeared (Kantorowicz 1946, pp. 92–101; Brühl 1962, p. 269). The second type of ceremony was the most frequent and took place during the most important religious feasts during the liturgical year (Erkens 2006, p. 167). Therefore, in 1087, William the Conqueror (1066–1087) decreed that he would be present wearing the wreath annually in Gloucester for Christmas, Winchester for Easter, and Westminster for Pentecost (Jäschke 1970, p. 558). In addition to the inclusion in these religious institutions' liturgical calendar, it was, above all, a question of making the king and his power visible.

This visibility was built on the object's association with the crown, with a status, the monarchy (Kantorowicz 1946, pp. 93–94). Since the 10th century, this insignia was also perceived as a "sacramental" object, since the privilege of crowning a sovereign was then the exclusive right of the church (ibid., pp. 94–95).[8] Although rarely, Festival crowing (Festkrönung) was also liturgically and symbolically more critical. It made it possible to reactivate the coronation ritual, but without the anointing (Zupka 2016, p. 39). Similar to the king's first coronation, this ceremony required a coronation *ordo*, which would explain such a document's possession by many cathedrals (Kantorowicz 1946, p. 96). Monarchs' choice regarding the churches in which these ceremonies were celebrated was also crucial and formally established religious institutions' affiliations with the monarchal power. Moreover, it allowed the king to affirm the topographical extent of his power.

The practice of multiple coronations offered the monarch the possibility to make himself legitimate in his Kingdom, more or less extended. This presented a consequent opportunity for the first Capetian kings who were struggling to respect the great lords of the Kingdom (Gross 2008, p. 255). Philip I was the first of the Capetian dynasty to use it to be crowned outside the territory on which he had sufficient authority, namely the Ile-de-France (Amyot 2007, pp. 8–11). After his consecration in Reims, Philip I

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[6] A first time in Rome in 781 at the age of three and a second time in Aachen in 813 when Charlemagne associated him to the throne before his death, see: (ibid., p. 24).

[7] *Erstkrönung, Festkrönung, Mitkrönung, Beikrönung, Unter-Krone-gehen* and *Kronentragen*.

[8] During the reign of the early Carolingians, the act of coronation was not held by the Church, as demonstrated by the coronation of Louis the Pious in 813 by his own father, Charlemagne. See (Brühl 1962, p. 322).

was thus crowned in 1071 in Laon, in 1098 in Tours, and 1100 again in Reims. No other coronation ceremony than that of Orléans in 1108 is known for Louis VI, perhaps due to the conflict he experienced with the Reims' reaction. Later, Louis VII repeated this practice by having himself crowned in Bourges in 1137, at the Notre-Dame of Paris in 1160, and perhaps also in Poitiers on the occasion of his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1136, as Elizabeth Brown suggested (Brown 1992, pp. 34–36). The existence of a second coronation in Poitiers in his young wife's company is conceivable, because through this marriage, the new king also became Duke of Aquitaine. As a result, a coronation in the duchy's capital would have been a means of proclaiming the new royal authority over this region. The two successive coronations moved away from the need to legitimize the monarchy outside the Ile-de-France, where the monarch's authority was already well established. Rather than considering them as a retreat of the king into his lands, they should be understood as the monarch's affirmation of a center of power, creating a capital (Bautier 1987, p. 5).

In this regard, although all these coronation ceremonies' common feature is to have taken place in cathedrals, Philip Augustus' coronation at Saint-Denis in 1180 was unusual but not unique (Kantorowicz 1946, p. 96).[9] According to the English chronicler Roger Howden (?–1201), the king would have chosen Saint-Denis at the request of his father-in-law, Baldwin V, Count of Hainaut (1171–1195).[10] If the chronicler was well informed, the Count's motivations might not be foreign to his acquisition of the Solesmes Woods in the same year.[11] Thus, the Count's support for Saint-Denis can be seen as an exchange of goods. Moreover, it shows that the interest of the religious community of the Abbey in the reception of the ceremony was essential to the point of sacrificing a vital territory in their possession.

If the support of Baudoin V played in the Abbey's favor, it must have been able to claim and host a ceremony of this magnitude. As guardian of the regalia, the Abbey of Saint-Denis could claim, in the same way as Reims, to host the ceremony within its walls. Charlemagne's fake diploma confirms that the Abbey had this ambition.[12] In this forgery, Charlemagne decided that all should honor Saint-Denis as head of the ecclesial Kingdom and his abbot as Primate of the Gauls as a sign of gratitude to the Saints Denis, Rustic, and Eleutherus. Moreover, the Emperor forbade his successors on the throne to be crowned anywhere else but in the Abbey and placed his diadem on the altar of martyrs with the words

> Most holy Lord Denis. I willingly divest myself of these insignia and ornaments of the Kingdom of France so that you may hold and possess from now on the (dominium regale). In testimony of which I offer you from now on four golden coins so that all, present and future, may know and know that I hold the Kingdom of France only from you and by you and that with your help and that of your companions and the support of your merits, I defend it with a double-edged sword, imploring and adoring all kings, our successors, to do the same every year, and to offer in a gesture of humility the said four besans, not as a sign of human but rather divine servitude, which we must call supreme freedom since to serve God is to reign. (Gasparri 2003, pp. 240–41)

This diploma sums up and reinforces the validity of the two charters granted by Louis VI by inventing a legitimacy based on an ancient and prestigious tradition. According to Gasparri, this document must be dated between 1124 and 1129 (ibid., pp. 241–42). The dating proposed by Gasparri is linked to the

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[9] The case of Westminster Abbey in hosting the consecration of the English kings is particularly interesting here because, similar to Saint-Denis, it found itself in competition with the largest cathedrals of the kingdom, such as Worcester and Winchester. The fact is that Westminster became the place of consecration and burial of the English monarchy, while Saint-Denis became only a royal mausoleum. See also: (Strong 2012).

[10] "*Deinde statuit Philippus rex Franciae, quod ipse et uxor ejus coronarentur die Pentecostes apud Senonem civitatem: sed per consilium comitis Flandriae anticipavit terminum illum, et fecit se et uxorem suam coronari die Ascensionis apud Sanctum Dionysium ab archiepiscopo Senonensi.*" (Roger of Howden 2012, vol. 2, pp. 196–97). See (Dale 2013, pp. 154–55).

[11] Inventaire analytique et chronologique des archives de la Chambre des comptes, à Lille, publié par les soins et aux frais de la Société impériale des sciences, de l'agriculture et des arts de Lille (1865, pp. 58–59, n. 133).

[12] (Mühlbacher 1906), *MGH* Charter n. 286; see also (Spiegel 1971, pp. 160–61).

claims of Saint-Denis to receive the *sacre*, based on the consecration of Louis VI in Orleans in 1108 and the deposit of the regalia in 1120. The consecration of young Philip in 1129, then that of Louis the Younger in 1131, both in Reims would have dried up this ambitious project. If the *terminus post quem* that she proposed is convincing, the *terminus ante quem* does not seem to correspond with an end to the claims of Abbot Suger, as proved by the construction of the new choir. This construction had begun under Abbot Suger (1122–1151). Although the construction was consecrated in 1144, the work continued under Suger's successor (Speer 2006, p. 73). In 1180, a new space was finally ready to accommodate the ceremony desired by its religious community: France's king's coronation.

3. The Reconstruction of the Church of Saint-Denis: Between Sources and Facts

According to Suger's words in his account of the consecration of Saint-Denis, the reconstruction of the Westwork and the choir has been undertaken due to the lack of space available during certain events (Figure 1):

> The basilica usually encountered significant problems because of the charming feature of its extraordinarily small size when the faithful's multitudes increased in number as they frequently congregated there to seek the intercession of the saints. Thus, on feast days, the church often filled, and the overflow of the crowds rushing into it poured back out through all its doors, and the outward push of those already inside did not allow those entering to enter and forced out those who had just entered. [. . .] The pressure of the tightly packed crowd pushed against those struggling to come inside to venerate and kiss the holy relics of the Nail and Crown of the Lord, and so no one among the countless thousands of people could move a foot from being so pressed together. (Suger 2018, p. 36)

Therefore, the driving force behind Suger's enterprise would be a liturgical need, as Andreas Speer pointed out (Speer 2006, pp. 67–69). Suger began with the reorganization of the old monk's choir in the nave, where the venerable tomb of Charles the Bald (843–877) was between the main altar and the one of the Trinity. The abbot also knocked down the Carolingian church wall built nearby the monks' choir's western end (Erlande-Brandenburg 1975, pp. 80–81). Then, he continued with the construction of a westwork (ibid., p. 72). Finally, on top of this monumental project, he built a brand new raised choir with radiant chapels and a more extensive crypt to house the relics of the Saints Denis, Rustic, and Eleutherius among all the other relics. The elevation of three and a half meters above the nave level characterized the new choir. Two staircases on either side enabled the access to this structure. The upper choir contained several liturgical spaces, namely the sanctuary in the center and, separated by the ambulatory, nine radiating chapels. The innovation here resides in opening all the spaces by piercing the radiating chapels' sidewalls, giving a second ambulatory impression. This system permitted to create different liturgical spaces for liturgical needs and, at the same time, to offer one bright united area concentrated around the shrine of the Holy Martyrs at the center. Much larger than the previous one, the new crypt served, architecturally, as a base for the upper construction. However, more importantly, it also served as a place large enough to accommodate pilgrims (Crosby 1967, p. 230). Indeed, the crypt conserved three of the relics of the Passion: the crown of thorns, one nail, and a fragment of the cross, which, according to legend, was offered to Charlemagne during his crusade in Constantinople. It was brought back to Aachen and given to the Abbey of Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald (Bozóky 2007, p. 137). In addition to these prestigious relics, a miraculous well was at the center of the space (Lombard-Jourdan 1985, pp. 237–69). This polarization of the sacred space created by Suger offered a new liturgical arrangement.
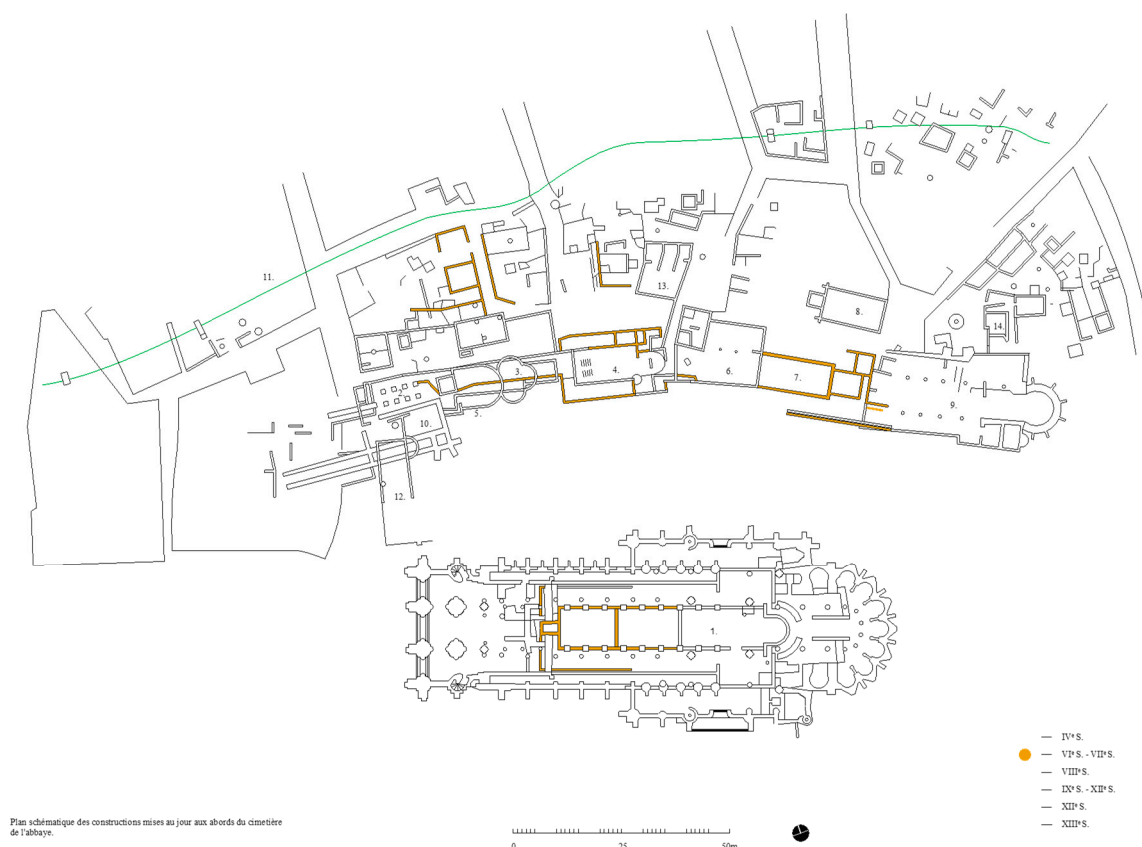
Figure 1. Phase of construction of the Abbey of Saint-Denis according to the archaeological research of Michaël Wyss: 1. Abbey Church. 2. Sainte-Geneviève Church. 3. Saint-Michel-du-Degré Church. 4. Saint-Barthélémy Church. 5. église des Trois-Patron. 6. église Saint-Michel-du-Charnier-Saint-Symphorien et chapelle de la Vierge. 7. église Saint-Pierre. 8. église de la Madeleine. 9. église canonial Saint-Paul. 10. bâtiment carolingien. 11. Aqueduc. 12. maison de la Cène. 13. Celiers. 14. maison du chantre de Saint-Paul. © Sebastian Baumann.

Before the new sanctuary's construction, all the liturgy took place in the old choir, which occupied almost the entire central space of the Carolingian church. This space extended from the fourth span of the central nave with a wall delimiting the choir's beginning to the axial chapel at the east.[13] In the monk's choir was the altar of the Holy Trinity (matutinal) at the western end, then, at the center was the tomb of Charles the Bald placed between the stalls on either side of the side fences. The high altar was located at the east of the church overhanging the crypt and its relics. The Dagobert (629–639) tomb, mythical Abbey founder, was to the left side's altar. Logic would see in the creation of the new Suger choir the new place for the daily liturgy. However, according to Edward B. Foley's research on the Abbey's first Ordinary dating from the second quarter of the 13th century, this was not the case (Foley 1990, pp. 193–97). The multitude of names given to the different altars distributed between the monks' choir and the upper choir makes each localization problematic. Jacobsen situates the morning altar dedicated to the Trinity at the western end of the monks' choir (Jacobsen 2002, pp. 198–202). Then were the stalls, with the tomb of Charles the Bald in the center, and, at transept crossing, the altar dedicated to the Holy Savior, under which the relics were initially contained. The Altar of the Holy Martyrs' exact location is unknown. It could have been to the east, center, or west of the upper choir. In most of the proposed reconstructions, the tomb or mausoleum containing

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[13] The old church consisted of a westwork, a three-aisled and nine spans nave, a simple transept with a lantern tower at its crossroads, a large crypt topped by a choir raised by a few steps, and an axial chapel dedicated to the Virgin.

the relics of the Saints Denis, Rustic, and Eleutherius have been forgotten (ibid., p. 205). Jacobsen placed the Holy Martyr altar in the west, then, in the center, the martyrs' mausoleum, and finally, under the apse, an altar dedicated to the Savior, the angels, and the Holy Cross (ibid., p. 202, Figures 8 and 13). If his proposition for the lower space organization is convincing, his upper choir's liturgical arrangements' location seems wrong. Firstly, the altar of the Savior, the Angels, and the Holy Cross, which Jacobsen placed at the east of the upper sanctuary, would more certainly be the new dedication of the former high altar crossing transept as suggested by the Ordinary of the 13th century (Foley 1990, p. 185). Secondly, during the consecration, Suger mentioned that the assembly took place between the Holy Martyr's altar and the Holy Savior (Suger 1992).[14] Thus, the Martyr's altar should be located at the choir center and the relics mausoleum at the east. The suppression of a second altar in the upper choir is essential, since it creates an even larger space than Jacobsen had initially suggested.

Jacobsen stated the singularity of the new choir's arrangement, and the possibility of using it in royal ceremonies without further questioning and no 12th-century source explaining the use of Dionysian liturgy has survived. Foley notes ten mentions of the Martyrs' altar or the surrounding space for the annual liturgy for the following century (Foley 1990, pp. 195–96). The upper choir was used only for the liturgical year's most solemn celebrations, such as Easter or Christmas, except for the St. Michael feast, where the altar was to be incensed (ibid., p. 196, n. 50). Surprisingly, the Ordinary does not explicitly mention a celebration at this altar for Saint-Denis' feast, except for the feast of the church's consecration (ibid., p. 196) The Ordinary's absence suggests that the Altar of the Martyrs, and the rest of the Upper Shrine, in general, were used for exceptional processions and celebrations. Moreover, as Jacobsen pointed out, this space's emptiness suggests important gatherings, such as taking the Oriflamme (Vexin's banner) or the coronation of the King of the Franks.

4. The Invention of the Vexin Banner and the Raising Ceremony

Suger reports the first mention of the Vexillum raising in his *Deeds of Louis VI* (Suger 1992, p. 128). The king reacted to the threat of invasion of the Kingdom uttered by Emperor Henry V (1086–1125) in 1124 by raising an army and uniting it under this banner.[15] The special relationship between the king and the holy martyrs is underlined. The ritual steps are briefly stated, and no information is given as to who was present during the event. The event's space was the high altar in the monks' choir, since the new sanctuary did not exist in 1124.

The second mention of the banner occurred in 1147 when Louis VII (1137–1180) prepared his departure to the East to participate in the Second Crusade. The spatial organization of the church of Saint-Denis had been modified. The banner's raising had logically to take place on the Holy Martyrs' altar, given the fact that the king was placing himself under the protection of the holy custodians of the

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14 "[. . .] *inter sanctorum martirum sepulturas et sancti Salvatoris altare* [. . .]".

15 Ibid, "Having learned of the plot from his close advisors, the lord king Louis bravely and boldly called up a levy which he did not await, summoned his nobles, and explained to them what was happening. Then he hurried to the blessed Dionysius, for common report and frequent experience had taught him that he was the particular patron and, after God, the foremost protector of the realm. Offering prayers and gifts, he begged him from the bottom of his heart to defend the kingdom, to keep safe his person, and to resist the enemy in his customary way. For the French have a special privilege from him: if another kingdom should dare invade theirs, the relics of that blessed and wonderful defender himself, together with those of his companions, are placed on the altar in order to defend the kingdom; and the king had this done with solemnity and devotion in his presence. He then took from the altar the standard belonging to the county of Vexin, which he held as a fief from the church, and gazed upon it. Taking it up as he had vowed, as if from his lord, so to speak, he rushed out against [. . .]"; "Quod cum domino regi Ludovico intimorum relatione innotuisset, tam strenue, quam audacter delectum quem non exspectat cogit, nobiles asciscit, causam exponit. Et quoniam beatum Dionysium specialem patronum, et singularem post Deum regni protectorem, et multorum relatione et crebro cognoverat experimento, ad eum festinans, tam precibus quam beneficiis praecordialiter pulsat, ut regnum defendat, personam conservet, hostibus more solito resistat. Et quoniam hanc ab eo habent praerogativam, ut si regnum aliud regnum Francorum invadere audeat, ipse beatus et admirabilis defensor cum sociis suis, tanquam ad defendendum altari suo superponatur, eo praesente fit tam gloriose, quam devote. Rex autem vexillum ab altari suscipiens, quod de comitatu Vilcassini, quo ad Ecclesiam feodatus est, spectat, votive tanquam a Domino suo suscipiens, pauca manu contra hostes, ut sibi provideat, evolat, ut eum tota Francia sequatur potenter invitat."

Kingdom during this event. Odo of Deuil recounts this episode and gives us much more information about this ritual than Suger:

> While this in the sight of everyone, he requested from Saint-Denis the Oriflamme and the permission to depart (a ceremony that was always the custom of our victorious kings), he aroused great lamentation and received the blessing of everyone's deepest affection. [. . .] Meanwhile, his mother and his wife and countless others went ahead to Saint-Denis. When the king arrived there presently, he found the pope, and the abbot and monks of the church gathered together. Then he prostrated himself most humbly on the ground; he venerated his patron saint. The pope and the abbot opened the small golden door and drew out the silver reliquary a little way so that the king might be easily enabled to see and kiss the relic of him whom his soul venerated. Then, when the banner had been taken from above the altar after he had received the pilgrim's wallet and a blessing from the pope, he withdrew from the crowd to the monk's dormitory. (Odo of Deuil 1948, pp. 16–19)[16]

In the chevet, the king's court and important ecclesiastical dignitaries were gathered near the altar of martyrdom, awaiting the king's arrival. Then, the king had to pray to the banner to ask permission to leave the Kingdom. After that, the direct contact between Louis VII and the patron saint's relics touched the monarch's soul. Once these components of the rite were completed, the king could take the banner. While Suger's account focused on the relationship between Saint-Denis, his companions, and the royalty, Odo described the ritual stages and the cohort of high-ranking people who attended the event. The taking of the banner by Philip Augustus, as described by Rigord, certifies the location of the ceremony:

> It was an ancient custom of France's kings when they went to war, took a banner from the altar of Blessed Denis, and took it with them as a safeguard and placed on the battlefront. Often the enemies, frightened at sight and recognizing the banner, fled. Therefore, the very Christian king went to the feet of the holy Martyrs Denis, Rustic, and Eleutherus, humbly placing himself in prayer on the marble square, and commended his soul to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the holy martyrs, and all the saints. Finally, after praying, he broke into tears and devoutly received insignia from the hands of William, Archbishop of Rheims, his uncle, legate of the Apostolic See. Then, leaving to fight the enemies of the Cross of God, he took with his own hands, on the bodies of the saints, two stunning silken flags, and two large banners decorated with crosses and brocaded in gold, in memory of the holy martyrs and their protection. (Rigord 2006, pp. 113–14)

Unlike the monks' choir cluttered with stalls, royal tombs, and altars, the new sanctuary granted numerous gatherings in its western part. In addition to Charlemagne's right conferred that the Abbey fraudulently held to host the royal ceremonies, Suger did everything possible to create a space suitable for their smooth circulation. Let us suppose that this reception was easy to put in place for the ceremony of raising the banner that the abbot creates from scratch on his arrival at the head of the abbey. The consecration or at least a coronation was codified ceremonies of entirely different scope, the conduct of which was usually more common in cathedrals because of their status and, more pragmatically, the size of these buildings.

16　"*Dum igitur a beato Dionysio vexillum, et abeundi licentiam petiit (qui mos semper victoriosis regibus fuit), visus ab omnibus planctum maximum excitavit, et intimi affectus omnium benedictionem accepit. Dum vero pergeret, rem fecit laudabilem, paucis tamen imitabilem, et forsitan suae celsitudinis nulli. Nam, cum prius religiosos quosque Parisiis visitasset, tandem foras progrediens, leprosorum adiit officinas. Ibi certe vidi eum cum solis duobus arbitris interesse, et per longam moram caeteram suorum multitudinem exclusisse. Interim mater ejus, et uxor, et innumeri alii ad Beatum Dionysium praecurrunt. Et ipse postmodum veniens, papam, et abbatem et Ecclesiae monachos invenit congregatos. Tunc ipse humillime humi prostratus, patronum suum adorat; Papa vero et abbas auream portulam reserant, et argenteam thecam paululum extrahunt, ut osculato rex et viso quem diligit anima sua, alacrior redderetur. Deinde sumpto vexillo desuper altari, et pera, et benedictione a summo pontifice, in dormitorium monachorum multitudini se subducit.*"

5. Attempt to Reconstruct the 1180 Coronation Ceremony at Saint-Denis

The twelfth century's *sacre* and coronation ceremony's analysis poses a problem so typical for this lack of preserved sources. As a result, no certainty can be formulated concerning the detailed course of these ceremonies for the reigns before that of Louis IX (1226–1270), which corresponds to a flourishing written production of *ordines* (Jackson 1995, vol. 2). For the 12th century, the most likely current hypothesis is that it is a version of *Ratold's ordo* used for the coronations of Louis VI, Philip the Younger, and Louis VII (Jackson 1995, p. 172; Schramm 1936, pp. 117–20). This *ordo* is based on an English *ordo* dating from the 10th century (Jackson 1995, p. 168). The *Ratold ordo* was an essential source for realizing the French and Imperial coronation ceremonies of the 12th and 13th centuries, as evidenced by the number of copies of close relatives emanating from northern France and the Empire (ibid., pp. 168–200). Elisabeth Brown proposed to consider one of these versions, the BnF ms. lat. 14192, as a production emanating from the Capetian sphere, dating from the second quarter of the 12th century (Brown 1992, p. 38). This version would have been written on the occasion of the marriage of Louis VII with Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1137 because of the formula: "Franks, Burgundians and Aquitanians," replacing that of *Ratold's ordo*: "Saxons, Mercians, and Northumbrians" (ibid., p. 32). Brown also suggested to consider Suger as the designer of this reworking. If his hypothesis is plausible, although it cannot be affirmed, the text offers no other avenue explored than the mention of the three people constituting the Kingdom of the Franks.

In contrast to the French royal *ordines* of the 13th century, *Ratold's ordo* and its copies, including the lat. 14192 version, give very little information about the actual conduct of the ceremony itself. The text does indicate the entire oral aspect—that is, what is to be said or sung: prayers, hymns, antiphons, and oaths taken by the king—but the practical aspects of the ceremony are not included. Thus, it is impossible to know from this text whether the visibility was already an essential aspect of the 12th-century ceremony. This lack of clarity concerning the ritual's organization could be explained by the fact that any church had the exclusive right to host the coronation before the thirteenth century. If Reims acquired the right to administer the consecration and first coronation of the king from 1129 onwards, the multiple coronations until the reign of Louis VIII (1223) significantly reduced this privilege.[17] The royal ordines designed during the reign of Louis IX (1226–1270) were drafted, taking into account the spatial and liturgical organization of the cathedral of Reims only and, thus, could not be employed in any other church. The Holy Ampulla mentions that its abbot must have been brought in procession from the church of Saint-Rémi and the regalia from Saint-Denis (Le Goff 2001, pp. 300–2). In addition to the coronation objects required, the text also mentions places specific to the ceremony's accomplishment, such as the church of Saint-Denis, the chapel of Saint-Nicolas, or the episcopal palace (ibid., pp. 302, 308). On the contrary, *Ratold's ordo* could be used wherever the ritual took place.

Concerning the coronation of Philip Augustus at Saint-Denis, the chronicler Rigord recounted the event in his life of the king written between 1186 and 1208:

> The year 1181 of the Incarnation of the Lord, the day of the calendars of June, the very day Our Lord ascended to heaven carried on the clouds, King Philip, obeying the advice of a good man, whom no doubt was animated by the spirit of God, was crowned a second time in the church of Saint-Denis. At the same time was consecrated the venerable Queen Elisabeth, his wife, daughter of the illustrious Baudouin, Count of Hainaut, and niece of Philip the Great, Count of Flanders. According to custom, he had the honor of carrying the sword that day before the king, his master. However, while this solemnity was celebrated in the church of Blessed St. Denis, and the king with the queen his wife bent her knee at the foot of the high altar and humbly bowed her head to receive the nuptial blessing of the venerable Mistletoe, Archbishop of Sens, in the presence of a large number of bishops and barons,

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17　On the anticipated association to the throne, see (Schramm 1936, pp. 97–110).

a memorable event took place, which we think it useful to recount in this book. The people of the neighboring towns, suburbs, villages, and villages had come in crowds full of joy to attend such a solemn ceremony and see the king and queen decorated with the tiara. As the eagerness of so many curious people caused disorder and tumult, a knight of the king's house, holding a wand in his hand, threw it randomly through the crowd to calm the tumult; In that moment, having misjudged his blow, he broke at once three lamps hanging before the high altar on the heads of the bride and groom, and the oil they contained was poured over the foreheads of the king and queen, as a sign of the abundance of the gifts which the Holy Spirit was pouring on them from heaven; For we think that God worked this miracle to spread the glory and the name of the monarch far and wide, and to spread the fame of his name over the face of the earth, as Solomon seemed to have prophesied in his song of love, when he said: "Thy name is as oil that is poured out," which is to be understood in this way: The sound of your name and your glory and your wisdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the banks of the rivers to the ends of the earth, and kings shall bow their heads before it, and many nations shall be subject to it. It is easy to speculate from these and other such authorities that what happened to King Philip by God's command must be interpreted as we have done. (Rigord 2006, pp. 29–30)

Jerzy Pysiak analyzed this passage compared to the consecration of Philip Augustus in Reims on 1st November 1179 and emphasized the difference in Rigord's treatment of the narration of the two ceremonies (Pysiak 2002, pp. 1174–77). For the first, the chronicler emphasized, above all, the political character of the newly appointed king's consecration. With regard to the second, the ceremonial and its symbolic, even miraculous, character was meticulously detailed. For Rigord, the coronation at Saint-Denis is treated as the real consecration of the new king and the oil spilled accident compared to the Holy Spirit's miraculous action at the baptism of Clovis.[18] This text is especially important, since it gives some information about the ceremony's organization and its location. The first information that Rigord gives concerns the nature of the ceremonial: the second coronation of the king and the queen's consecration. The chronicler also provides information on the officiant, Guy the first of Noyers, Archbishop of Sens (1176–1193), and the bearer of the sword that the king girdled, his father-in-law Baudouin Count of Hainaut.[19] The other personalities present at this event are not mentioned by Rigord, who only underlines the multitude of people present, whether they are members of the elite or ordinary people.

Concerning the ceremony's location, Rigord gives only the blessing of the new couple that took place on the church's main altar, located at the eastern end of the monks' choir (Jacobsen 2002, p. 196; Wyss 1996, p. 86). The chronicler says nothing about the rest of the ceremony's location, including the throne's location. The blessing was considered the most sacred action, but the king taking his place on his throne adorned with his royal insignia was crucial in the ceremony. It showed the monarchical power in all its splendor. This performance's symbolism was so important that it alone embodied the monarchy's image for centuries, as the various illuminated portraits of the Carolingian rulers and the royal seals has evidenced (Poilpré 2011, pp. 326–35; Bedos-Rezak 1986, pp. 95–103). The visibility of this staging was essential and represented; therefore, the first information given by the *ordo of Reims* in 1230.[20] The second sentence of this text says: "The first step is to prepare a throne a little high, like a platform, adjacent to the choir of the church but outside, between the two parts of the choir, on which one goes up by steps and where the peers of the Kingdom and even others can stand with the king if

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18　On the legend of Clovis, see (Aimoin of Fleury 1869, p. 40).
19　The mention of the Count of Flanders is an anachronism on the part of the chronicler, since Baudouin became Count of Flanders in 1191.
20　This text is not, strictly speaking, an *ordo* but a modus that gives all the instructions for organizing the ceremony. The liturgical texts declaimed during the ritual do not appear in it; see (Jackson 1995, pp. 292–305).

necessary" (Le Goff 2001, p. 300). The throne had to be visible to all and arranged in a place that could accommodate a certain crowd nearby.

At Saint-Denis, the heightening of the space by several meters offers a clear view from the lower choir. Suger underlines this last characteristic in his account of the consecration:

> For now, we were primarily concerned about the translation of our lords, the most Holy Martyrs, and other saints who were scattered throughout the church and venerated in separate chapels. We were also devoutly motivated to beautify their most sacred reliquaries, particularly those of the lords. So we selected a site and moved them where those approaching might gaze upon them in a more impressive and visible way, and we strove with the help of God to produce a splendid resting place by employing the elegant craftsmanship of goldsmiths and an abundance of gold and precious gems. (Suger 2018, pp. 48–49)

As soon as the entry of the church, the upper choir is visible from all sides. In addition to being visible, the throne had to be located in a space that would allow a gathering of lay people to gather around the monarch. Within the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, the newly raised choir is the only space that fulfills all the characteristics required to accommodate the throne. Thus, in this same place, the throne was found almost four centuries later for the consecration of Catherine de Medici (1547–1559). The drawing made by Antoine Caron (1521–1599), the official painter of the court, allows us to understand how the interior space of the church of Saint-Denis was arranged for the ceremony (Figure 2). Rituals took place at the morning altar present at the western end of the monks' choir, while the throne is visible in the upper choir where a broad public is gathered above the high altar visible at the bottom of the structure.
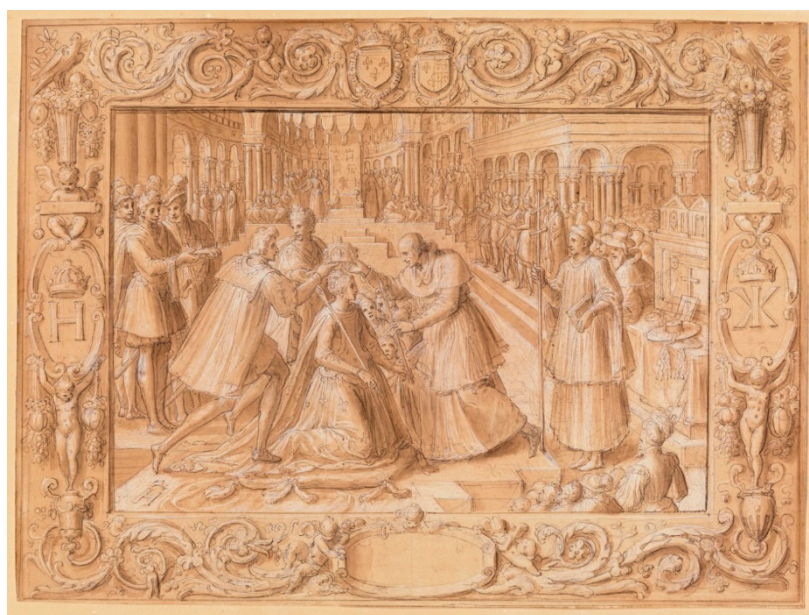
Figure 2. Antoine Caron, Coronation of Catherine de Medici in the Basilica of Saint-Denis, drawing in the series executed for "l'Histoire Françoyse de nostre Temps", manuscript commissioned by Nicolas Houel, apothecary, and given to Catherine de Medici, RF29752. 15-recto, Paris, Musée du Louvre, D.A.G, © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) by Michel Urtado.

6. Conclusions: "Long Live the Queen"

Four hundred years after Pepin the Short and his heirs' coronation, the steps taken by Suger bore fruit, and Saint-Denis hosted the crowning ceremony of a King of the Franks. However, this ceremony was the first and last crowning of a king in this new setting wanted by the illustrious abbot. With papacy's support and the strengthening of the legend of the Sainte-Ampoule, Reims claimed more than ever its single right to crown the King of France in the 13th century. The abandonment of the multiple

coronations' tradition after Philip Augustus also played a role in Reims' supremacy. The Capetian kings no longer had to fight for their legitimacy, as Louis VIII descended as much from the Capetian dynasty through his father as from the Carolingian dynasty through his mother (Spiegel 1971, pp. 147–48).

Moreover, the Kingdom's stability and the Capetian king's authority were no longer to be consolidated thanks to the victorious actions of Philip Augustus throughout his reign. The Dionysian clergy took part in the coronation in Reims as the regalia's legatee, as confirmed by the ordines from the 13th century onwards. However, the Abbey of Saint-Denis had not said its last word, and if the kings were to be consecrated exclusively in Reims because of the Sainte-Ampoule, the queens were anointed with ordinary holy oil. The clergy of Reims thus failed to impose the crowning of the queen in her cathedral. Several queens were crowned at Sens, then at the Sainte-Chapelle, and finally, the ceremony took place at Saint-Denis from Anne of Brittany (1491–1498) to Catherine of Medici (1547–1559). If kings' coronations were politically more vital because they designated the moment when God gave the grace to reign to one man, the queens' coronations were just as sumptuous. Suger certainly should not have expected this reversal. Ironically, after the queens were forbidden to be buried in Saint-Denis during the thirteenth century, they got their revenge by being consecrated and crowned there.

More than a simple case study, this analysis makes it possible to reconsider the practice of coronation in France before the 13th century and propose a new approach to the analysis of the coronation ceremony reflecting on multiple coronations' existence. The primacy of Reims in the study of the *sacre* had cast a shadow over Suger's project for the Abbey of Saint-Denis. While the illustrious Abbot's claims to royalty had already been noted by research, no study had yet proposed an analysis of the reconstruction project in the light of this ceremony. It shows that taking into account the ritual as a living image makes it possible to approach this already eminently treated theme with a new look by reflecting on the spatial context in which it takes place and its visibility. Finally, the analysis of this visual space taken as a whole—the architecture, its decoration, and the royal ceremonials—also allowed us to redefine the identity of French royalty in the 12th century. Suger acted for the good of his Abbey and wanted to enhance his status at all costs, but he was also a statesman. The abbot participated in asserting a sacred royalty for the Capetians by placing them in the Old Testament kings and earlier dynasties that ruled the Frankish Kingdom. Although historically fictitious, this affiliation was conveyed through visual vehicles of which the coronation ceremony and the coronation ceremony were central parts.

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