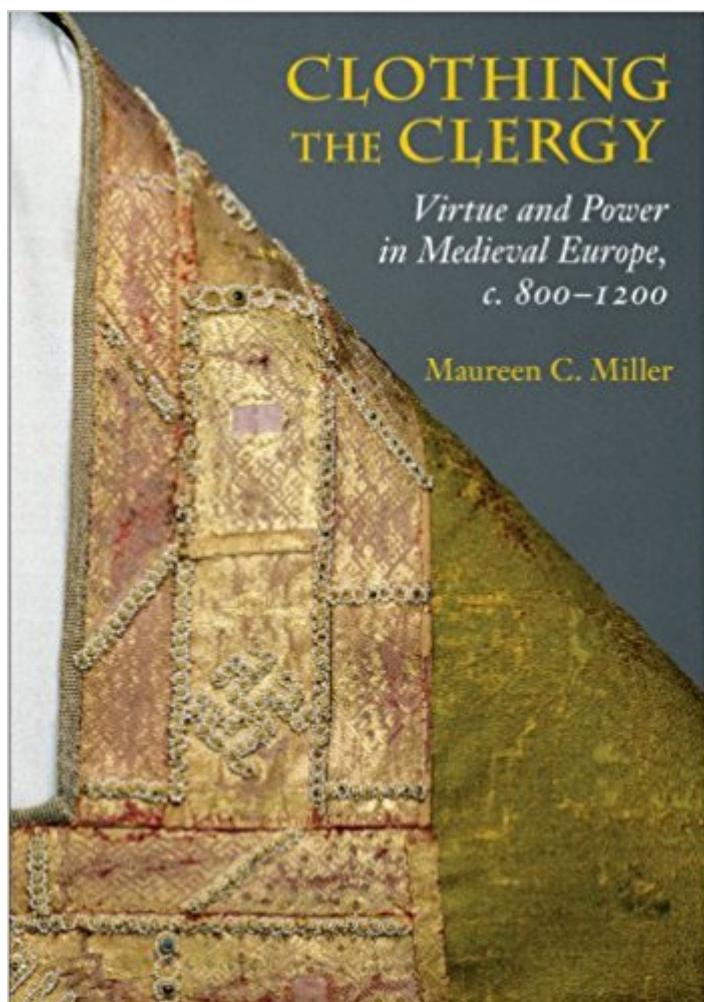


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# Clothing The Clergy: Virtue And Power In Medieval Europe, C. 800–1200



## Synopsis

After initial ambivalence about distinctive garb for its ministers, early Christianity developed both liturgical garments and visible markers of clerical status outside church. From the ninth century, moreover, new converts to the faith beyond the Alps developed a highly ornate style of liturgical attire; church vestments were made of precious silks and decorated with embroidered and woven ornament, often incorporating gold and jewels. Making use of surviving medieval textiles and garments; mosaics, frescoes, and manuscript illuminations; canon law; liturgical sources; literary works; hagiography; theological tracts; chronicles, letters, inventories of ecclesiastical treasures, and wills, Maureen C. Miller in *Clothing the Clergy* traces the ways in which clerical garb changed over the Middle Ages. Miller's in-depth study of the material culture of church vestments not only goes into detail about craft, artistry, and textiles but also contributes in groundbreaking ways to our understanding of the religious, social, and political meanings of clothing, past and present. As a language of power, clerical clothing was used extensively by eleventh-century reformers to mark hierarchies, to cultivate female patrons, and to make radical new claims for the status of the clergy. The medieval clerical culture of clothing had enduring significance: its cultivation continued within Catholicism and even some Protestant denominations and it influenced the visual communication of respectability and power in the modern Western world. *Clothing the Clergy* features seventy-nine illustrations, including forty color photographs that put the rich variety of church vestments on display.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Clothing the Clergy is a fascinating addition to the scholarship of both clothing and early medieval Christianity recommended for any academic library. . . . Miller argues that the comparatively plain vestments of late antiquity gave way to a more ornate style as a reflection of new attitudes regarding episcopal power and clerical virtues. As bishops began to view themselves as co-rulers alongside kings and emperors, they embraced a style that mirrored their new status. Similarly, they hoped an ornate form of vestments would encourage virtues like chastity, wisdom, justice, and charity in their clergy, aspirations emphasized in new vesting prayers and the bestowal of vestments during ordination ceremonies." — Hans C. Rasmussen, *Catholic Library World* (March 2015) "[T]his remarkable book provides an original, stimulating and valuable addition to the existing body of literature on Christian vestments." — Lisa Monnas, *The Burlington Magazine* (September 2015) "This wonderfully researched and amply illustrated work plots the emergence of a distinct clerical garb between the ninth and twelfth century. Weaving together historical descriptions, councils, and ritual admonition with the testimony of material culture, Miller successfully "explores clothing as an expressive language (p. 9). The ideology behind the clothes provides important insight into the clergy's aspirational identity." — Dyan Elliott, *The Catholic Historical Review* (Fall 2015) "Some books are a joy to read. Other books are essential to read. This book is both. . . . Rarely do scholars integrate such different strands of study in creating their intellectual tapestry. Here there is the usual historical wool of text: tracts, chronicles, and laws. To these Miller adds the warp of liturgies, arts, and surviving garments. It is a delight to see these sources used with such skill to create a holistic pattern of the development of a distinctive clerical culture." — Gary Macy, *Speculum* (January 2016) "Clothing the Clergy is a lucid and fascinating account of an almost unknown subject, the design and manufacture of the magnificent ritual garments of the medieval Catholic clergy. It is also one of the most profound, far-reaching, and fruitful rethinkings in a generation of the history of Europe in the central Middle Ages. In tracing the emergence and definition of the clergy, largely through its own initiatives, as a distinct and self-conscious order of society in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries Miller uncovers new and highly revealing aspects of the relations between clergy and laity, privileged and unprivileged, men and women, and adds a new dimension to our picture of the transformation of Europe in that epoch." — R. I. Moore, emeritus Professor of Medieval History, Newcastle University, Corresponding Fellow of the Medieval Academy, and author of *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* "In this fascinating and important contribution to the study of material religion, Maureen C. Miller explores the expressive uses of ornate clerical vestments. Drawing on material artifacts and a

wide range of written sources, Miller skillfully demonstrates how clerical clothing displayed the hierarchies so important to ecclesiastical reformers, how it connected the men who wore such garb with the female artists who produced it, and how it fostered a conception of an ideal ruler that connected the appearance of power with the virtues necessary for good governance." Martha G. Newman, University of Texas at Austin, author of *The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098 1180*"It is common for historians to speak metaphorically of following threads and weaving together stories. But for Maureen C. Miller, textiles and their production offer more than just a language to explain the historian's craft. They instead serve as crucial texts themselves, providing new and valuable insights into the past. In *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue, and Power in Medieval Europe, c. 800-1200*, Miller deftly demonstrates the importance of clerical vestments for understanding how religious authority was conceived and exercised . . . Miller's work exemplifies the value of the study of material culture and offers a compelling argument that deepens our understanding of medieval Catholicism and its legacy." John Gilmary Shea Prize Committee (American Catholic Historical Association) "With this innovative turn to medieval material culture as represented in surviving clerical clothing, combined with her eye for revealing detail in manuscript illumination and a rich reading of texts animating clerical reform, Maureen C. Miller has opened up a whole new vista on the church in society between the years 800 and 1200. A book about clerics and reform and vestments, *Clothing the Clergy* finds space too for women and prayers and social status and much more. A wonderful achievement, a beautiful book." John Van Engen, Andrew V. Tackes Professor of Medieval History, University of Notre Dame, author of *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The *Devotio Moderna* and the World of the Late Middle Ages*

Maureen C. Miller is Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe, c. 800 1200*, *The Bishop's Palace: Architecture and Authority in Medieval Italy*, and *The Formation of a Medieval Church: Ecclesiastical Change in Verona, 950 1150*, all from Cornell, and *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Conflict: A Brief Documentary History*.

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