



High Fashion in the Church

Pauline Johnstone

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The decoration of church vestments, which are the ceremonial garments worn by the clergy at the celebration of the Mass, has always been a matter of high fashion. In the first place the crafts of silk weaving and embroidery, which provide the technical means for the decoration of these garments, have held a prominent place in the changing fashions in the arts since the early Middle Ages, and since that time have been used in the service of the church as well as for secular purposes. Secondly in a narrower sense of the term, both these crafts have been at the heart of fashionable dress through the centuries. Many silks intended for this market have also been used by the vestment makers, with the result that the vestments have remained in the forefront of each successive trend. This therefore is a book about the changing aspects of art history: its aim is to show something of the origins and use of the vestments themselves, but principally to trace the development of their decoration in the context of the arts of any one period. *High Fashion in the Church* is richly-illustrated as its subject matter rightly demands. It also contains an index, glossary and bibliography.

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