DURHAM, N.H.— As Britain prepares for the coronation of King Charles III, there is much speculation over the majesty and size of the event as well as who will be attending. Nicoletta Gullace, associate professor of history at the University of New Hampshire and an expert on the royal family, is available to talk about the historical significance of the ceremony to be held on Saturday, May 6, as well as protocol and what we can expect from the royals.

Gullace can be reached at nicoletta.gullace@unh.edu.

“While Charles automatically became king upon the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth, the coronation is the ceremony when he is officially crowned,” said Gullace. “The coronation has traditional,
religious and symbolic significance. It is the moment that St. Edward's Crown is placed on the king’s head — and in this case, Queen Consort Camilla will also be crowned — and it signifies Charles’s authority in a long line of rulers reportedly going back to the time of William the Conqueror in 1066.”

Gullace, who is an expert in 20th century and modern British history, says unlike the queen’s coronation in 1953, which was attended by 8,251 guests and broadcast on television to 27 million viewers, the king’s coronation is expected to be much smaller and shorter.

“Charles wants to have a ‘slimmed down monarchy’, so is trying to avoid the appearance of extravagance,” said Gullace. “There will be fewer people present and lower expectations all round. Not all members of the aristocracy will be invited and those who are not will most likely feel snubbed. While the event will probably look magnificent on television, it most likely won’t have the same level of pageantry or magic of the queen’s coronation.”

Gullace points out that planning has not been without its challenges noting that event planners struggled to book performers for the coronation concert. Most of the interest by Brits and Americans centers around whether Prince Harry and Meghan Markle will attend and what drama their presence (or absence) will cause.

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