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## **Ceremony, Genealogy, Political Theology**

Stuart Elden

### **Introduction**

While ceremonies are sometimes part of everyday life, for most people they mark specific and significant moments in a life course. These might include baptism or christening, or other ceremonies marking birth or dedication; Bar and Bat Mitzvah, confirmation, coming of age or other entry into adulthood; marriage, perhaps retirement, and funerals. Some of these are explicitly religious, others may be secular replacements. There are ceremonies associated with changes of season, such as the summer or winter solstice, or with feasts, Saint days or other religious festivals. Graduation ceremonies frequently mark the end of a period of education. For those in some professions or types of life, ordination, investiture, or awards come with their own specific ceremonies. The administration of justice has its own ceremonial aspects, from the trial to imprisonment and, in some cases, execution or other corporeal punishment. Annual events such as Memorial Day, Armistice Day, marches to commemorate significant battles, or religious days of atonement or fasting have their own ceremonial aspects. Major sporting events such as the World Cup or Olympic Games have elaborate opening and closing ceremonies. Ceremony is sometimes used to describe ritual processes, such as the Japanese tea ceremony.

Political systems also come with their own ceremonial aspects – they are an explicitly performative aspect of politics. In some countries, like the United Kingdom, the majesty of political power is most explicit in events such as the state opening of Parliament. The speech, which initiates a session of Parliament, usually of one year, is the moment when the three constituent parts of Parliament meet in a single place. Delivered in the House of Lords, the Queen reads a speech prepared by her government, attended by members of the House of Commons. She is crowned and robed, and delivers the speech from a throne, having processed from Buckingham Palace to the Palace of Westminster, in a gold horse-drawn carriage and escorted by the Household Cavalry. There are several ritual elements with a long history in this ceremony, from the speech written on goatskin parchment paper (no longer on actual vellum), to the summoning of the members of the Commons by the House of Lords official known as ‘Black Rod’. The doors of the Commons are shut in his or her face and only reopened after three knocks, to symbolise the independence of the Commons from the monarchy, a practice dating to the seventeenth-century English Civil War.<sup>1</sup> At other times, a ceremonial mace is present in the House of Commons as a symbol of the authority of the absent sovereign. Parliament cannot sit, debate or vote without this being present.

Even in polities without a royal remnant, such as the United States, there are still important ceremonial aspects. The inauguration of a new or second-term President is one significant ceremony in the political calendar, with the oath of office. The oath of office is the only part

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/stateopening>

of this event mandated by the Constitution, but there are other elements that have become established practice. Another significant political ceremony in the United States is the State of the Union Address, given to a joint session of Congress in the House of Representatives, usually on a yearly basis except in the first year of a term, though the Constitution stipulates that “information of the State of the Union” shall merely be “from time to time”.<sup>2</sup> Yet the title of ‘State of the Union Address’ only formally dates from 1946, and before this it was generally known as the Annual Message.<sup>3</sup> Many of the established aspects are based on tradition, with aspects becoming sedimented over time, rather than necessarily enshrined in law. One interesting aspect is the ‘designated survivor’, a high-ranking cabinet member who does not attend the ceremony, but is guarded in a secure location. This is to provide continuity of government in the event of a major incident such as a terrorist attack – given the large number of people present at this single event. Since 2005, some members of Congress have been similarly absent to constitute a rump legislature if required. In dictatorships, quasi-religious symbolism regularly goes alongside the leader, from parades to iconography.

Yet ceremonies with a significant political purpose might be a more everyday event. Discussing the pledge of allegiance held every day in US schools, Michael Billig suggests that “the ceremony is a ritual display of national unity” (1995, 50).

Here, one might have thought, is a ritual which would have been studied and re-studied endlessly by American sociologists and social psychologists. They should be delighted to have on their doorsteps such a Durkheimian ceremony. Moreover, the ceremony appears with the repeatability of a laboratory experiment, so that micro-processes of gesture, intonation and stance can be repeatedly examined in their controlled conditions. It should be a godsend for functionalists, role-theorists and micro-sociologists, let alone anthropologists, who can do their fieldwork and still return home for lunch. In point of fact, academic interest has been negligible. Anthropologists have headed for the reservations of the native Americans rather than the school-rooms of middle Iowa (Billig 1995, 50).

The anthropological work on world societies will not be explored here, and most of the material discussed will draw on a Western European, Christian tradition. Much could be done with similar questions in a range of other societies, through Asia from Japan to China and India, and through the continents of Africa and South America.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the focus will tend to be on the extraordinary ceremony, rather than regular, daily rituals like the pledge of allegiance or customary religious services. However, it is worth stressing that this is not to reduce their importance. As Billig further argues:

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<sup>2</sup> The Constitution of the United States, Article II, Section 3, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

<sup>3</sup> <https://history.house.gov/Institution/SOTU/State-of-the-Union/>

<sup>4</sup> For examples of work that look at ceremony outside of a Latin, Christian tradition see Harrison 2000; Rai (ed.) 2011; and Rai 2014.

The significance of the ceremony is not diminished if it is treated as routine, rather than as an intense experience. If anything, the significance is enhanced: the sacral has become part of everyday life, instead of being confined to a special place of worship or particular day of celebration (Billig 1995, 51).

As the French sociologist Émile Durkheim recognised a century ago, ritualised behaviour like this is one of the means through which social coherence and order can be established and maintained (1968). Equally, in the nineteenth century Walter Bagehot argued that the English constitution operated by means of two kinds of institutions: the dignified and the efficient. The dignified, the more theatrical aspects, of which ceremonies were part, and the monarchy the most immediate symbol, were there to impress and command obedience; the efficient ones to govern (2001).

More recently, there has been return to themes around the question of ceremony and its contemporary political instantiations (Crewe and Müller eds. 2006; Rai ed. 2011; Rai and Johnson eds. 2014; Coakley and Rafter eds. 2014). This recent work builds upon writings such as Emma Crewe's anthropological study of the British House of Lords (2005), and Kertzer's more general anthropology of political ritual (Kertzer 1989). Work on political ceremony is part of a wider concern with the relation between politics and performance (see, for example, Goodman ed. 2000; Edkins and Kear ed. 2013; Rai 2014; Rai and Reinelt ed. 2015). As Rai suggests, "political performance is critical to our reading of politics itself" (2014, 1180). Deliberately, talking of the 'politics of performance' can be read in two ways: as either subjective or objective genitive. This means that there is examination of the political aspects of performance, and the performative aspects of politics. Both are significant to the question of ceremony. Although the terms ritual and ceremony are often used interchangeably, politically it seems helpful to distinguish between them by suggesting that ritual is often a part of ceremony, in that ceremonies contain rituals, while rituals might be a sequence of structured actions conducted outside of them. As Rai puts it, "*ceremony* means an activity that is infused with ritual significance, performed on a special occasion while *ritual* means the hyper-visibility of ceremony and routinisation of ritualised performance" (2010, 288).

In Shakespeare's play King Henry V, before the battle of Agincourt, the King reflects on his role and its duties: "And what are thou, thou idol ceremony?" (Act IV, scene I, 237)<sup>5</sup> The king considers how the role requires greater duties and less privacy, enormous privilege but greater anxiety and responsibility. Is ceremony more than "place, degree and form/Creating awe and fear in other men?" (Act IV, scene I, 243-44). Ceremony is marked by trappings such as anointing balm, orb and sceptre, ceremonial weapons, throne, robes and crown, but cannot be reduced to these. These trappings, titles and rituals are mere display. They might be necessary but are not sufficient to the attribution of a role. There are good questions

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<sup>5</sup> I have used the 1995 Arden edition. This speech (Act IV scene I, 233-63) comes from the Folio text; it does not appear in the earlier Quarto version of the play.

raised here, and this chapter begins the work of interrogating the concept and practice of ceremony historically and theoretically.

### **From Etymology to Political Theology**

‘Ceremony’ is an intriguing word, deriving from Old French *ceremonie* and Latin *caerimonia*, and meaning the ritual observances and sacred rituals of a religious service. A ceremony could also be “a portent, omen” (OED 5). The Latin term *caerimonia*, meaning sacredness or reverence, is of disputed etymology. Michiel de Vaan says that the Roman belief that the prefix came from the Etruscan town *Caere* was a “folk-etymology”. Instead he suggests that it is probably “derived from an adj[ective]. \**caerus* which also formed the second member of the cp. [compound] *sin-cērus* ‘whole, sound’” (de Vaan 2008, 81). The term *caerus* may relate to the Sanskrit term *kárman* – action, work or deed, or *karma*. The suffix *-monium* or *-monia* is more straight-forward, as the legal status or obligation of something, being the root of the terms like *acrimony*, *parsimony*, *patrimony*, *matrimony*, *sanctimony*, and *testimony*. To speak of a ‘religious ceremony’ is thus a pleonasm, because all ceremonies have at least the trace of a religious lineage in the word itself, as well as perhaps in specificities, even if they appear to be for purely secular purposes. This relation can of course be seen in practice rather than merely in the lineage of the word.

As such, work on ceremony necessarily builds on the field of political theology, which has long looked at religious roots of secular politics. We owe the term ‘political theology’ in a positive sense to the jurist Carl Schmitt, notorious for his membership of the Nazi party and support for the regime around questions of emergency powers and expansionism. Schmitt first used the term in his 1922 book *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Mikhail Bakunin had previously used the term in 1871 to mockingly describe the ideas of Giuseppe Mazzini (Bakunin 1973; see Moltmann 2015, 7). Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, originally published anonymously in 1670, is a perhaps still earlier antecedent, though this is really a treatise on theological-politics (2007).<sup>6</sup> In the opening lines of the essay which gives his book its title, Schmitt makes a claim which is often quoted, but generally read in a reductive way:

All central concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts. This is not only because of their historical development – in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver – but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of those concepts. The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology. Only by being aware of this analogy can we appreciate the manner in which the philosophical ideas of the state developed in the last centuries (Schmitt, 2009, p. 43; 1985, p. 36, translation modified).

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<sup>6</sup> There may be still earlier uses. For a brief discussion and references, see Heron 2018, 143-44 n. 4.

All too often this is read for the first sentence alone. The ‘not only’ of the second sentence is important, though it is the ‘but also’ which is more challenging and arguably significant. As Jacques Derrida points out, the first element of Schmitt’s formulation suggests the need for a historical, genealogical, investigation, but that the second part is that of a “systematic logician” (2017, 249). While the historical lineages of the modern concept and practice of ceremony are significant, it is also important to look at the “systematic structure” of ceremony.

Schmitt’s point was to expose the myth of a truly secular politics, free from religious aspects. However, Schmitt did not explore explicitly theological material in detail in the book, and often he seems to be using the term “theology” as interchangeable with metaphysics. In a 1935 monograph the theologian Erik Peterson acknowledged Schmitt’s use of the idea, but noted that “his brief arguments at that time were not systematic”. He added that his own essay on monotheism in the Roman Empire was an attempt to “show by a concrete example the theological impossibility of a ‘political theology’” (2011, 233-34 n. 168). Schmitt’s response, which came many years later in 1970, a decade after Petersen’s death, denied that a single case study could be used to discredit the notion universally, but more importantly, returned to his earlier argument that deciding what was or was not political was itself a political decision. Thus theology could not simultaneously claim to be outside politics and also close off a political question (2008, 113, 122; see 2007).<sup>7</sup>

As Adam Kotsko notes, “the field of political theology has not yet been rigorously defined. It is more a field of affinities than a clearly delineated disciplinary space—a kind of ‘zone of indistinction’ between theology and political theory where the terms of debate are still very much up for grabs” (2013, 107; see Hovey and Phillips eds. 2015). For Hammill and Lupton, political theology can be used “to identify the exchanges, pacts, and contests that obtain between religious and political life, especially the use of sacred narratives, motifs, and liturgical forms to establish, legitimate, and reflect upon the sovereignty of monarchs, corporations, and parliaments” (2012, 1). Whether or not there is such a thing as a political theology, and how it is defined, there is a theology in politics. That is to say that a whole range of aspects of contemporary politics relate to earlier theological constructs. The modern notion of sovereignty over territory, for example, has a lineage from the idea of temporal power in the Christian Middle Ages. Temporal power, as well as limited by the spiritual power of the papacy, was also spatially circumscribed (see Elden 2013). This lineage to theology is even more explicit in the question of political ceremony, as many authors have demonstrated.

Ernst Kantorowicz is a crucial figure in the development of studies of political theology. Best known in Anglophone debates for his 1957 book *The King’s Two Bodies*, he was also the author of a major biographical study of the Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich II (1927, 1931). *The King’s Two Bodies* examines the ways that the medieval king was understood to have

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion, see Hollerich 2011, xxv-xxvi; and a 1979 letter sent by the Jewish theologian Jacob Taubes to Schmitt, in Taubes 2013, 27-31.

both a physical, mortal body, and an immortal, eternal body politic that endured past their own death. The latter was the foundation for notion of the realm, kingdom or, later, the state. The proclamation that “the King is dead, long live the King” is one indication of the continuation of this eternal sovereignty, but it endures into republican politics as well. Kantorowicz’s sources were varied, but included art, coins, legal texts, theological texts and histories, as well as the writings of Dante and Shakespeare, especially *King Richard II*. Kantorowicz provides examples which show not only the religious lineage of modern ceremonies, but also their structural relation. Kantorowicz indicates, for example, that the ceremonial procedures of the English Parliament parallel those of the celebration of a mass, just as its threefold structure compares to the Trinity (1957, 227). Similarly, just as Christ is wedded to the Church, so too is a ruler mystically married to their kingdom. Coronation ceremonies therefore sometimes parallel the service of a wedding (1957, 221-223; see Rust 2014, 112; Woolley 1915).

*The King’s Two Bodies* should be read alongside Kantorowicz’s earlier study *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (1946). There, Kantorowicz stresses the importance of studying liturgy, not only for the “theologian and church historian”, but also for the medievalist generally, looking at the “political, institutional, or cultural history of the Middle Ages” (1946, vii). Focusing on the liturgical chant of the *Laudes Regiae*, the royal praises, a specific acclamation of the Caesar, Kantorowicz shows how “seemingly insignificant changes in the texts of the laudes, traced here from the eighth to the thirteenth century, reflect the various changes in theocratic concepts of secular and spiritual rulership” (1946, ix). The opening line of the *Laudes Regiae* was the motto *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat* – Christ conquers, reigns and commands – and Kantorowicz explores how this was transferred to apply to rulers, especially the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor, but also the Kings of Western Europe (see also Angelov and Herrin 2012). It is a development of a key theme of his earlier biography of Friedrich II. In relation to England, Kantorowicz notes that it is “at least a symbolic coincidence that the *Christus vincit* is mentioned, for the last time, in a marginal note to the Coronation Order of Richard II with whom a period of kingship came to an end” (1946, 180). He ends the book noting that the *laudes* was reintroduced in the Fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini (1946, 186), a good example of the political appropriation of aspects of religious ceremony. It is still used in the Catholic Church, especially for the inauguration of a Pope. Yet elements of the chant it can be dated back before Christ, when Roman generals or emperors re-entered the city.

The most significant thinker in the recent use of the term political theology has probably been Giorgio Agamben, especially the later volumes of his *Homo Sacer* series. While the initial books of this series explored ideas of bare life, sovereignty and the camp, the later published volumes explored monastic rules and poverty, and provided archaeologies of the oath, duty and office, which link theological, ceremonial and political themes (2010, 2013a, 2013b). But it is in *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and*

*Government* that he provides his most sustained study in the series (2011). As Dean points out, the Italian term *regno*, used in the book's title, means 'reign' as well as 'kingdom', and Agamben is concerned with the modalities of political power (2012, 145-46). Agamben notes the use of acclamations in Nazi Germany, including "Heil Hitler!", "Sieg Heil", along with the salute, and the motto "Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Führer" (Santner 2018, 95). If we add the pageantry of flags, uniforms and military parades, this demonstrates the ceremonial aspects common to dictatorships of the left as well as the right. For Kotsko, following Agamben, political ceremony is "an echo of the acclamation that calls divinity into being" (2013, 107).

In the wider literature, the term "political theology" has been used to examine specific figures in theology such as Saint Paul (Taubes 2003) or Jean Calvin (Tuininga 2017); philosophers including Hegel (Shanks 1991) and Schelling (Brata Das 2017); writers like Shakespeare (Shuger 2001; Haverkamp 2004; Lupton 2005; Rust 2009); and topics such as European Integration (Royce 2017) or the question of the neighbour (Žižek, Santner and Reinhard 2005). In recent years, some scholars have worked in dialogue with Agamben's arguments to examine the theological aspects of modern economy and management (Mondzain 2004; Esposito 2015; Leshem 2016; Diamantides and Schütz 2017; Heron 2018; Santner 2018). These are only an indicative sample of a widespread use of the term, in which the question of ceremony is a recurrent theme.

### **Histories of Ceremony**

There is also extensive work that examines specific ceremonial practices in different historical periods. This would include studies of Classical Rome (Sumi 2005) and in particular the triumph held to hail conquering military leaders (Beard 2007), and of the Holy Roman Empire (Coy et. al. eds. 2010, especially section III). Kantorowicz's important work on Medieval Europe has already been noted (Kantorowicz 1946; 1957; see Hanawalt 2017), and there is work developing these themes in relation to Renaissance and Early Modern France (Bryant 1986; 2010; Giesey 1960), England (Duncan 2012; Cole 1999), and Europe in this period more generally (Hammill and Lupton eds. 2012; Mulryne et. al. eds. 2015; Rutledge ed. 1996). The relation of royal majesty and religious ordination is significant here, but even republics worked with comparable ceremony. After the execution of King Charles I – an event with its own ceremonial aspects – interregnum England under Oliver Cromwell had significant rituals and ceremonies (Knoppers 2000).

The theme of ceremony has also been discussed in relation to Shakespeare's plays (i.e. La Guardia 1966; Sisk 1978; George 2010; Elden 2017). The famous speech reflecting on ceremony by King Henry V was mentioned above. But one of the striking things about Shakespeare's uses of ceremony is that they are often disrupted, denied, refused or parodied. King Richard II, for example, puts excessive stress on symbolism and ceremony, only to have these challenged by the more forceful Henry Bolingbroke (the future Henry IV), and ultimately King Richard has his ceremonial status rescinded when he is uncrowned and deposed. King Henry V suggests that "His ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears



but a man” (Act IV scene I, 105-6). While still known as Prince Hal he had mocked ceremony in a London tavern (2002, Act II, scene iv, 366-468), with his friend Falstaff suggesting he could play King Henry IV: “this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre and this cushion my crown” (Act II scene iv, 368-69). Henry IV, of course, utters the famous words “Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown” (2016, Act III, scene I, 31), like his son recognising the duties that come with the symbol – the work to be done after the ceremony is over. Coriolanus refuses the ceremonial display of his wounds to the people as part of his election to consul, and is banished from Rome for breaking with the people and the tribunes. Cordelia refuses to go along with King Lear’s wish for a ceremonial recitation of filial devotion; King John has to perform his coronation several times, in part because of his weakness as a ruler and his deference to Rome.

Yet Shakespeare’s plays do not simply portray, and at times parody, the ceremonial aspects of politics. As Michel Foucault has argued, seventeenth century “tragedy was one of the great ritual forms in which public right was displayed and its problems were discussed” (2003, 174; see 2007, 265). He has in mind both Shakespeare and French dramatists such as Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine. In other words, as well as political ceremony being theatrical, theatre can itself be a political ceremony. In terms of the project of this collection, the relation between politics and performance works both way: performance is political as well as the political performative. Shakespeare used historical material as sources for many of his tragedies and history plays, but many of the themes they treat found contemporary parallel, which would not have been lost on his audience. *Richard II* is a particularly striking example. Queen Elizabeth thought herself the equivalent of that deposed king, as she worried about her own deposition. A performance of the play at the Globe theatre the night before the Earl of Essex’s failed uprising in 1601 made the comparison striking. As Foucault suggests, Shakespearean plays frequently focus “on the wound, on the repeated injury that is inflicted on the body of the kingdom when kings die violent deaths and when illegitimate sovereigns come to the throne” (2003, 174). Looking outside Shakespeare’s time, but to a different period of English history, Foucault suggested that the removal of the mad King George III by his doctors was itself “basically, a ceremony, a ceremony of deposition, a sort of reverse coronation” (2006, 20). As I have argued elsewhere, Foucault finds the replacement of sovereign power by a different kind of power more interesting, than the replacement of a king by another king. Nonetheless, the question of the ceremony in the display of political power at various periods long fascinated him.<sup>8</sup>

### **Aspects of Ceremony**

These historical examinations indicate the number of ways in which religious rites are still embedded in modern, secular politics. A key aspect is the endurance of royal, corporeal

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<sup>8</sup> A striking discussion of political power and ceremony, organised as a play of five acts, appears in his 1971-72 course at the Collège de France and a related lecture in Minneapolis (2015). For a fuller discussion of these themes see Elden 2017 and Akbalik 2017. Many of these readings of Shakespeare’s plays are further developed in Elden 2018.

elements in modern republics. Eric Santner for example shows that the distinction Kantorowicz traces between the king's two bodies did not disappear in modern polities but continued in the notion of the "people". The "glorious body" of the King was not merely a fictional, symbolic cloak, but a "virtually real supplement to his empirical, mortal body" (Santner 2018, 23). In his study *The Royal Remains* (2011), Santner explores the enduring corporeal nature of popular sovereignty, a notion he explores as the flesh. Philip Manow has similarly shown the endurance of the body politic in modern democracies, looking at aspects such as parliamentary seating plans and other spatial arrangements, art and other imagery, the notion of political representation and mythology, and the media obsession with physical bodies of rulers (2010).

Ceremony is important as a means of a polity stressing its continuity, with prime ministers, presidents and parliaments able to trace a lineage back to the founding of the republic or other political system. They are also significant in terms of cementing a specifically national identity, and for that national polity to be seen as formally equal to others. Many newly independent states continue rituals and ceremonies from former colonial powers, while other adopt or adapt those from states they wish to emulate. Ceremonial aspects may also stress a belief in a more universal order, of which the state wishes to be a part. Additionally, the ritualistic elements aim at a connection with abstract ideas, such as freedom or democracy, hard to visual in themselves. Even non-national political actors, such as the United Nations or European Union adapt many aspects of national politics in terms of their positions, legal texts, rituals, ceremonies and accessories, from flags to procedures. Yet it is also important to note the ways that some ceremonies, or the rituals attached to them, are not nearly as old as implied. The investigation of political ceremony can thus learn from work on the invention of tradition and banal nationalism (Hobsbawm and Ranger eds. 1983; Anderson 1983; Billig 1995), which shows the dubious lineage of some of these practices. It also provides a challenge to some of the uncritical assumptions of Durkheim and those who have followed his approach.

Ceremonies are rich with significant interrelations between bodies in motion, at both small and larger scale, from coordinated movement to gesture.<sup>9</sup> Bowing, kneeling, hands raised or laid on an other's head, the kissing of feet or an ornate ring. Military aspects of marching, saluting, drill requirements and the use of horses or other trained animals add to the spectacle. As Rai points out, ceremonies are always gendered (2010, 284, 288), a perspective indebted to Judith Butler's work on the performative aspects of gender (1990). Work on dance and movement may be of use to further analysis of these political choreographies. Ceremonies are also filled with instances of the interrelation of those bodies with material things, from clothing and personal accoutrements to larger objects like flags, sceptres, crowns, thrones, maces, oils, bells, bibles, and so on. Indeed, an obsolete

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<sup>9</sup> On gesture, see Agamben 2000; on the body in political performance, see Rai 2014.

sense of the word 'ceremony' pertains to "an external accessory or symbolical attribute of workshop, state, or pomp" (OED 4).

Some work has looked at the texts used in ceremonies, and their historical lineage. The spoken words and physical gestures are often understood as part of a liturgy. More might be done with this, as well as analysis of music or other sounds accompanying the spectacle such as bells, gun or cannon shots. The speech directions are important as well as the specific words, just as in religious services. Equally, just as in the theatre, the 'script' here is not just the words said, but directions for staging or performance. Work on semiotics and iconography, as well as textual analysis, is therefore important.

The temporality of ceremony can take several forms. Its temporality might be in terms of chronology, with some linear succession of events – the birth announcement, christening, marriage, investiture, coronation and funeral of a monarch, for example. Some of these directly relate to specific sacraments of the Catholic Church – baptism, confirmation, Eucharist or communion, reconciliation (penance or confession), matrimony, Holy Orders and the anointing of the sick. Temporality might be cyclical, with the ceremonial aspects of the state of the union address, the oath of office, or the state opening of parliament. Its temporality might be repetitive, happening multiple times, and rhythm is frequently significant.

Equally, ceremony has important spatial aspects. Some ceremonies always occur in the same place, and that location and its architecture is part of the ritual. But equally there are some ceremonies where the location is deliberately changed so there is a repetition for a different audience. Examples would include Queen Elizabeth I's royal progress, or the repetition of King John's coronation in different locations. Linking back to an earlier theme, some ceremonies make use of processional elements, i.e. movement through space, as part of their ritual. These marks the spread of political, religious or royal power beyond its usual location into other spaces, blurring easy distinctions between public and private space, as well as lines drawn between secular and spiritual, state and civil society, the everyday and the ceremonial (see Howe 2007, 11). Royal entry into towns paralleled Christ's entry into Jerusalem, or the entrance of a victorious Roman military commander. The spatial arrangement of bodies and props is significant, and provides another link to the theatrical. Combining the temporal and spatial aspects is the question of synchronicity, where ceremonies occur at the same time in multiple locations, such as Church services or those of remembrance. Equally, spaces used for one purpose on a day-to-day basis become recoded when used for a ceremonial purpose. Horse Guards Parade, for example, was formerly used for tournaments, is a popular tourist destination, the site of the annual Trooping the Colour ceremony, and was used in the 2012 Olympics to host beach volleyball.

## **Conclusion**

Ceremony, then, is an important notion in the relation between politics and performance. As Rai has suggested, the elements of performance – the body, space/place/stage,

words/scripts/speech/voice and performing/performative labour – need to be tabulated with aspects of reception or audience – authenticity of representation, mode of representation, representative liminality and resistance to representation. This provides a grid through which we can begin to analyse political performance generally, of which ceremony would be an important subsection (2014, 1190). Themes around Body/Voice/Gesture and Audience are discussed in more detail in other parts of this *Handbook*.

Historically, much of what we know about ceremonies comes from the extant textual record. Yet as Howe indicates, this is unfortunate, in that they “were intended to do their work and acquire meaning beyond the textual realm” (2007, 3). Modern ceremonies can be analysed anthropologically for their corporeal, temporal, spatial and symbolic aspects; historical ceremonies can only be investigated on the basis of textual descriptions and whatever other sources remain – artefacts, buildings or their plans (see also Hanawalt 2017, 6). Nonetheless, the historical record provides rich material both for a study of specific ceremonies and the wider, genealogical question of what a ceremony does in politics.

A ceremony is intended, in part, to bridge the divide between the embodied life of the participants and the abstract principles they are being connected to. The idea of kingship, for example, lays fictitious claim to an unbroken lineage, a set of principles, entitlements and duties, and perhaps a claim to divine right. The rituals as part of the ceremony are intended to symbolise and connect to these precepts. Imitation of previous ceremonies is a significant part of creating this lineage; one reason why it is important for them to follow strictly defined procedures. This means that a ceremony is not simply taking place in the present moment and location but connects to something seen as eternal and universal (see Howe 2007, 1-2). In so doing ceremonies create a link back to the past, but also establish the precedent for an imagined future. An explicit instance of the relation between politics and performance, the question of ceremony is one that would benefit from further attention.

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