

Treasured Threads

Ecclesiastical textile collections as living heritage
of the Catholic Church in Australia.



Figure 1: The Very Reverend Robert William Willson, first Catholic Bishop of Hobartown, wearing vestments designed by Augustus Pugin. [John Rogers Herbert ca 1854]

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Abstract

A rich and varied legacy of Catholic textile heritage is cared for in widely distributed collections across Australia. While the scale, scope and nature of these treasured threads is not well understood within the diverse Catholic communities that ‘own’ this heritage, the significance and stories hidden in these textiles remains largely unknown to the broader public. Textiles with connections to the iconoclasm of the Reformation, the atrocities of the French Revolution and the struggles of the *Kulturkampf* of Bismarck’s Germany sit quietly in Catholic religious communities in rural New South Wales. Tasmania holds an unsung trove of Neo-Gothic Revival ecclesiastical textiles that witnessed the growth of a new colony, while a fragile seventeenth-century devotional banner from the royal workshops of Spain shares space in the Western Australian wheat-belt with a late-eighteenth-century bishop’s cope from Northern Italy and the simple black habits of Benedictine monks. These *treasured threads* and their remarkable stories are a tiny sample from the textile collections which form an important part of the living heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Combining historical research and extensive use of digitised archival sources, with qualitative methods adapted from ethnography and material culture studies, including textile collection surveys and snowballing interviews with custodians and members of religious communities, this research explores how, why, and by whom cultural significance and value is attributed to ecclesiastical textiles that are cared for in collections and archives. The research reveals that Catholic institutions across Australia care for rich and diverse textile collections that, despite their age, rarity, historical associations and community significance, are little known outside their owner communities.

Current thinking in heritage studies contends that people and objects are entangled in webs of cultural meaning, practice and performance. People create objects, and through their enduring materiality objects have agency and vibrancy which in turn has influence and power in social worlds. Research into the community and social values of Christian heritage in general, and Catholic heritage in particular, has only recently appeared in the field of heritage studies, where enquiries around intangible and social heritage values have tended to focus on

the ‘West’s’ ‘others’, indigenous and non-western cultural groups. This textile heritage embodies deep spiritual, community and personal significance, and is a manifestation of a richly symbolic system of cultural knowledge, practice and living heritage that spans two millennia. Ecclesiastical textiles play important roles not only in the liturgical and pastoral life of the Church, but also in the community life of its parishes and religious orders. Of particular interest is how cultural practices, community memory and identity are maintained through caring for these textiles. The role of women’s devotional labour in creating and curating this legacy is especially significant in a cultural context that has traditionally excluded them from active participation in liturgical rites, policy-making and the hierarchy of power. However, the few ecclesiastical textiles that are found in secular collections in Australia are valued chiefly within an art historical frame, on the basis of their design, aesthetics, manufacturing techniques, skills expertise, and occasionally their monetary value.

A better understanding of the diversity of values that are attributed to these treasured threads has the potential to impact on future conservation and management policies as more churches and religious communities amalgamate or close and their fragile and vulnerable textile heritage moves into new and different contexts. This research therefore contributes to our knowledge of the distinctive entanglements between people and textiles that will help shape future discourses of heritage value and management policy in the Australian context.

Authorship

Except where clearly acknowledged in footnotes, quotations and the bibliography, I certify that I am the sole author of the thesis submitted today entitled –

Treasured Threads:

Ecclesiastical textile collections as living heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia

I fully certify that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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A note about images

Research participants provided images in a number of formats including high and low resolution digital photograph files, original photographs, scanned images of original photographs and archive documents, printed images in Microsoft WORD documents, photocopies of original photographs and photocopies of archive documents. While some of the images are poor quality, and in several cases blurry, it was important to include them as supporting evidence for the points discussed and as potential identification tools for future researchers and managers of heritage ecclesiastical textiles.

Abbreviations

ACBC	Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
ACHS	Association of Critical Heritage Studies
AICCM	Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials
ASA	Australian Society of Archivists
AWM	Australian War Memorial
BCHC	Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission
CCI	Canadian Conservation Institute
DBK	Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (Bishops Conference of Germany)
FCJ	Faithful Companions of Jesus
GIRM	General Instruction of the Roman Missal
HACBS	Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society
ICOM	International Council of Museums
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
KDC	Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (Catholic Documentation Centre for the Netherlands)
MDHC	Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
NGV	National Gallery of Victoria
NLA	National Library of Australia
NNBC	New Norcia Benedictine Community
OSB	Order of St Benedict (The Benedictines)
RSJ	Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, RSJ (Religious Sisters of St Joseph).
SJ	Society of Jesus (The Jesuits)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Vatican II	Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965)

Terminology

The words church, Church, catholic, Catholic, Roman Catholic, and Christian are not synonymous. For the purposes of this thesis, I have contextualised these words as follows:

church (as in a church) – a building or place where Christian religious services are held. For example, a parish church or local church.

Church (as in The Church) – the institution of the Catholic Church.

catholic – all-embracing, general or universal, as in a catholic taste in music.

Catholic – pertaining to the Catholic Church. For example, Catholics are members of the Catholic Church.

Roman Catholic – a term used by those outside the Church and not a term used by the Catholic Church. The Church has called itself the Catholic Church since the first century (Whitehead, 1999). Therefore, this term does not appear in this thesis.

Christian – a follower of Jesus Christ or his teachings. Catholicism is a denomination within Christianity so all Catholics are Christian but not all Christians are Catholic. In the context of this thesis Christian is used in the general sense of a follower of Christ or a member of a Christian Church.

Vatican II – refers to the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, commonly known as the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Vatican II was the twenty first Ecumenical Council, the first was the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325. The Councils are named after the places where they were held.

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Chapter 1

Setting the scene

Ecclesiastical textiles are a significant and highly visible part of the material culture of the Catholic Church, one of the world's major religious cultural groups, yet research into the cultural significance and heritage value of such textiles, to owner communities and to the wider world outside the Church, is fragmentary at best and rarely represented in heritage studies literature. The concepts of cultural significance and heritage value underpin contemporary cultural heritage policies and management protocols, but to date, much 'Western' research into these concepts has focussed on the need to encompass, include and respect the deeply symbolic artefacts and customs of indigenous and marginalised groups. Research into the community and social values of Christian material heritage in general, and Catholic material heritage in particular, is a somewhat recent entrant to the field of heritage studies, where there has been a tendency to avoid focusing the lens of criticality onto official aspects of 'Western' culture. While Australia is geographically and temporally distant from most of the Catholic Church's 2000 year history, it is nevertheless home to richly diverse collections of ecclesiastical artefacts. Textiles with connections to the iconoclasm of the Protestant Reformation, the atrocities of the French Revolution and the struggles of the *Kulturkampf* of Bismarck's Germany sit quietly in Catholic religious communities of rural New South Wales. Tasmania is home to a largely unknown and unrecognised legacy of ecclesiastical textiles designed by leading Neo-Gothic Revival architect Augustus Pugin (Andrews, 2002). In a Western Australian abbey a fragile seventeenth-century devotional banner from royal embroidery workshops of Spain shares space with a late eighteenth-century bishop's cope and a mid-nineteenth-century pretiosa mitre from Northern Italy (MacLeod & Car, 2016). A chasuble that reputedly belonged to Napoleon Bonaparte's uncle, Cardinal Joseph Fesch, currently resides in a parish church in Sydney.

Vesture and other textiles stored in diocesan archives, parish churches and secular art galleries and museums trace the history of aesthetic design and exemplify traditions of once common but now rarely seen textile arts and crafts. These *treasured threads* are indicative of a cultural legacy deeply valued and cared for by local communities of the Catholic Church in

Australia – a part of Australia's cultural landscape that is largely untrodden by today's heritage professionals and scholars of the textile arts.

1.1 Background

UNESCO defines cultural heritage as

... the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. (UNESCO, n.d.)

In essence, heritage is that which is valued, and collections of heritage items are thus considered worthy of preservation as a legacy for the future. From the exotica of Renaissance cabinets of curiosities (Blom, 2002) and art amassed on the Grand Tour, to the ethnographic collections and archaeological artefacts that formed the foundations of great nineteenth-century public museums such as the British Museum and the Natural History Museum in London (West & Ansell, 2010) material heritage has been valued and hence collected for centuries. Chapter 3.1 explores in more detail the theoretical framework in which the concepts of cultural significance and heritage values are framed and analysed. The growth and development of the concepts of heritage values and significance is discussed against a background of changing definitions of heritage and the influence of more recent concepts such as person/object relationships, entanglement, intangible heritage, living heritage, and the role and voice of owner communities in cultural heritage management.

1.2 Entanglement

Artefacts are increasingly recognised as having a cultural context separate from, yet related to, their material forms. Objects may embody cultural beliefs and values that exist in their primary cultural context but take on new values when that context changes (Alexopoulos, 2013; Matero, 2000). The tangible and intangible are now recognised as inextricably linked through relationships that develop between communities, artefacts, cultural practices and cultural landscapes (Hodder, 2012; Olsen, 2010). Chapter 3.2 examines in greater detail the notion that people and objects are entangled in webs of cultural meaning, practice and performance. People create objects, and in their enduring materiality, objects have agency

and vibrancy which in turn exert influence and power in social worlds. Objects and artefacts exist as material entities but they also have cultural lives and act as signs and symbols which are recognised and understood by their owner communities that are often unknown to outsiders. This ‘insider knowledge’ defines primary relationships between people and objects and underpins concepts of cultural significance and heritage value. However, the cultural significance and heritage value of artefacts is not confined to ‘insiders’ – the communities who make and use such objects. “Outsiders”, such as collectors and purchasers of cultural artefacts, museum staff, researchers, and heritage professionals, may recognise or impose very different values and build very different relationships with things. It is not surprising therefore, that with multiple interest groups and possibly incompatible value systems, the potential exists for values conflict, misunderstanding and contestation. This multiplicity of values systems underpins the concept of cultural dissonance, where the differing values of multiple stakeholders can lead to discord and/or conflict (Wallace, 2009). The existence of such ‘values conflict’ has been a key focus for research in the field of indigenous cultural heritage, particularly where community emphasis on meaning and use confronts ‘official’ national and international heritage policies, with their emphasis on tangible materiality (Bouchenaki, 2003). The concept of dissonance is explored further in Chapter 3.2.1. Even though heritage professionals in the late twentieth-century and early twenty first century increasingly recognise the complex interconnections of tangible materiality and intangible cultural values, and the entanglement of people and artefacts, research attention has largely been on non-Western, non-Christian cultures. At the turn of the twentieth century, the editors of the Catholic Encyclopedia noted that:

No one who is interested in human history, past and present, can ignore the Catholic Church, either as an institution which has been the central figure in the civilized world for nearly two thousand years, decisively affecting its destinies, religious, literary, scientific, social and political, or as an existing power whose influence and activity extend to every part of the globe. (The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1912, preface).

While the high art material legacy of the Church may dominate understandings of European and colonial heritage, the *community* significance of the material heritage of the Catholic Church remains an under-researched trove of treasured cultural artefacts deeply entangled with personal experiences, community memory and hidden hermeneutic codes.

1.3 Ecclesiastical textiles

Inventories and surveys of Catholic ecclesiastical heritage indicate that a surprising amount of the moveable heritage of a church is in the form of textiles (Lugtigheid, 2005a). In addition to the distinctive vesture of the Catholic clergy, ecclesiastical textiles include paraments such as altar cloths, altar linen and decorative frontals for pulpits and lecterns (Roulin, 1931). Churches are also adorned with textile wall hangings and devotional banners (Anson, 1965; O'Brien, 1992; Roulin, 1931). Ecclesiastical textiles are historical, cultural documents of complex symbolism and deep spiritual significance. They combine the tangible materiality of fibres, decorative elements and form with the intangible elements of function, hermeneutics and cultural practice. Since medieval times the functions of these textiles have remained largely unaltered; their design and decoration, however, reflect the cultural, social and political contexts of the times of their manufacture and use (Corthell, Dolan, Highley, & Marotti, 2007; Dean, 1981; Johnstone, 2002; Mayer-Thurman, 1975).

Before moving into the body of the research and its findings in chapters 5 and 6, chapter 2 provides detailed background on the forms and functions of ecclesiastical textiles, primarily within their owner communities. Two thousand years of continuous use is discussed against a background of internal and external changes wrought by liturgical reforms and renewal, the whims of fashion, and the changing status and roles of the Catholic Church embedded in a dynamic and often hostile secular world. The development of ecclesiastical garb over the last 900 years is illustrated by a detailed exploration of the cassock and chasuble, arguably the most recognised of the ecclesiastical garments of the Catholic Church.

1.3.1 Ecclesiastical textiles as heritage

Ecclesiastical textiles of the Catholic Church are tangible parts of the material world overlaid with centuries of intangible religious and spiritual significance and constitute an important component of the living cultural heritage of the Catholic Church. As living heritage, ecclesiastical textiles are not static artefacts stuck in a particular era. They accumulate a biography and social history as they are entangled in community life. The architectural textiles that define sacred spaces, the vesture that defines sacred ritual and identifies ministerial office, and the devotional items which act as a focus for prayer reflect the internal spiritual and liturgical values of the Church and the external secular political, social and aesthetic influences of their times. However, as my research shows, ecclesiastical textiles

also possess a fine-grained local significance to their own communities. Despite *visible* changes wrought by outside political events, internal power struggles, prevailing fashion, and debates on correct or authentic vestments, today's Catholic rites, rituals, ceremonies, protocols and vesture are a continuation of millennia-old traditions. The forms and functions of vestments can be traced in an unbroken line from the everyday clothes of early Christians (Braun, 1907; Johnstone, 2002).

Despite twenty centuries of continuous existence and witness to a legion of major historical events, the Catholic Church's textile legacy remains largely undocumented and little understood in the field of heritage studies. However, this situation is changing. Heritage value and significance is an expanding area of interest which offers researchers new opportunities to investigate Christian material heritage, particularly in Europe where many state museums have taken over the custodianship of historical religious collections (Anlezark, 2010; Defoer, 2000; Kuchenmeister & Littrell, 1988; Suominen-Kokkonen, 2016; Teryukova, 2014). Chapter 7 examines the care and curation or management of the important but fragile cultural legacy embodied in the little known ecclesiastical textiles collections in Australia. Some of the challenges faced by the custodians of ecclesiastical textile collections housed within their original owner communities mirror those of professional museum and archives staff. The inherent vice of the materials traditionally used for ecclesiastical textiles is well understood and management protocols are largely in place. But it is the care and concern for the intangible spiritual meanings, liturgical practices and personal and community memories woven into the textiles that distinguish these collections from the management objectives of their secular counterparts. Custodians express their concern about how these values are most at risk of being lost, especially if, and when, ecclesiastical textiles move from their religious landscapes into secular surrounds.

1.3.2 Ecclesiastical textiles in Australia

The history of the Catholic Church in Australia is well documented with the major influences on colonial Catholic practices being Benedictine monastics from England and diocesan priests from Ireland (Byrne, 1896; Dowd, 2008; Southerwood, 1993; Waldersee, 1974). The history of ecclesiastical textiles in Australia, however, is less well documented. Chapter 4 introduces the textile collections selected for study and discusses methods used to survey the collections and analyse the values attributed to these collections by their custodian

communities. Institution ‘biographies’ provide an historical background and cultural context for each of the collections which feature in this research.

More recently, documentary evidence of vestments in Australia has been largely confined to opening addresses and catalogues for local exhibitions of historic vestments, and opinion pieces in the local press (Australia Day at St Mary’s, 2011; E. Harrington, 2007; Marchant, 2008; Rogan, 1998). Interestingly these ‘non-academic’ commentaries occasionally provide insight into the place of ecclesiastical textiles in Catholic community life. Such fragments of information hint at an important cultural legacy of treasured threads unrecognised yet hidden ‘in plain sight’. Chapter 5, the first of three chapters which present and discuss the key findings of this research, analyses the nature of the collections surveyed for this research and the history and cultural context of the textiles found in each collection. The threads leading to the locations, composition and scope, source or provenance, and history of the selected collections weave a picture of a large and diverse ecclesiastical textile legacy little known outside of their own religious communities.

Chapter 6 discusses the values and cultural significance attributed to ecclesiastical textiles by their custodian communities. While the cultural legacy and history of each collection is unique to its owner community, several distinctive themes of cultural value emerge from an analysis of the collection surveys and stakeholder interviews, along with a tangle of threads of significance that characterise each collection. This analysis reveals that textiles embody aspects of cultural identity, community relationships and personal memory, that they carry memories of historically important individuals, events and identities as well as the close bonds of religious and lay community members, and that they stand for liturgical practices and spiritual meanings through their functions, and the beauty and aesthetics of their forms. These themes emerge from some of the poignant and unexpected stories of a cultural legacy touched by personal connections as well as local, national, international and global events. The trade catalogues for church requisites that chart the aesthetics of vesture from the mid-nineteenth century onwards cannot inform us about the cultural significance of the textiles sold to parishes and religious communities across Australia (Gille, c1885; Pellegrini, c1930). Newspapers, particularly those published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, occasionally refer to the vestments made in their local communities. It is, however, anecdotal evidence, including personal reminiscences from members of religious communities and

family stories recorded by archivists working in religious institutions, that offers glimpses of the deep personal attachments to many ecclesiastical textiles.

1.4 Research Questions

Recent research by staff at the Melbourne Diocesan Heritage Commission into the origins of Melbourne's first vestments, throws doubt on a story recounted by Richard Divall (1996) in an address at the opening of an exhibition of religious vestments by the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria¹. Divall described the manufacture and community significance of the vestments worn by the priest at the first Mass celebrated in Melbourne in 1839:

...Here scraps – pieces of velvet and probably cloth from a wedding dress have been used, with simple every day braid appliqued. Handmade, embroidered with devotion by the local ladies and now one of our most treasured historical possessions. (Divall, 1996, p. 497)

This comment is a reminder of how stories are woven into the fabric of significant objects and how they can come to embody values that take on a life of their own. The perpetuation of half-remembered, romantic and sometimes erroneous stories such as those attached to Melbourne's first vestments highlights the need for more collaborative and nuanced research into both history and values; research informed by primary informants before those memories are lost to time. This thesis begins the journey to discover the stories and community significance behind the textile legacy of a long-established Western Christian cultural group. My research questions, therefore, focus on how and why Catholic ecclesiastical textiles are valued as 'heritage' in an Australian context, and how this cultural significance or value shapes the manner in which the textiles are cared for and preserved. As religious artefacts move from their original owner communities into new contexts their cultural significance and values change. My secondary questions therefore focus on the place of ecclesiastical textiles in a global and largely secular cultural landscape and the different, sometimes conflicting, values placed on the same objects by groups with differing heritage agendas (Kite, 2005; MacLeod & Car, 2014c; Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, 2014; Paine, 2013; Roque, 2011). Taken together, my research questions will investigate the multiplicity of cultural

¹ The exhibition was entitled "Embroidered Textiles and the Sacred: An exhibition by the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria" and was open from July 17 to July 19, 1996.

significance and heritage values of a group of religious artefacts that heritage and museum professionals have traditionally regarded more as ‘high art’ than living cultural heritage.

1.5 Methodology

Ecclesiastical textiles have been the focus of research in a diverse range of disciplines with their own established methodologies. Research methodologies and methods employed in critical heritage studies, a field of study well-suited to research into cultural significance and heritage values are ideally suited to this research. It is sufficient at this stage to note that heritage studies, as a multi and interdisciplinary field of study, tends to borrow methods and approaches from a range of disciplines such as material culture studies, archaeology, and ethnography. Methods employed by researchers in the field of heritage studies and related areas are discussed in more detail in chapter 3.3. At this stage it is suffice to say that the materiality of Christian artefacts parallels the materiality of secular objects, so methods such as visual inspection and quantitative measurement employed by archaeologists and scientists are an appropriate choice to investigate the physical attributes of ecclesiastical textiles (MacLeod & Car, 2016). The case study has long been a favoured approach for anthropologists and ethnographers describing the people, practices and values of a particular cultural group. (Madden, 2010). Methods such as object biographies and the investigation of artefacts in context add further depth to understandings of the cultural significance of the ecclesiastical textiles in the study (Burström, 2014; Caple, 2006a; Dannehl, 2009; Prown, 1982). As in other fields of research that have focussed on the entanglement of person and object, much “cultural” research analyses historically significant archaeological or secular artefacts (Caple, 2006b; Jervis, 2011; Lydon & Ireland, 2005) and indigenous artefacts or non-western, non-Christian religious artefacts (Clavir, 2002; Matero, 2000).

1.6 Ecclesiastical textiles in past research

Ecclesiastical textiles have been the subject of wide research outside the context of Catholic religious practice. Writers in fields as diverse as archaeology, anthropology and ethnography, history, art and design, sociology and psychology, gender studies and politics, material culture, popular culture, and heritage conservation and museology, have used ecclesiastical textiles, and vestments in particular, as a focus for their research. The scientific

analysis of the materials that make up ecclesiastical textiles has featured in textile conservation literature over many years and there has been substantial research on the challenges of conserving ecclesiastical textiles. Historians, sociologists, psychologists and writers in the field of women's studies have touched on ecclesiastical textiles in a range of works focussing on the roles of women in the Catholic Church, and how textiles frame identity and contribute to the social and spiritual lives of communities. Within the Church, scholars have discussed the place of textiles in the history and cultural practices of the Catholic faith. While each of these fields of study offers its own perspective and highlights different values, there is little published on the significance and cultural values placed on Catholic ecclesiastical textiles by 'owner' communities.

1.7 Scope of the research

Ecclesiastical textiles are ideal focus objects for investigating the tangible, the intangible and the entangled within the material culture of a major cultural group from within the realms of Western culture. As stated earlier, ecclesiastical textiles combine traditional forms and styles outwardly influenced by centuries of secular fashion but with an internal, unbroken tradition of religious rites and traditional practices and a deeply significant hermeneutic system of signs and symbols. Textiles figure prominently in many facets of the life of the Catholic Church – in liturgies and religious ceremonies, in processions and civic celebrations, in daily religious life and in daily parish life through contributions from the faithful, as community identifiers and as focus objects for private and public devotions. With such a wide range of functions, it is reasonable to assume that every 'working' church and religious community maintains a collection of ecclesiastical textiles, and many collections would include textiles treasured for their historic values and their personal and community connections. This research project investigates the scope, provenance, community significance and cultural value of ecclesiastical textiles from a range of Catholic cultural contexts including churches, religious communities and church archives. While the majority of Catholic ecclesiastical textiles remain with their original owners and retain their original functions, a small number are held in secular environments as artistic objects. This research seeks to understand how this context shapes the way these collections are managed and cared for and how their cultural significance is understood and articulated by their custodians.

Chapter 8 reviews the research findings regarding the cultural significance and heritage values of ecclesiastical textiles held in a variety of cultural settings in Australia. It draws together the key findings of this research concerning how values are attributed to religious textiles by custodian communities, how heritage values may be interpreted differently in secular collection contexts, and what we can more broadly learn about the cultural heritage of Catholic communities when it is approached as a living cultural heritage, kept alive by communities of faith.

Chapter 2

Ecclesiastical textiles.

Inventories and surveys of Catholic ecclesiastical heritage indicate that a surprising amount of the moveable heritage in a church is in the form of ecclesiastical textiles (Lugtigheid, 2005a). *Ecclesiastical* is defined as belonging to or connected with the Christian religion or relating to the Christian Church or its clergy or suitable for use in a church. Ecclesiastical textiles, therefore, could be considered to be textiles belonging to a Christian church, used in a Christian church, or worn or used by members of a Christian church or community. The forms, functions, and significance of ecclesiastical textiles within the Catholic Church have remained largely unaltered for the last thousand years (Braun, 1912; Norris, 1950). However, the styles and decoration of ecclesiastical textiles reflect the cultural, social and political trends of the times of their manufacture and use.

Textiles play several important roles in the ecclesiastical life and setting of the Catholic Church and have done so since the time of the early Church. The distinctive garments worn by the clergy and members of religious communities in medieval times are still in use today, albeit with minor changes in design and decoration (Johnstone, 2002; Mayer-Thurman, 1975). Special linens and other textiles are still used during the celebration of certain liturgies (Roberts, 2015), altars are covered with fine cloths and ambos adorned with decorative coverings. Sacred spaces within churches, chapels and cathedrals have been delineated with curtains and walls hung with liturgical and devotional banners (Anson, 1965; Haas, 2007; O'Brien, 1992). Ecclesiastical textiles of the Catholic Church can be categorised as (a) clothing, including liturgical vestments and non-liturgical garments, (b) textiles associated with rites and rituals, including textiles used in liturgies and the paraments such as frontals, wall hangings and devotional banners that define and decorate liturgical spaces, and (c) textiles associated with the laity, including uniforms and regalia of societies and sodalities, and focus items for personal devotion.

The colours and motifs decorating ecclesiastical textiles are dense with meaning. Each monogram, floral motif, and colour is a symbol or sign which can be read and understood by

members of the community. Many symbols derive from Biblical stories and others have been borrowed from Pre-Christian traditions, local legends and even folk tales. Flora and fauna, numbers, shapes and letters contribute to the rich symbolism found in Catholic churches and rites (Hulme, 1892; Taylor, 2003; Van Parys, 2013). Popular tradition has it that such symbols are “...the picture book of the illiterate...” but such symbols can only be ‘read’ if the reader knows the code (Taylor, 2003, p. 10). The long oral tradition of preaching meant that members of the Catholic faith, literate and illiterate, could recognise the symbols and understand the message.

In churches following the Roman Rite², the five liturgical colours – red, white, green, violet and black – remained unchanged from the Council of Trent summoned by Pope Pius V in the mid-sixteenth century until the 1970s. Regulation 346 of the current General Instructions for the Roman Missal (GIRM) reaffirms and retains the traditional use of liturgical colours, with only minor changes regarding the use of black. The use and symbolism of colour is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 and Appendix 1.

2.1 Ecclesiastical clothing

Ecclesiastical clothing worn by Catholic clergy can be broadly classified into two main types, liturgical vesture and non-liturgical garments. Liturgical vesture includes the *vestes sacrae*, or sacred vestments worn by the clergy for the celebration of the liturgy of the Mass and items such as copes worn during other rites and ceremonies. Non-liturgical garments are those worn on non-liturgical occasions and include formal choir dress and informal everyday dress, for example the distinctive soutane or cassock worn by all ranks of the clergy. Other categories of non-liturgical dress include the distinctive habits of monks and religious sisters and the garments worn by lay ministers. Little known outside the Church are the regalia and ceremonial dress of lay organisations, sodalities and Orders of Papal Knights. Examples from all of these categories are found in the heritage textile collections cared for by the Catholic communities in Australia.

² “... The Roman Rite is the manner of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, administering Sacraments, reciting the Divine Office, and performing other ecclesiastical functions (blessings, all kinds of Sacramentals, etc.) as used in the city and Diocese of Rome. The Roman Rite is used by everyone who is subject to the pope's patriarchal jurisdiction. ...” (Fortescue, 1912c) The Eastern or Orthodox Churches have their own rites.

What constitutes correct and acceptable ecclesiastical dress and clerical attire is, and always has been, prescribed by Catholic Canon Law and Church regulations. There are guidelines, instructions and rubrics for what can be worn, when it can be worn and by whom it can be worn. Ecclesiastical garments are, therefore, significant cultural community identifiers. Interestingly, particular garments have an additional level of cultural significance as they are embodiments of a hermeneutic tradition of signs and symbols that has existed for centuries. James Noonan Jr. set out to provide a detailed description and history of currently approved vesture and insignia, including liturgical and non-liturgical garments, in his monumental work, *The Church Visible*, published in 2012. While Noonan's book has been criticised by some³, it remains one of the few books on the vesture and protocol of the Catholic Church published post-Vatican II. One of the earliest publications dealing with vesture is a thirteenth-century compilation of earlier works entitled *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* by William Durandus (c1280), Bishop of Mende. Durandus devotes an entire book of his eight book opus to the vestments, their origins, and their hermeneutic or mystic meanings: this work held sway until the sixteenth century. The much-cited definitive study of pre-Vatican II vestments, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient : nach Ursprung und Entwicklung, Verwendung und Symbolik*, published in 1906 by Joseph Braun S.J. has yet to be fully translated into English. In recent years many nineteenth and early twentieth-century reference books on vesture, no longer in print and difficult to locate, have been digitised and made accessible via the Internet. For example, *The Mass and Vesture of the Catholic Church* by Monsignor John Walsh (1916), *Costume of prelates of the Catholic Church, according to Roman etiquette* by John Nainfa (1926) and *Linges, Insignes et Vêtements liturgiques (Vestments and vesture: a manual of liturgical art)* by Dom Eugene Roulin OSB (1930) provide useful summaries of vesture contemporary to their publication. The works of Walsh, Nainfa and Roulin carry an official *Imprimatur* and *Nihil Obstat* granted by the Vatican. The terms *nihil obstat* (translation – *nothing stands in the way*) and *imprimatur* (translation – *let it be printed*) indicate that the text contains nothing contrary to the faith or morals of the church and has received an official Vatican authority for publication⁴ (Hilgers, 1908). Taken chronologically, these and similar literary works track over 800 years of changes to liturgical and clerical clothing.

³ Noonan's book has been criticised for "...its biases, its acceptance of any and all contemporary Roman practices, and an overuse of Italian names for items of clerical dress." (Shetler, n.d.) "...This book is not, as the publisher claims in an overly exuberant dust-jacket encomium, 'the ideal complement to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. ... at times, [Noonan] slips into a didactic mode that will irritate some readers while doubtless heartening others as an example of good old-fashioned clericalism' ..." (Weigel 1996)

⁴ Articles #830 and #832 of the Code of Canon Law deal with publication of books.

2.1.1 Liturgical dress

Liturgical dress is reserved for the celebration of the rites and liturgies of the Catholic Church. Liturgy, as a general term, can be defined as the official, public worship of the Church as distinct from private devotions (Fortescue, 1910). Article #837 of the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church formalises the definition of liturgies or liturgical actions:

... Liturgical actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself which is the sacrament of unity, that is, a holy people gathered and ordered under the bishops. Liturgical actions therefore belong to the whole body of the Church and manifest and affect it; they touch its individual members in different ways, however, according to the diversity of orders, functions, and actual participation⁵. (Code of Canon Law, article 837)

Therefore, liturgies are the public community rites of worship of the Catholic Church, rather than the individual private devotions of its members. Celebrations that fall under this definition include the Sacraments – Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. Other liturgies include the Mass for the Dead said at funerals, the Liturgy of the Word (with or without Holy Communion), the Liturgy of the Hours (usually celebrated as morning or evening prayer), and Benediction. The central rite of the Catholic Church is the Holy Mass, described in article 56 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Vatican II document on the reform of the liturgy, as ...

... made up of the two parts, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These two parts are so closely interconnected that they form but one [liturgy]. (Pope Paul VI, 1963)

The vesture for each liturgy is dictated by strict protocol, with each liturgy assigned its own combination of garments and associated textiles, with colour and decorative motifs determined by its place within the Church's liturgical calendar. The Church's liturgical calendar is divided into liturgical seasons, with each season characterised by specific prayers, scripture readings and symbolic colours and motifs. There is a three year cycle of scripture readings for the Sunday Mass and particular prayers and readings for weekday Masses. The current rubrics for the celebration of the Holy Mass were promulgated by Pope Paul VI in the

⁵ Code of Canon Law: Book IV Function of the Church (Cann. 834 - 848)

document originally published in Latin as *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* in 1969. This document, known in English as The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), sets out the rules and regulation that govern every facet, including vesture, of the celebration of the Roman Rite of the Mass. The preamble of this official document, which grew out of discussions at Vatican II, outlines the historical nature of the rite, re-affirms its origins in the promulgations of Pope Pius V at the sixteenth-century Ecumenical Council of Trent, and seeks to justify its adaptation to the modern world.

... when the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the dogmatic pronouncements of the Council of Trent, they spoke at a far different time in world history, so that they were able to bring forward proposals and measures of a pastoral nature that could not have even been foreseen four centuries earlier. (Australian Bishops Conference, 2007, p. 4)

While some medieval writers such as Bishop William Durandus (c1280) maintained a biblical origin for vestments, most writers, and the Vatican, acknowledge that the vestments used in liturgical celebrations derive from ancient Greek and Roman secular clothing: its forms being finally ‘fixed’ by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The dress code currently authorised by the Vatican references the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), a major document arising out of The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), and solemnly promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963 (Paul VI, 1963). In the years after Vatican II minor changes and clarifications to the vesture rubrics have been made. For example, in 1968 Pope Paul VI issued a *motu proprio* (Apostolic Letter) restricting the use of pontifical insignia to certain groups of bishops and prelates (Pope Paul VI, 1968). In the following year an *instructio* (Instruction) was issued through the Vatican Secretariat of State describing the forms of dress of the secular clergy of the Catholic Church (A. G. C. Cicognani, 1969). This instruction, known as *Ut sive sollicite*⁶, abolished certain garments previously worn by bishops and simplified the design of others. In 1970 the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy issued a circular letter outlining reforms to choir dress (Wright, 1971). Further refinements were published in *Ceremonial Episcoporum*

⁶ *Ut sive sollicite* translates as *How carefully*. While this may seem an unusual title for a Vatican document, it arises from the convention of referring to such documents by their opening words. Vatican documents are traditionally published in Latin and the first phrase of this letter is *Ut sive sollicite suum munus tueretur universae vigilandi Ecclesiae*, which translates as *So that he might carefully fulfil his duty of keeping watch over the universal Church*. The title of the letter is *Circa vestes, titulos et insignia generis Cardinalium, Episcoporum et Praelatorum ordine minorum* which translates as *On the dress, titles, and coats-of-arms of Cardinals, Bishops, and lesser Prelates*.

(Ceremonial of Bishops) issued by the Congregation of Divine Worship in 1984 and clarification of the long-running debate surrounding the wearing of pre-Vatican II ‘Roman-style’ vestments was addressed in the Apostolic Letter, *Summorum Pontificum*,⁷ by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007. Despite assurances and clarification from the highest levels of the Church hierarchy the vesture debate between ‘traditionalists’ and ‘modernists’ sparked by the liturgical reforms of Vatican II still rages fifty years on (see Chapter 6).

The Vestes sacrae

The garments that traditionally made up the *vestes sacrae* are the most sacred of the liturgical vestments. They are worn by the priest celebrant for the celebration of the Holy Mass and comprise the amice, alb, cincture, stole, and chasuble⁸. An officiating deacon wears the alb, stole and dalmatic. A brief discussion of the chasuble and alb follows and further information on the dalmatic, stole, amice and cincture can be found in the Glossary.

The Chasuble

The most distinctive and recognisable of the *vestes sacrae* is the chasuble. The chasuble is a loose open sided-garment worn over an alb, a floor-length white linen or cotton robe with long sleeves. The chasuble grew out of the Graeco-Roman paenula or casula, a conical-shaped poncho-like cloak worn by peasant workers as protection against the weather (Johnstone, 2002). Over time this simple garment took on greater liturgical significance, and by the ninth century it was restricted to priests. In the Middle Ages vestments themselves acquired mystic religious meanings, becoming symbols and sacred objects in their own right. The chasuble is blessed by the bishop at the ordination of a priest with the words “... ‘Receive the priestly vestment, by which is signified charity.’...” (Thurston, 1908). As an object that has been blessed, the chasuble is considered to be a *sacramental*. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (Part 2, Section 2, Chapter 4, Article 1) defines and explains sacramentals and blessings –

⁷ The letter begins *Summorum Pontificum cura ad hoc tempus usque semper fuit* which translates as *Up to our own times, it has been the constant concern of Supreme Pontiffs*.

⁸ Current vesture rubrics do not include the maniple, a decorative length of cloth draped around the wrist. The maniple was set aside as one of the *vestes sacrae* in the document entitled *Tres Abhinc Annos (Three years ago)*: The Second Instruction on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Liturgy, issued on May 4, 1967 by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Section VII, part 25 reads “...The maniple is no longer required.”

... 1677 Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life.

... 1672 Certain blessings have a lasting importance because they consecrate persons to God, or reserve objects and places for liturgical use. ... The dedication or blessing of a church or an altar, the blessing of holy oils, vessels, and vestments, bells, etc., can be mentioned as examples of blessings that concern objects.

It is important to note that the blessing is lost when the chasuble, or other object, is worn out, much repaired or altered in form so that it can no longer perform its liturgical function (Braun, 1912). The conical shape of the medieval chasuble changed over time in response to changes to the liturgy of the Mass. In its various forms the chasuble's shape has been described as conical, semi-conical, Borromean, pendant, 'flat-back' 'fiddle-back', Roman, Gothic revival, Gothic and semi-Gothic (Sternbeck, 2008). The decoration of the chasuble with its particular colours and motifs is traditionally associated with specific events and times in the annual cycle of religious observances for the Catholic Church. For example, red is associated with, amongst others, the Holy Spirit. The dove, a traditional symbol of the Holy Spirit, is a common motif on red vestments worn at Pentecost, the major feast commemorating the Holy Spirit. A red chasuble featuring the dove motif is in the textile collection in the Diocese of Bathurst Archives (figure 2).



Figure 2: Dove motif from Pentecost chasuble, mid-twentieth century.
(Image by author, 2016).

Vestment makers often combine a range of motifs to send a message. For example, a purple chasuble worn during Lent combines thorns, bulrushes, and the instruments of Christ's Passion to remind the congregation of the suffering and death of Christ that atoned for the sins of "mankind" and will bring about their redemption (figure 3).



Figure 3: Bull rushes and thorns motif from a Lenten chasuble, mid-twentieth century.
(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission).

The purple represents sorrow and penitence, the thorns are Earthly suffering and the bulrushes symbolise God's power to nurture and save (Taylor, 2003). A similar design on a black vestment in the Diocese of Sale Archives would have been worn on Good Friday, black being symbolic of death. The meanings of a selection of motifs featured on vestments from the surveyed collections are discussed in Chapter 6 and Appendix I.

The Alb

The alb is an ankle length white robe with long sleeves and high neck, and is cut full enough to fit comfortably over the cassock. It has been worn since the ninth century by all clerics and ordained ministers, including deacons and acolytes, when celebrating liturgies. The alb derives from the plain white robe worn by early Roman citizens and, unlike the chasuble, retained its medieval form up until the late twentieth century. The few modern concessions to the design of an alb include the use of buttons, zips or snaps, in place of the traditional tape

ties, to close the neck. The fabrics of choice for albs have always been fine linen, wool or cotton blends; modern synthetic fabrics are a recent option (Noonan, 2012). Medieval albs were occasionally decorated with inserts of embroidery, called *apparels*, at the neck, wrists, and hem. The seventeenth century saw the introduction of deep lace hems – a fashion that persisted for the next 300 years (Johnstone, 2002) (figure 4). Modern albs are plain with perhaps a narrow band of simple white-work or drawn thread embroidery set into the lower edge.



Figure 4: Machine-made lace cuffs and hems typical of early twentieth century albs and rochets.
(Images by author, 2016 (left) and 2013(right))

With the simplification of the liturgies in the 1970s a number of liturgical garments regularly worn at liturgies other than the Holy Mass are seldom seen today. The most recognisable of these garments still in semi-regular use is the cope, with the surplice (or cotta) and the humeral veil making the occasional appearance.

The Cope

An old name for the cope was the *pluviale*, a reference to its origins in the same early Roman protective garment that became the chasuble (Walsh, 1916, p. 457). The conical chasuble and the cope were both made from semicircles of fabric. Whereas the conical chasuble was stitched closed down the front seam, the cope was open and resembled a cloak rather than a

poncho (figure 5). The distinctive stiffened and highly decorated panels attached to the shoulders of a cope are the remnants of the original hood. The elaborate, bejewelled metal or cloth clasp, the Morse, found on some episcopal copes no longer meets the vesture rubrics. A modern cope resembles a cloak and is closed at the neck by a simple fabric or plain metal clip (figure 5). Copers are ceremonial garments worn in solemn processions by clerics at all levels of the hierarchy; they are not worn by a celebrant for the Mass. The cope is worn over an alb and a stole.



Figure 5: Semi-circular cope, ca 1880 (left). Modern cloak-style cope, mid-twentieth century (right).

The semi-circular cope is closed by a morse, the cloak-style by a metal clip.

(Source: Catholic parish of Salisbury, South Australia, 2013 (right), used with permission. Image by author, 2016 (left))

Pontificals

Prior to the reforms of 1969 the *Pontificals* or episcopal vestments of prelates – bishops, cardinals and pope – included several items dating from earlier times. The number and type of ‘extras’ have changed over time but the rubrics operating at the beginning of the twentieth century list the pontificals worn by a bishop until the reforms of the 1950s and 60s as “... eight in number: buskins, sandals, gloves, dalmatic, tunicle, ring, pectoral cross, and mitre...” (Thurston, 1911) (figure 6). The dalmatic was the garment traditionally worn by a deacon and the tunicle by a subdeacon. A bishop wore these in addition to his priestly chasuble as a sign that he was servant of all in the Church. The rank of subdeacon no longer exists as it was abolished in 1972 (Pope Paul VI, 1972). The higher echelons of the hierarchy were

entitled to additional items. A series of photographs published in LIFE magazine in the 1950s shows twenty of the pontifical vestments worn by Pope Pius XII⁹. Today, all ordained ministers who celebrate the Mass, from the local parish priest to the pope, wear the same four garments – alb, cincture, stole and chasuble. Prelates retain the option of wearing a dalmatic under the chasuble when celebrating a Pontifical High Mass. Further information on pontificals appears in the Glossary.



Figure 6: Pontificals. Buskins (left) c1913; episcopal slippers, gauntlets (gloves) and stockings (right) mid twentieth century.

(Images by the author, 2013).

2.1.2 Non-liturgical dress

Non-liturgical dress includes the formal Choir dress and informal everyday dress of a cleric. Choir dress, including the once familiar cassocks, and their variants, is the clerical wear for priests, bishops, cardinals and the Pope when on pastoral duties, or when celebrating a liturgy that is not a Mass (Bailey, 2013). Everyday or daily dress is worn on informal occasions. Choir dress, unlike vestments, has been less influenced by prevailing fashion and the cassock, in particular, has survived for centuries relatively unchanged (Thurston, 1908). The number of non-liturgical garments recognised by Thurston in 1908 that remain in common use is much reduced. The simplification of non-liturgical dress accompanied the simplification of

⁹ The images of Pope Pius XII's pontificals can be viewed at <http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2008/11/spectacular-photographs-of-papal.html#.W7my1vZoS71>

the liturgies and liturgical vesture. Several of the garments seen in photographs of prelates pre-1960 were abolished and others simplified. In 1953 Pope Pius XII decreed that the train be removed from cassocks and tassels removed from the fascia, the traditional sash worn over the cassock. Post-Vatican II dress reforms saw minor changes to the rules governing choir dress (Cicognani, 1969). Several garments, for example the mantellone and mantelletta, were abolished while others, such as the rochet and mozetta, were made optional and, while remain in use, are seldom seen. These minor variations in style and design and changes to prevailing Church dress regulations can help in dating these garments. The cassock is arguably the most recognised of the non-liturgical garments and a brief discussion of its development and variants follows. A number of non-liturgical garments are described in more detail in the Glossary.

The cassock (soutane)

The cassock, *soutane* is the French name, is worn by all members of the clergy and even though it was traditionally worn under the alb it is not a liturgical garment. The cassock derives from medieval academic dress (Johnstone, 2002, p8) and developed over the next few centuries into the familiar garment long associated with the Catholic clergy. The *ordinary* cassock is worn by all levels of the hierarchy, while the *choir* cassock is worn by the prelature when in ‘choir’ or on formal occasions. The design, cut and trimmings of a cassock identify the rank and responsibilities of its wearer. For example, the Pope is the only prelate who wears a white cassock with a short shoulder cape, the *pellegrina*, attached to the collar, while the piping and buttons on the modern black cassock of a cardinal are red. Sarah Bailey, (2013) recounts the apparent story behind the caped cassock that was once a regular sight in the UK, Australia and New Zealand but rarely seen elsewhere.

... In 1850, the year in which he restored the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales, Pope Pius IX was understood to grant all priests in England and Wales the privilege of wearing a replica of his white caped cassock, but in black. (Bailey, 2013, pp. 12-13)

It would appear that the caped cassock seen in Australia and New Zealand arrived with early English priests. This is not the only time that a pope has granted the privilege of wearing a variant of the then current vesture. In 1888, Pope Leo XIII granted bishops the right to wear

a purple biretta¹⁰ – at that time a cardinal’s biretta was red and all other clerics wore black (Nainfa, 1925). Mid-twentieth-century dress reforms removed the train that was a distinguishing feature of a prelate’s choir cassock. Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne often wore a black top hat in place of his biretta (Griffin, 1986). A black suit has been an option for many decades as evidenced by early photographs of Australian clerics (figure 7).



Figure 7: Archbishop Stephens (far right) and Cardinal MacRory (second from right) being met by Archbishop Mannix (second from left), 1930.

Archbishop Mannix is wearing a full-length episcopal cloak over his caped cassock and a purple biretta. The piping and buttons on Archbishop Mannix’s cassock would be purple. Cardinal MacRory’s fascia (sash) would be red as would the piping and buttons on his caped cassock and tassels on his *capello romano* (Roman hat). Note the traditional silver buckles on Archbishop Mannix’s shoes. Archbishop Stephens and the un-named priest on the left are wearing black suits.

Image by Sam Hood (1930), original item no. DG ON4/1490. State Library of New South Wales, used with permission.

Formerly made in coloured cloth, red for cardinals and violet for bishops, all cassocks with the exception of the white papal cassock are, according to current rubrics, black. The “hierarchy” colours are however, retained in the wide sash or fascia and the piping along the

¹⁰ Letter of Pope Leo XIII. *Praeclaro divinae gratiae*, February 8, 1888. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* vol. XX (1887), p. 369.

edge and around the collar. The cassock traditionally closes with 33 buttons, one for each year of Christ's life on Earth. Religious habits serve a similar function to the cassock where the colour and cut of the habit identifies the Order, for example Benedictine monks wear a black habit as do the Jesuits, the habit worn by the Carmelites is brown, the Dominican habit is black and white, and the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor Conventual are sometimes referred to as Grey Friars from the colour of their habits.

2.3 Paraments

Ecclesiastical clothing is not the only type of ecclesiastical textile used in the Catholic Church. Often referred to as paraments, 'non-garment' textiles continue to play a part in liturgies, delineate sacred spaces within a church, adorn church walls and furnishings, and act as a focus for personal and community devotions.

2.3.1 Liturgical paraments

The Catholic Church mandates a wide range of textiles for the celebration of its liturgies. The most sacred of these *liturgical* textiles are the altar cloths which dress the altar and the altar linens employed for the celebration of the Holy Mass. As with all things liturgical, there are rubrics governing the size, shape and decoration of the altar cloths and altar linens. The altar is traditionally covered with three white linen cloths, and this has probably been the custom since the ninth century (Schulte, 1907a). A mid-twentieth-century guide to the correct use of altar linen reflects the preciseness of pre-Vatican II traditions –

... The upper cloth should cover the entire surface of the table of the altar, and at each end go down to the floor, but without touching it. The other two cloths (or one doubled ...) need cover only the whole altar table. ... It is permitted to ornament the front edge of the [top] cloth and the two ends with a border of linen lace ... the use of such ornamented cloths should be restricted to feast days. (Britt, 1949, p. 8-9)

An extensive examination and discussion of the history and significance of altar cloths is given in John O'Connell's seminal work *Church Building and Furnishing* (1956), the following extract summarises the symbolism embodied in altar cloths –

... Two ideas influenced the use of a cloth or cloths on the altar; the symbolism of the clothing of Christ, represented by the altar (later this was carried out chiefly by the frontal), and the symbolism of linen as a shroud for the Body of Christ. (O'Connell, 1956, p197)

The altar-linens are the corporal, pall, purificator, and finger-towel; all made in fine white linen and sometimes ornamented, in the case of the corporal and purificator, with a small red cross. Interestingly two of the textiles used on the altar also form part of a traditional set of vestments and are made in the same fabrics and decorated to match the chasuble, maniple and stole. The burse is a flat purse-like cover for the folded corporal and the chalice veil, as its name suggests, covers the sacred chalice and paten before and after the Mass is celebrated (figure 8 and Appendix II).



Figure 8: Hand-embroidered burse dated 1708.

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, Sydney, 2016, used with permission)

The *vested* chalice of pre-Vatican II rubrics comprised the chalice, covered by a folded purificator, the paten was then placed on top followed by a pall (a square of linen stiffened with card), the chalice veil was draped over the pall and the whole topped with the burse containing the folded corporal. With the simplification of the liturgies following Vatican II,

the burse and chalice veil are no longer mandated for the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite but are commonly in use at celebrations of the Extraordinary Form¹¹.

Many of the ceremonial textiles associated with liturgies and rites other than the Holy Mass are seldom seen today. Until the mid-twentieth century ceremonial processions were a regular part of Catholic Church celebrations on certain major feast days, such as the Feast of Corpus Christi or the Marian Processions held in May. The priest carried the Blessed Sacrament displayed in a monstrance and processed under a canopy. There are two types of canopy, the small, flat umbrella-like *ombrellino* and the larger rectangular *baldacchino* supported and carried on four, six or eight poles (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Umbrella adapted to an ombrellino, early twentieth century.
Hand-painted by the Sisters of St Joseph at Lochinvar.
(Image by the author, 2016)

An entry in the 1912 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia articulates the difference between the two canopy types and comments on the significance of the positions of the supporters:

... The ombrellino is used for carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick
and for conveying it from the altar to the baldacchino. The [baldachino] is

¹¹ The Ordinary Form is the current form of the Mass published post-Vatican II by Pope Paul VI in 1970 and re-published twice by Pope John Paul II. The Extraordinary Form is the *Tridentine* or Traditional Latin Mass, published in the 1962 Missal of Pope John XXIII. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007)

used for all public processions, when it is borne by nobles of the highest rank, the more worthy holding the foremost staves. (Morrisoe, 1908)

With the simplification of the liturgies came the simplification of textiles and much of what was once mandated is now consigned to storage. Without adequate records the cultural significance and meanings behind these ‘old’ liturgical textiles are in danger of being lost and the objects viewed more as curiosities of the past.

2.3.2 Hangings and banners

Churches have been decorated with hanging textiles for centuries. Curtains delineated sacred spaces, tapestries and embroideries recorded religious stories and historical events. Lecterns were draped with decorated cloths. An antependium (altar frontal) filled the space below the altar and while it shared the same religious symbolism as the altar cloths mentioned earlier, it had other functions:

... the frontal—with its sequence of colours and its changing form and decoration—lends variety and new beauty to the altar, and helps to mark the degrees of festivity in the Church's liturgy. In presenting an unbroken coloured surface it also draws attention to the altar, as the focal point of the church, giving it architectural prominence. (O’Connell, 1956 p194)

Devotional banners identify the local patron saint of the church or act as a focus for private and public devotions (figure 10), while seasonal liturgical banners remind the congregation of current events and celebrations.

Devotional banners

One of the most common devotional banners depicts the Sacred Heart of Jesus which first became a focus of private devotions in the eleventh century and a public devotion in the early seventeenth century. Finally, on June 11, 1899, by order of Leo XIII, and with the formula prescribed by him, all “mankind” was solemnly consecrated to the Sacred Heart (Bainvel, 1910). A Sacred Heart devotional banner typically depicts the figure of Christ overlaid with a representation of a pierced heart wreathed in thorns (figure 10, left). The heart, surmounted by a cross and flames, is surrounded by rays of light. Richard Taylor (2003) explains the iconography thus

... This is a devotional image, meaning that it is intended for use by the onlooker as an object of meditation and as a channel for worship. ... The intention in the image is to focus on Jesus' inner spirit, as opposed to, say, his words or his deeds. Above all, it is Jesus' love and his courage that are remembered in images of the Sacred Heart, with the rays or fire emphasizing the strength of his passion. (Taylor, 2003, p. 73)



Figure 10: Devotional banners made by the sisters at Sion Convent, Sale, Victoria, ca 1900.

The banners depict the Sacred Heart of Jesus (left) and Mary, Queen of Heaven (right).

(Images by the author, 2016)

Pope Pius XII reiterated the importance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart in his 1956 encyclical, *Haurietis Aquas (On Devotion to The Sacred Heart)*. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is paralleled in a popular devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Hardon, 1998). The iconography is similar but the heart of Mary is pierced with a sword and the encircling thorns may be replaced by roses. Pius XII linked the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary –

... In order that favors in greater abundance may flow on all Christians, nay, on the whole human race, from the devotion to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, let the faithful see to it that to this devotion the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of God is closely joined. For, by God's Will, in carrying out the work of human Redemption the Blessed Virgin Mary was inseparably linked with Christ in such a manner that our salvation sprang from the love and the sufferings of Jesus Christ to which the love and sorrows of His Mother were intimately united. (Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas*, 1956, paragraph 124)

On October 13, 2013, Pope Francis entrusted the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the latest in a series of consecrations and entrustments made in the name of Mary by Popes Pius XII and John Paul II (Lenartowick, 2017). It must be said that the devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus or the Immaculate Heart of Mary are not as common today but many churches will have a statue or painted depiction somewhere within the building.

Seasonal liturgical banners

The Catholic Church's liturgical year is divided into seasons. The Liturgical Seasons are Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost and Ordinary Time. The cycle of seasons is tracked by a changing liturgical colour scheme. As with vestments seasonal banners are assigned a liturgical colour which mirrors the colour scheme and motifs of the priest's vestments and matches the overall theme of the season. For example, a seasonal banner used during Lent would be purple and include symbols such as those in figure 2. Seasonal liturgical banners mark the progress of the Church's liturgical year, and unlike devotional banners, are regularly changed.

2.3 Textiles associated with the laity

There is a small group of textiles which, while not directly connected to the liturgical life of the Church, recognise the piety and devotion of the laity of the church. Members of many of the sodalities¹² and societies of the Catholic Church wear distinctive garments. For example, the blue cloaks worn by women of the Legion of Mary and the green collars and sashes of the men of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS) were once a common

¹² A sodality is a lay group within the Catholic Church associated with a particular devotion, for example the Legion of Mary, or charitable works, for example the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society.

site at local Church celebrations and ceremonial processions (figure 11). The significance of this group of textiles is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.



Figure 11: Green velvet embroidered collar of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society.

(Image by the author, 2016)

2.4 Historical development of ecclesiastical dress

While the spiritual functions of ecclesiastical garments within the Catholic Church have remained largely unaltered since the Middle Ages (Braun, 1912; Norris, 1950), design and decoration has changed. The myriad shapes and styles of ecclesiastical dress over the centuries reflect the cultural, social and political trends of the times of their manufacture and use (Johnstone, 2002; Mayer-Thurman, 1975). In fact, it is possible to estimate the date and place of manufacture of many ecclesiastical textiles from the Middle Ages onwards from the materials and techniques used in their manufacture and from their shapes, style and decoration. The noted early twentieth-century writer on ecclesiastical dress, Joseph Braun S.J. (1912), divided the development of priestly dress into four periods.

Period 1 – The Church before the reign of the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great

Period 2 – From Constantine the Great to Charlemagne, first Holy Roman Emperor.

Period 3 – The Dark Ages and Early Middle Ages

Period 4 – The thirteenth century to modern times

Braun was writing in the early twentieth century and writers up to the mid-twentieth century follow much the same sequence. While very little has been written about the development of vesture post-1960, the changes following Vatican II were particularly profound and a fifth period of vesture development should be added – Mid-Twentieth century, Vatican II and Beyond.

2.4.1 The Church before the reign of Constantine the Great

Most writers on ecclesiastical dress recognise that ecclesiastical dress developed from the everyday dress of the Graeco-Roman world. Braun contends that in the Early Church priestly dress did not differ greatly from secular dress. Prior to the fourth century bishops and deacons wore better quality versions of the tunic and mantle worn everyday by the general population. This may have been partly to protect early Christians in an era of religious persecution. Persecution ended in the early fourth century during the reign of Constantine the Great, when Christianity was made the state religion of the Roman Empire (Herbermann & Grupp, 1908). Liturgical insignia based on the pallium (a shawl or scarf-like garment) began to appear towards the end of the fourth century.

2.4.2 From Constantine to Charlemagne

The 400 years between the reign of the Emperor Constantine and the reign of Charlemagne, first Holy Roman Emperor, saw the gradual development of recognisable liturgical garments as vesture ceased to follow secular dress. Joseph Braun S.J., noted expert on liturgical dress, contends that

...the process of development which was completed in this period includes five essential elements: [1] definitive separation of the vestments worn at the liturgical offices from all non-liturgical clothing, and especially from that used in secular life; [2] separation and definitive settlement of certain articles of dress; [3] introduction of the *sacrales distinctiva*; [4] employment of the vestments definitively assigned for use at the Divine offices with

retention of the ordinary clothing under these vestments; [5] introduction of a special blessing for the vestments intended for liturgical use. (Braun, 1912)

Interestingly similar distinctions between liturgical, non-liturgical and secular dress remain in force to this day. Braun also notes that differences in dress between the Eastern and Western Churches were evident from this time, with the East acting as a prototype for the West. With the development of a separate priestly dress came the first garments specifically set aside for the celebration of the liturgies. In fact the pre-cursors of the chief vestments of current liturgical dress all date from this time. For example, the earliest chasuble, a voluminous conical-shaped garment resembling the modern cope sewn closed along the front edges, was based on the Roman *paenula*, a cloak-like garment covering the arms and generally reaching below the knees. Braun comments on the extreme simplicity and dignity of these early vestments – no specific ornamentation was employed save the customary red embroidered trim on the dalmatic.

2.4.3 The Dark Ages and Early Middle Ages

The development of Western European vestments was essentially completed during the Dark Ages and early part of the Middle Ages. Specific garments were assigned to particular levels of the Church hierarchy and to certain liturgies, for example the chasuble became the exclusive dress of the priest while celebrating a Mass and the pluvial (fore-runner of the cope) took its place at other functions (Braun 1909). By the eleventh century pontifical dress, the ecclesiastical dress of bishops, had increased in garment number and decoration as a reflection of the growing status of bishops within the power structures of Western Europe (Robson, 1990). Braun notes that the eleven pontifical vestments listed by Amalarius, a ninth-century liturgist and Bishop of Metz, in his treatise *De ecclesiasticis officiis* had grown to seventeen by the reign of Pope Innocent III in the thirteen century. Concurrent with the development of ecclesiastical vesture was a growing tension between the Eastern or Orthodox and the Western or Roman branches of the Christian Church, a tension which culminated in the Great Schism of 1054. The break between the Orthodox and Roman Churches continues to this day and is reflected in their very different vestures. From this time on liturgical vesture in the Western Church was strongly influenced by the growing power and authority of Rome. There has been little change in the vesture of the Eastern Church.

2.4.4 The thirteenth century to Modern Times

Braun contends that from the thirteenth century to modern times

... the history of the liturgical vestments is almost entirely the history of their rubrical evolution, their adornment with embroidery and ornamental trimmings, and the nature of the material from which they are made. ... In general the tendency in the fourth period has been towards greater richness of material and ornamentation, but, at the same time, towards greater convenience, therefore, a constantly increasing shortening and fitting to the figure of the vestments, naturally impairing the form and aesthetic effect of the vestments (Braun 1909).

The on-going development of the chasuble is a good example of the above assertion made by Braun. For example, the introduction of the *Elevation* to the Rite of the Roman Mass in the thirteenth century led to a major design change in the chasuble. The heavy folds in the ornate brocades popular during the late Middle Ages and constricting nature of the conical cut of the medieval chasuble made raising the arms difficult so the sides of the chasuble were slowly ‘clipped’ or cut away. The folds and bulk of the conical-shaped chasuble were gradually reduced until only the front and back panels remained, freeing the arms and making movement easier (Sternbeck, 2008). Eventually the graceful folds of the ‘original’ conical chasuble and its Gothic counterpart became the flat rigid panels characteristic of the so-called Roman or fiddle-back chasuble. The flat surfaces were an ideal platform for displays of status and power, and the use of brocades and embroidery, in silk, gold and silver threads, persisted for several centuries (Robson, 1990). Pauline Johnstone (2002), in her landmark work on the history of the decoration of ecclesiastical vestments, *High Fashion in the Church*, and Beryl Dean (1981) in her detailed guide to the making of ecclesiastical vesture, *Embroidery in Religion and Ceremonial*, track the political, social and religious changes that have influenced ecclesiastical decoration since the thirteenth century. Johnstone’s work in particular illustrates the characteristic designs and techniques which have assisted textile conservators and researchers to assign dates and locations of manufacture to a wide range of ecclesiastical textiles.

Medieval Symbolism

The basic forms and functions of ecclesiastical textiles were largely in place by the early 1200s, and a new dimension to the decoration of vesture was in its embryonic stages. One feature of medieval liturgical rites and vesture is symbolism. The significance and meaning of symbolism is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, what follows is a brief summary. Thurston (1912) traces the gradual development of liturgical symbolism from its origins in the eastern orientation¹³ of early Christian churches to the publication, ca 1280, of *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* by William Durandus, Bishop of Mende. Medieval liturgists attached mystic meaning to every garment, ritual gesture, liturgical object, and even the design and materials used to build a church. Modern authorities are agreed that in hardly any case has a vestment been adopted in the Church for mystical reasons (Thurston, 1912). Vesture may have developed for practical reasons, but Medieval vestments also exhibited a richness of material and design which reflects the increasing political status of the Church hierarchy (Robson, 1990). Decorative motifs exploited a visual language long understood by congregations. Johnstone notes the skill of medieval embroiderers in rendering narrative scenes from the Bible, the life of Christ, and the stories of saints and martyrs, reminiscent of the paintings found in contemporary illuminated manuscripts (Johnstone, 2002, pp. 41-42). A list of symbols and their meanings found on liturgical textiles in the surveyed collections and their meanings is in Appendix I.

The Renaissance and Reformation

The Renaissance ushered in a new approach to art and architecture, and its influences extended to the ornamentation of vestments. The stiff, flat surfaces of the ‘fiddle back’ chasuble were ideally suited to the new goldwork designs of scrolls, floriated frames and entwined ribbons inspired by the discovery and excavation of Ancient Roman sites (Johnstone, 2002, p. 79). Regional differences in Catholic Europe produced the short, almost pear-shaped *viola* chasuble characteristic of sixteenth-century Portugal, the elongated, narrow-shoulder A-shaped chasuble of seventeenth-century Spain and the square cut back commonly found in Italy and France. During the seventeenth century the richly embroidered figurative and narrative motifs of earlier centuries were replaced by simpler floral patterns. At the same time a backlash against the sumptuous display and excesses of the Catholic

¹³ Taylor, 2003, pp. 28-33, provides several explanations for the traditional east-west orientation of a church. Regardless of the actual geographic orientation of a church, the main entrance is called the West Door and the window behind the altar at the far end of the central nave is called the East Window.

Church hierarchy was fuelling the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe and England. The Calvinist churches of Germany and Scandinavia rejected vestments all together, while other protestant churches retained a simpler, modified vesture for a time. The Catholic Church was outlawed in England and its papist trappings largely destroyed. Catholic ecclesiastical vesture was not seen publically in Britain for nearly two and a half centuries. In 1545 Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent to address the threats posed by the rise of Protestantism.

... The Council's reforms clarified Catholic doctrine, ... and at the same time dealt with various practical matters, ... insisting on correct dress among [the clergy], ... Iconography was standardised. (Johnstone, 2002, p. 85)

The Council of Trent met many times over the next twenty years. In September 1562 Session XXII, under Pope Pius IV, considered reforms to the celebration of the Mass. It is interesting to note that the Catholic Church, unlike its Protestant contemporaries, did not discourage the wearing of vestments and the call for reform and constraint in this area was largely absent. It was felt "...that beauty in every part of the church paid homage to God ..."

(Johnstone, 2002, p86). While the Council of Trent made no rubric as to vesture, it was recognised that ceremonial, and its attendant display, plays an important part in liturgical practices. The Council justified its stand thus:

... And since the nature of man is such that he cannot without external means be raised easily to meditation on divine things, holy mother Church has instituted certain rites, namely, that some things in the mass be pronounced in a low tone and others in a louder tone. She has likewise, in accordance with apostolic discipline and tradition, made use of ceremonies, such as mystical blessings, lights, incense, **vestments** (*author's emphasis*), and many other things of this kind, whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be emphasized and the minds of the faithful excited by those visible signs of religion and piety to the contemplation of those most sublime things which are hidden in this sacrifice. (Council of Trent, Session XXII, Chapter V)

Following the Council of Trent, Charles Borromeo, Bishop of Milan (later Saint Charles Borromeo) did much to rein in the extravagance and diversity of contemporary vestments,

particularly the chasuble. Michael Sternbeck, in an analysis of the development of the Roman chasuble, describes how Borromeo's quest to return vesture to the more graceful lines of medieval times resulted in what is now known as the *Borromean Chasuble*, a chasuble nearly reaching the heels with the shoulder width extended to 51 inches. The garment rested once more on the arms as in medieval times (Sternbeck, 2008). Sternbeck also reminds readers that what is today called the *Roman* style did not in fact originate in Rome. It is the cut-away style favoured in northern Europe and objected to by Borromeo. Borromeo's style resembles the nineteenth-century Neo-Gothic Revival style favoured by Augustus Pugin. Despite his efforts to divert vesture away from current fashion, Borromeo had little success with the simplification of ornamentation. By the beginning of the seventeenth century the Gothic and Renaissance styles of European church architecture were being replaced by the flamboyance of the Baroque and vesture once more followed fashion. Biblical and other figurative scenes were abandoned, as were narrative designs and liturgical symbolism. The predominant motifs were floral.

... This was a style which relied on brilliance rather than grandeur, and on pretty confections rather than on solid Christian teaching. It was to be the mainspring of vestment design through the next hundred years. (Johnstone, 2002, p. 86)

Baroque and Rococo: 1600-1800

During the eighteenth century chasubles were at their most elaborate, when ostentatious display threatened to overwhelm the inherent dignity and sacredness of liturgical services. Historically, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were times of political struggle and colonial expansion. New worlds were opening up and trade routes expanding. New and exotic fabrics such as silks from the East and precious metals and jewels from the New World became the new status symbols of the rich and powerful, and were seen as the new 'best' materials to acclaim the glory of God. The earliest textiles found in Australian collections date from this time. For example, the New Norcia Benedictine Community counts a cope of an elaborately-woven floral brocade typical of the mid-eighteenth century amongst the earliest textiles in its collection (figure 12).



Figure 12: Cope from the *Spanish Collection*, mid-eighteenth century.

(Source: New Norcia Benedictine Community Friends magazine, issue 38, p. 11, used with permission)

Surprisingly many vestments were included in a 2013 exhibition at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibition, entitled *Interwoven Globe: the Worldwide Textile Trade 1500-1800*, explored "... the international transmittal of design from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century through the medium of textiles..." (Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, 2014.) While it may not be immediately obvious how trade textiles could impact on ecclesiastical vestment the exhibition curators reminded visitors that -

... Expensive trade textiles from Iran, Turkey, India, and China found their way into European churches as gifts from wealthy patrons, reflecting the donor's high social status. The clergy, who wore vestments made of rich foreign cloths, communicated an authority and a sophistication that came with having access to the wider world. In dim, candle-lit interiors, the vibrant hues and glittering silver and gold threads created an impressive aura that reinforced the eminence of the priesthood. (Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, 2014)

One of the most striking fabrics encountered in early eighteenth century ecclesiastical garments, particularly copes, are the *bizarre* silks featuring an eclectic mix of architectural, floral and *Chinoiserie* motifs, none of which had any religious significance. A garment made in *bizarre* silk can therefore be identified as ecclesiastical by its cut rather than its decorative motifs, and three examples are included in the Textile Research Collection at the National

Gallery of Australia, Canberra (figure 13). Fashion is fickle and bizarre silks were soon replaced by floral patterned brocades (figure 13).



Figure 13: Eighteenth century fabrics from ecclesiastical garments.

The cope (left) is pieced from pieces of a red fabric featuring an eclectic mix of architectural and floral motifs (centre). The floral fabric (right) is from a chasuble dating from the mid-eighteenth century.

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016 (right) and image by author, 2016 (left and centre))

Religious motifs reappeared in the orphreys and elaborate embroidery that adorned late Baroque period chasubles and copes (figure 14).



Figure 14: Detail of decoration on a Baroque chasuble dated 1714.

The swirling floral designs and religious motifs are typical of mid- to late-eighteenth century ecclesiastical textiles.

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

Johnstone (2002) contends that the more confronting and macabre images of skulls and skeletons used on seventeenth-century vestments were inspired by the *Vanitas* school of still-life paintings popular in the Netherlands at the time. Such ‘death’ images were commonly

used on black funeral vestments and possibly intended to remind the faithful that all men must die. Bizarre silks and 'death' images feature in only a small proportion of ecclesiastical vestments made during the 1600s and 1700s. The most common decorative technique used during this period was sumptuous surface embroidery in silk and gold thread. Deep lace flounces on albs, rochets and surplices also made their appearance in the late seventeenth century. By the latter part of the seventeenth century Baroque flamboyance had given way to the more fluid lines of the Rococo and the elegance of the Neo-Classical. Goldwork embroidery was particularly suited to the neo-classical designs popular at this time. A chasuble in the rococo style is on display at St Patrick's Church, Church Hill, Sydney. Sumptuous vesture epitomised the power and influence of the Catholic Church in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth century but that was all about to change. Vestment-making went into decline as revolution swept through Europe and the wealth of the Church was confiscated. Johnstone neatly encapsulates the influence of the secular world on vesture with the comment:

... As ecclesiastical reform had curbed excessive display in the church at the end of the sixteenth century, so secular reform brought about another period of retrenchment at the end of the eighteenth. (Johnstone, 2002, p111)

Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: 1800-1960

While revolution may have swept aside the opulence of church vesture and diminished the power of the Church in Europe, in Britain the restrictions on Catholic worship were lifting. The Catholic Emancipation Bill (1832) gave Catholics the right to worship in public for the first time since the reign of Henry VIII. A period of rapid church building and furnishing followed. At the same time the rise of ritualism within the Protestant Church of England compounded the need for new vesture. The leading influence on ecclesiastical decoration in England was an architectural style known as the Gothic (or Neo-Gothic) Revival. Again vesture was influenced not by liturgical practices and requirements but by prevailing fashion. Industrialisation also played a part with the newly invented Jacquard looms and embroidery machines reducing both the cost of vestments and the time need to make them.

Catholic Emancipation and the Neo-Gothic Revival

The Neo-Gothic Revival in England was epitomised by the work of architect and designer Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin and his followers. Pugin was a convert to Catholicism and saw the medieval Gothic style as the only style worthy of giving glory to God (Andrews, 2002, p6). Pugin revived the flowing style of medieval chasubles and copes. His chasubles closely resembled the *Borromean* style of the mid-1500s, and his decorative motifs borrowed much from Gothic tracery and painting. In the preface to his ground-breaking work *Glossary Of Ecclesiastical Ornament And Costume: compiled and illustrated from ancient authorities and examples* Pugin re-iterates and advocates the traditional medieval use of symbol and motif, a style he saw as the only true form of ecclesiastical decoration:

... it is indispensably necessary for all ecclesiastical artists, not only to understand the true forms and symbolical significations of the sacred vestments and ornaments, but to apply the various decorations in a consistent manner to the edification of the faithful, and as lively illustrations of the sacred Mysteries. (Pugin, 1844), p. vii)

Pugin's vestments typically feature repeating patterns based on medieval tiles woven into the ground fabric and surface decoration includes foliated crosses and figures drawn from fifteenth-century orphreys (Johnstone, 2002, p. 118) (figure 15).



Figure 15: Chasuble and cope designed by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin ca1850.

(Source: Archdiocese of Hobart Archives, 2018, (left) and Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016. (right), used with permission)

The interest in Gothic Revival was also felt in the Catholic churches of Europe. Pictorial and narrative designs were particularly suited to the new Jacquard looms. European vestments of the time feature woven cross-shaped and Y-shaped orphreys and braids: even whole scenes were woven into the ground fabric of chasubles, copes and the increasingly popular devotional banners (figure 16).



Figure 16: Jacquard style chasuble in a fabric woven with metallic threads, early twentieth century.
(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The introduction of embroidery machines in the mid-1800s revolutionised liturgical decoration. The best of the intricate figurative and narrative scenes stitched by machine rivalled those produced by the most skilled hand embroiderers and were cheaper and quicker to produce (figure 17).

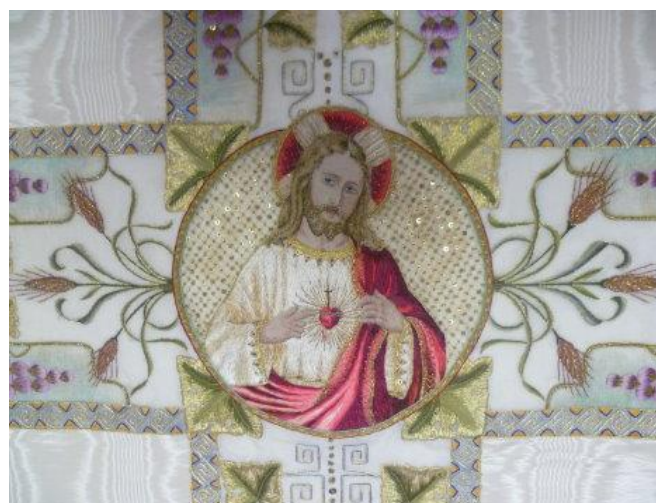


Figure 17: Machine embroidery, early twentieth century.
(Images by the author, 2016)

Sarah Bailey (2013) notes that the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century resulted in more leisure time which, coupled with readily available needlework threads and fabrics, allowed women in particular to contribute in a material way to their local churches where "... their legacy is seen in many beautifully worked vestments..." (Bailey, 2014, p. 51). Once again ecclesiastical style followed prevailing fashion and the majority of designs from England were Neo-Gothic Revival. Embroidery designs and patterns were published in art and craft journals such as *Art Amateur* which published an ongoing series of articles entitled Church Embroidery in the late 1880s (Higgin, 1888; HMG., 1888). Anastasia Dolby, writing twenty years before, recognised both the need for specific instructions for ecclesiastical embroidery and an understanding of the religious significance of the work for, in her opinion, while

... A few books on the subject have been written within the last twenty- five years, ... they are to be regarded principally as mere histories of Decorative Needlework, for, although highly and generally interesting to readers, yet they prove utterly worthless as guides to uninitiated workers. ... The beautiful art of Church Embroidery is so mysterious and perplexing to the novice, and so simple and fascinating when understood, that I desire nothing more earnestly than that every reader of these instructions, may become proficient, if only for the lasting delight the knowledge will assuredly confer. (Dolby, 1867, p. v)

Dolby's book, *Church Embroidery, ancient and modern*, also included an early insight into the inherent vice of some of the materials she describes. For example, working with gold was particularly difficult.

... Some shades of green will affect the gold worked upon them most seriously. We are told that they are such as are produced by the aid of prussiate of potash, arsenic, and other pernicious minerals¹⁴. ... But the metal also, in ancient times, must have been manufactured in a form purer than it is now ; otherwise these old specimens of work would have

¹⁴ Prussiate of potash is the common name for potassium ferricyanide (formula $K_3Fe(CN)_6$). This bright red salt is a component of Prussian Blue and is still used in the manufacture of dyes, paints, and blueprints. Compounds of arsenic and chromium, a heavy metal, were common ingredients in nineteenth-century dyes and paints and include the highly toxic Scheele's Green (copper arsenite) and Paris Green (copper(II) acetoarsenite). Scheele's Green and Paris Green gained a well-earned reputation as agents of death and were eventually banned (David, 2017).

blackened, long since, under the influence of damp, and gas, and other evils,
which they have been necessarily exposed to in our age. (Dolby, 1867, p.
137)

Ecclesiastical embroidery as a domestic skill continued into the early twentieth century as did manuals written for the parish altar guilds involved in making altar linen. Alice Dryden's 1911 book *Church Embroidery*, like Dolby's book fifty years earlier, included an extensive history of ecclesiastical embroidery as well as designs for the decoration on vestments and banners.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a new style of decoration appeared in northern Europe. The cross orphreys on chasubles were much narrower than the wide illuminated medieval orphreys they copied and so separate embroidered or woven medallions were applied to the crossing point of the arms (Johnstone, 2002, p.132). This style of decoration persists today, albeit utilising more stylised motifs. Competing designers and manufacturers set the scene for the first debate about 'correct' vesture since the Council of Trent enacted its liturgical reforms 400 years earlier.

"Gothic" versus "Fiddle-back" and the Tetragrammaton controversy

Nineteenth-century interest in the Middle Ages, the Gothic Revivalists, and the push for a return to simpler styles led to a proliferation of local variation in the design and decoration of vestments. The simpler, free-flowing 'Neo-Gothic' chasuble championed by Pugin in England and his contemporaries in Germany and the Netherlands, challenged the established rigid 'fiddle-back' styles popular in France, Italy and Spain. Despite opposition from Rome, the Neo-Gothic and its variants gradually spread through the Western European Church (Connelly, 1889). Katherine Haas (2007) contends that strict adherence to the rubrics of vesture was particularly evident in nineteenth-century America where the re-emerging Catholic Church was vigorously aligning itself to European, particularly Rome, authority and management (Haas, 2007). In Australia, however, 'allegiance' to Roman style and authority was not as pronounced (Dowd, 2008) and many of the textiles in the surveyed collections reflect the English and Northern European ecclesiastical designs favoured by the English and Irish clergy that founded the Church in Australia. In Australia, at least for the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the Neo-Gothic revival styles of Pugin and his followers held sway over the elaborately decorated vesture and other ecclesiastical textiles produced in Italy, France and Spain.

One interesting late nineteenth-century vestiture battle that Rome did, however, win, was over the use of the rayed triangle, an ancient motif commonly used on French vestments and the lace flounces on albs. The battle had its roots in the historical ban on Catholics joining the Freemasons, the reaction of French Freemasonry to the encyclical *Humanum genus* promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in 1884 and a wave of anti-Semitism that gripped France in the wake of the trial of Alfred Dreyfus in 1894 (Pope Clement XII, 1738; Pope Leo XIII, 1884; Johnstone, 2002, p134, 139). The ban was incorporated into The Code of Canon Law (canon #2335) and remains in force today (Ratzinger, 1984; Irreconcilability. 1985). In liturgical symbolism a triangle is a traditional symbol for the Trinity and a triangle in a glory (rays of light), which often included the Tetragrammaton, i.e. the Hebrew letters יהוה (YHWH or Yahweh), symbolises God the Father (figure 18) (Taylor, 2001, p. 69-70). A similar motif commonly encountered in Freemasonry is the Eye of Providence which dates from the mid-1700s and is often represented as an eye inside a triangle or an eye surrounded by a glory (Morris, 1932). The controversy surrounding an ancient Christian symbol which could be interpreted as having a Jewish connection through the Hebrew inscription, and Masonic overtones through the rayed triangle achieved

... something that repeated papal encyclicals directed towards Freemasonry over a hundred and fifty years had failed to bring about – the removal of the Tetragrammaton from French vestments. So thoroughly was this reversal carried out that the offending symbol was not merely discontinued, but in many churches literally covered with a newly embroidered patch substituting the IHS or the Trinity. (Johnstone, 2002, p136)



Figure 18: Lace-making pattern featuring the controversial tetragrammaton within a rayed triangle, nineteenth century (left). The Eye of God motif on a burse, nineteenth century (right).

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, Sydney, 2018, used with permission)

Early to-mid-twentieth century

By the end of the nineteenth century the influence of the Neo-Gothic Revival on vestment design and decoration was waning. In France *L'Art Nouveau* produced a distinctive style of vestment decoration that lasted into the first decades of the twentieth century. The style was characterised by padded goldwork motifs enhanced with spangles and gold metal braid on a silk or cloth-of-gold ground. The designs invariably formed a cross on the back of the chasuble and a pillar on the front and featured ears of wheat, grapes, roses and pomegranates with the IHS monogram or the *Angus Dei* symbol (figure 19).



Figure 19: Generic goldwork chasuble front (left) and back (centre), detail of a rose design (right), late nineteenth century.

(Images by the author, 2016)

In Germany and Austria, movements such as the Vienna Secession and *Jugendstil* influenced architects such as Otto Wagner. Wagner, like Pugin before him, designed all aspects of his masterpiece, Vienna's *Kirche am Steinhof* (*Church of St Leopold*), from the building itself to its fittings and vestments for the clergy. Only in Italy did 'tradition' hold sway, where vestments of woven silk brocade or damask in the square *Latin* style featured little surface decoration save for the pillars on the front and back outlined in braid. One last style of nineteenth-century decoration worthy of mention also harkened back to the Neo-Classical and Neo-Rococo designs of the eighteenth century: the swirling, stylised floral and foliate

motifs embroidered in flat gold thread on plain silk fabrics adorned chasubles, copes and dalmatics (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Typical mid-to late-nineteenth century chasubles in the Neo-Classical and Neo-Rococo style.
(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, (left) and C. Patullo, 2012, used with permission (right)).

The style was so popular that vestment makers in Rome could not meet demand and orders were outsourced to workshops in France and Belgium as evidenced by an image of a c1900 chasuble made by the Belgian vestment makers Arte-Grossé (figure 21).



Figure 21: Chasuble made in the Italian Neo-rococo style in Belgium by Arte-Grossé, ca 1900.

(Source: Arte-Grossé Archives, 2017), used with permission)

Father Joseph Braun S.J, noted theologian, art historian and author of the definitive early twentieth-century work on vesture, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient* (1907), summed up the state of vesture at the end of the nineteenth century in his assertion that

... Taking everything together, the development which liturgical vestments have experienced since the thirteenth century, and more especially since the sixteenth century, hardly appears to be a matter of satisfaction, notwithstanding all the richness and costliness of ornamentation, but rather a lamentable disfigurement caused by the taste of the time. (Braun 1912)

The Gothic vs Roman vestment debate continued into the twentieth century. Australian vestment-maker and church historian Michael Sternbeck, commented on the apparent mixed messages coming from Rome in the 1920s -

In December 1925, at a time when vestment-makers in Europe and beyond were creating magnificent chasubles of Borromean proportions, the Congregation of Rites published a rescript¹⁵ that the more ample form of chasuble was not to be used for the Roman Rite[(Vico, 1925)], except by special permission of the Holy See. What a peculiar decision this was, given that earlier in the same year an Exhibition of the Liturgical Arts had been held in Rome and newly-made vestments, according to the Borromean proportions, were shown in a special audience with [Pope] Pius XI, who approved their use and blessed them. (Sternbeck, 2008)

The *rescript* did not bring an end to the debate. In 1957 The Sacred Congregation of Rites revoked its 1925 degree against the wearing of ‘Gothic’ style vestments and left the matter of design to the judgement of local ordinaries (Sternbeck, 2008 citing (G. C. Cicognani, 1957)). The two forms of chasuble existed side-by-side following the papal ruling. The straight square *Latin/Roman* style (sometimes referred to as the ‘fiddle-back’ from the resemblance of the front to the back of a violin) with a cross orphrey on the back held sway in France and Italy while the more fluid, Neo-Gothic style decorated with a Y-orphrey was more common in England and northern Europe (figures 22 and 23).

¹⁵ A *rescript* is an official edict or announcement. In the Catholic Church the term refers to a response from the pope or another ecclesiastical authority to a question regarding discipline or doctrine.
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rescript>



Figure 22: The characteristic 'fiddle-back' shape and stepped-cross orphrey of a Roman chasuble in the French style, early twentieth century

(Images by the author, 2011)



Figure 23: The full rounded style of a Neo-Gothic chasuble with Y-orphrey, mid-twentieth century.

(Source: C. Patullo, 2012 used with permission)

Johnstone (2002) records that Italian weavers were incorporating ancient Christian symbols such as the anchor, fish and the Chi-Rho Christogram¹⁶ into their fabrics and similar motifs were used on the ubiquitous machine embroidered medallions stitched to the centres of the cross orphreys (figure 24). Fabrics woven in Belgium followed the tenets of the Liturgical Movement and were characterised by small repeating patterns featuring religious symbols, inside frames derived from medieval tracery (information from staff at Arte/Grossé via email). (figure 25).

¹⁶ From chi (X) and rho (P) the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Christos).



Figure 24: Religious symbols of an anchor, fish, bread and the alpha-omega monogram, feature on an ecclesiastical fabric woven in the 1940s (left). Machine-embroidered medallion typical of the mid-twentieth century.

(Images by author, 2016).



Figure 25: Medieval stone tracery inspired motifs typical of fabrics favoured by the Liturgical Movement.

(Images by author, 2016)

Sadly, political influences were soon to impact on vestment design and manufacture and few makers survived the devastating economic and social disruption which followed the Great War and World War II. A willingness to adapt to rapidly changing conditions underpinned the survival of two particular companies into the twenty-first century, Louis Grossé, now Art-Grossé, of Brussels, Belgium, and Stadelmaier Company at Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

2.4.5 Mid-Twentieth century, Vatican II and Beyond

The liturgical renewal which followed the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1966) heralded a return to simpler, less ostentatious designs, with an emphasis on sacredness rather than message. Vesture dating from the latter part of the twentieth century is less influenced by prevailing secular fashion and is more reflective of liturgical practices. Liturgical renewal instigated by Vatican II impacted on vesture in two ways. Firstly, the Mass was now celebrated with the priest facing the congregation and so the back of the chasuble was no longer in view of the congregation. As a result, the large decorative embroidered cross orphreys and pillars that had, in one form or another, adorned chasubles for centuries were largely consigned to history, and replaced by single embroidered motifs or strips of wide braid applied to the front and back of the chasuble. Vesture design became rather generic and lacklustre: the fine workmanship and aesthetics of pre-war specialist vestment-makers had largely disappeared. The distinctive designs of Sister Augustina Flüeler, a nun from the Cloisters of St Klara in Switzerland, and vestment makers Stadelmaier BV, The Netherlands, did however, challenge the prevailing generic sameness of mass produced vestments. Sr Augustina was a weaver and her simple, fully-cut vestments of fine wool and silk, reminiscent of the full-cut medieval conical chasuble, featured almost no liturgical symbolism (Renner, n.d.). Sr Augustina's book *Paramente*, published in 1955, is yet to be translated from the original German. References to her obvious contributions to the history of church vesture are largely confined to brief references in craft publications, particularly those dealing with weaving. Asa Martinsson and Martin Erikson, in an article published in a Swedish textiles journal on the historical development of shape and colour of vestments, acknowledge the influence of the Liturgical Movement in Sr Augustina's work but also acknowledge that her contribution to the history of vesture is largely unrecognised.

... the liturgical renewal instigated in Belgium in 1909. ... the people involved looked back beyond medieval times, to the early church as an ideal. With this came big, wide chasubles, without further embellishment. This style found a clear expression in the work of the Swiss nun, Augustina Flüeler. Her textiles are mentioned as a kind of model in several works on both the liturgy and textiles. What was considered unique in her case was that her textiles were handwoven, in qualities specially fit for their purpose. These were lightweight, fine fabrics used in the very wide vestments. She

does get a mention, but in the footnotes, in books on art history. (Asa & Eriksson, 2009, p. 15)

Mr Richard Hawker, Creative Consultant from Watts & Co. of London, purveyors of fine ecclesiastical and ceremonial regalia, recounted, via a series of emails, that Sr Augustina insisted that the priests who bought her vestments be fitted in person so that they would know the correct way to wear them. Mr Hawker also provided information on Valentine KilBride, an English silk weaver who produced vestments very much in the style of Sr Augustina. KilBride was a member of the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, a Catholic art and craft colony much influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, which operated at Ditchling in England from the 1920s until the 1980s. I have been unable to locate any Flüeler or KilBride vestments in Australia but several examples of the unique and innovative vestments made by the Stadelmaier Company from the Netherlands were found. The Stadelmaier Company's designs, incorporating traditional symbols and narrative figures and a preference for the *Gothic* shape, foreshadowed the Post-Vatican call for a return to a simpler, more liturgically based vesture and ornamentation. By the 1950s Stadelmaier had established a reputation for fine workmanship and quality materials. The company's designs reflected a deep understanding of the significance of traditional symbols albeit in a 'modern' interpretation. As Rene Lugtigheld, a textile conservator from the University of Amsterdam, quoted in an article that accompanied a 2015 exhibition of Stadelmaier vestments¹⁷ at the Museum Catharijneconvent (St Catherine's Convent Museum) in Utrecht.

... perhaps the most appreciated aspect, however, was the combination of daring and piety exuded by the vestments' design ... bold in presentation, modern but not abstract, which makes it remain pious and [at] one with the ecclesiastical architecture. (Lugtigheld, 2015, quoting from *De Gelderlander*, 1 February 1957: 'New avenues in paraments')

Stadelmaier continued the nineteenth-century tradition of employing expert designers and craftsmen. Wim van Woerkom, a noted Dutch graphics designer, painter and stained glass artist, produced some of the most distinctive of Stadelmaier's designs. Van Woerkom's trademark elongated and somewhat angular figures were expertly rendered in black outline

¹⁷ The exhibition was entitled "Atelier Stadelmaier: Heavenly fashion around the altar" and was open from April 10 to August 16, 2015

and brightly coloured threads by Magdalena Stadelmaier-Glässner, a highly skilled professional embroiderer and wife of the company founder, and her team. As in the past, ecclesiastical design followed the secular trends of its time. Early Stadelmaier designs referenced the *Bauhaus* and *German Expressionist* movements of the 1920s while Van Woerkom's designs of the 1960s reflected *Minimalism*, where work was stripped down to its fundamental features (Young, 2008) (Figures 26 and 27).

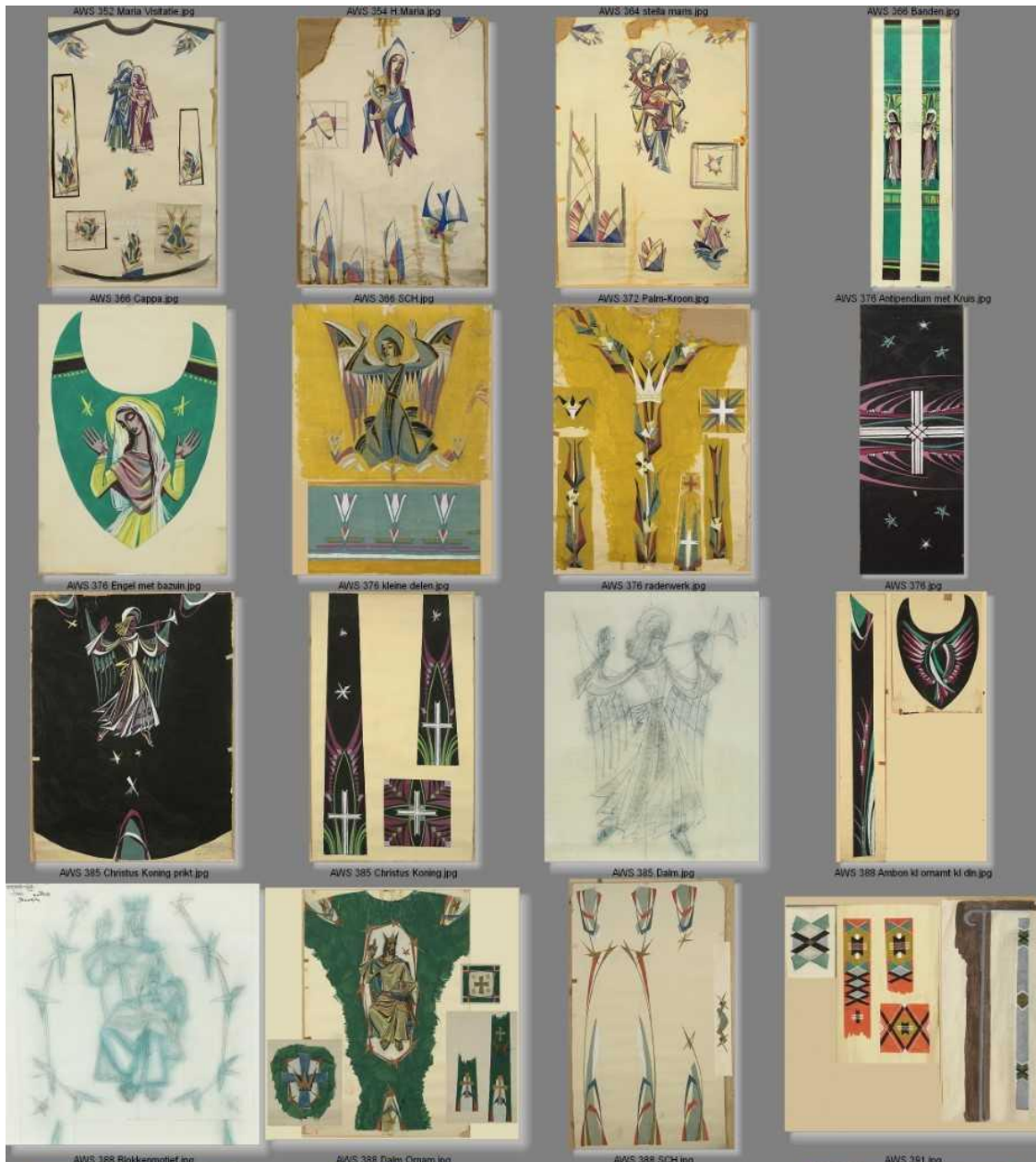


Figure 26: Stadelmaier designs of the 1960s

(Source: Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen, Netherlands, 2018, used with permission)



Figure 27: The design drawings for the Archangel Michael vestments (left) and an Archangel chasuble (right).

Source: Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen, Netherlands, 2018, and Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

Within the Catholic Church the push for general liturgical renewal was slowly gaining momentum and the first major reforms to liturgical and non-liturgical vesture for nearly 800 years followed the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965). Vesture reform was heralded by a reduction and simplification of prelate vesture (A. G. C. Cicognani, 1969). The current 'dress code' is authorised by the Vatican references the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), a major document arising out of Vatican II solemnly promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963 (Paul VI, 1963). In the years after Vatican II, minor changes and clarifications to the dress code were made. In 1968 Pope Paul VI issued a *motu proprio* (Apostolic Letter) restricting the use of pontifical insignia by certain groups of bishops and prelates (Pope Paul VI, 1968). In the following year an *instructio* (Instruction) was issued through the Vatican Secretariat of State describing the forms of dress of the secular clergy of the Catholic Church (A. G. C. Cicognani, 1969). This instruction, known as *Ut sive sollicitate*, abolished certain garments previously worn by bishops and simplified the design of others. In 1970 the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy issued a *circular letter* outlining reforms to choir dress (Wright, 1971). Further refinements

were published in *Ceremonial Episcoporum* (Ceremonial of Bishops) issued by the Congregation of Divine Worship in 1984 (Congregation of Divine Worship, 1984) and clarification of the long-running debate surrounding the wearing of pre-Vatican II ‘Roman-style’ vestments was addressed in an Apostolic Letter by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007 (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007). Today vestments are almost universally Gothic or semi-Gothic in style and the wearing of Roman or ‘fiddle-back’ style vestments is restricted to the celebration of the Latin Mass.

The chasu-alb and the Nijmegen model

Just as the northern European churches had championed vesture reform in the nineteenth century with their adoption of Neo-Gothic vestments, the same region also championed reform in the mid to late twentieth century. The liturgical renewal ushered in by Vatican II cemented the place of the Gothic, or semi-Gothic, chasuble in the vesture rubrics. In 1966 Ben Stadelmaier, son of the founder of the Stadelmaier Company, took up the challenge of designing a vestment suitable for the newly revived concelebrated Mass, where several priests jointly celebrated at the altar. Stadelmaier designed a simple long sleeved, wide cut floor length vestment which could be worn without an alb and cincture. It was undecorated save for the embroidered stole worn over it. It became known as the *chasu-alb* (Figure 28). The chasu-alb was not universally accepted, but it was eventually permitted under the current rubrics as a variation suited to local conditions, for example in tropical regions (Deeter, 2009).

While the chasu-alb may not have been a success, it did pave the way for Stadelmaier’s next innovation which came to be known as the *Nijmegen model* (Lugtigheld, 2015).

Stadelmaier’s design involved a wider stole worn *over* an almost floor-length Gothic style chasuble. Decoration was largely confined to Stadelmaier’s trademark ‘modernist’ embroidery on the stole and textural detail in the weave of the ground fabric. The style gained popularity, particularly after a photograph of Joseph Louis Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, wearing the vestment appeared on the front cover of *Time Magazine* in 1982. Bishop Guilford Young of Hobart wore a set of Stadelmaier *Nijmegen model* vestments at the Mass celebrated to commemorate the 25th anniversary of his installation as bishop. The concelebrating bishops wore plain white chasubles (figure 28).



Figure 28: Bishop Guilford Young (second from right) wearing Stadelmaier vestments (1980) and the chasuble and stole from the set (right).

(Source Archdiocese of Hobart Archives and Heritage Collection, 2018 (left), and Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen, Netherlands, 2018, used with permission)

Four sets of *Nijmegen model* vestments in the liturgical colours of red, green, purple and white were ordered for the Marist Fathers seminary at Toongabbie, New South Wales in 1968. When the seminary closed these vestments were moved to Holy Name of Mary parish church at Hunters Hill and are still occasionally worn (information from Marist Fathers Provincial Archives). In fact the *Nijmegen model* did not conform to the regulations outlined in the GIRM which required the stole to be worn under the chasuble (Australian Bishops Conference, 2007). Vatican approval finally came in 1985 –

... by way of a papal *nihil obstat*. Pope John Paul II wore the vestment, with matching stole, designed especially for him, in front of the international press (Lugtigheld, 2015 p3). (figure 29).

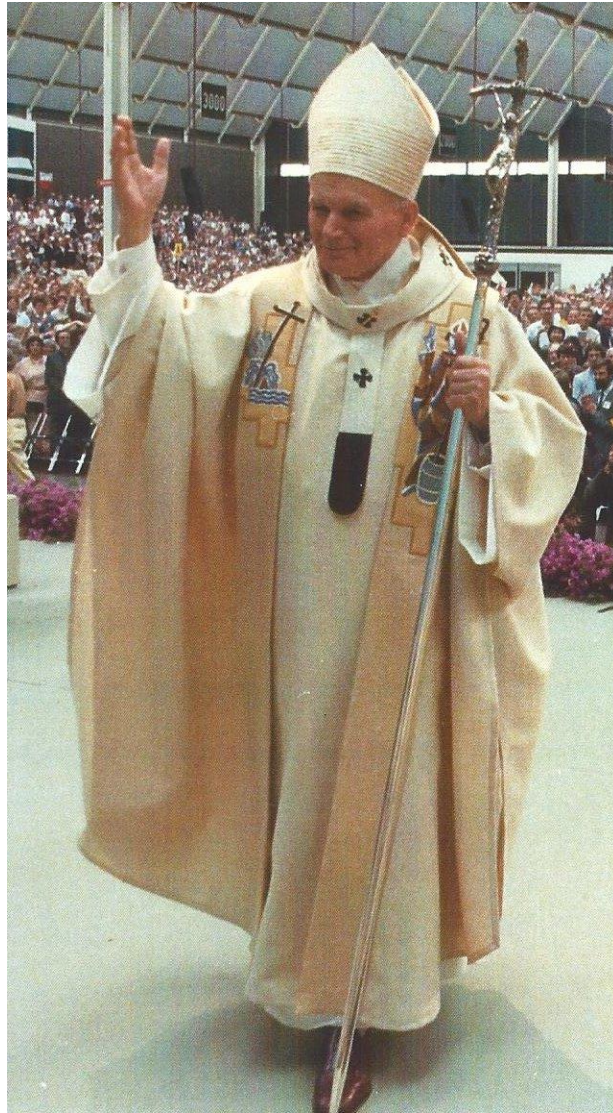


Figure 29: Pope John Paul II in the Nijmegen model vestments designed for his visit to the Netherlands in 1985.

(Source: B. Stadelmaier, 2018, used with permission)

The turn of the twenty-first century saw the vesture debate re-ignite when Pope Benedict XVI began wearing historic pre-Vatican II vestments in the Roman style (Boorstein, 2008; O'Meara, 2013; Orena, 2013; Sternbeck, 2013). Traditionalist factions unhappy with the extent of liturgical reforms since the 1970s saw the move as an endorsement of pre-Vatican traditions while Modernist reformers were concerned that a return to a more authoritarian Church hierarchy was imminent (Boorstein, 2008; Gibson, 2008). Observers were quick to

comment when Benedict's successor, Pope Francis¹⁸, chose a more austere style when his pontificate began in 2013 (de Souza, 2018; Elwood, 2015).

2.5 Wrapping up

Ecclesiastical textiles in all their diversity are a highly visible manifestation of the material heritage of the Catholic Church, a heritage that, as we shall see, embodies cultural values that extend back to the very beginnings of the Early Christian Church. This chapter has defined and described the many forms and functions that textiles play in the cultural life of the Catholic Church. As noted in the discussion of the development of ecclesiastical clothing, liturgist Father Joseph Braun SJ asserted that while the forms and functions, of Catholic ecclesiastical clothing have remained largely unchanged for a millennium, the aesthetic aspects of design and decoration have not. Does this combination of change and continuity reflect cultural significance and value? It could be said that over the centuries the decoration of ecclesiastical textiles, both garment and non-garment, liturgical and non-liturgical, clerical and non-clerical has reflected contemporary values of style and taste. Is this the only value embodied in the textiles? The next chapter looks at how the concepts of cultural significance and value have been defined by scholars and practitioners. Chapter 5 looks more closely into the ecclesiastical textile collections surveyed for this research, and chapter 6 reveals the diverse and surprising ways in which the treasured threads housed in these collections are in fact valued.

¹⁸ Pope Francis is not Pope Francis I. As he is the first pope to choose to be known as Francis, he will only become Pope Francis I if and when another pope chooses that name and is known as Pope Francis II.

Chapter 3

Context and Approach

... we in this country [have] so little appreciation of the significance of these vestments symbolically, culturally or didactically. We tend to evaluate them purely as perceived status symbols. (Diocesan Archivist A, questionnaire response.)

These words were penned by an Australian archivist in response to a question asked during the course of my Honours research into the cultural significance of a collection of ecclesiastical textiles housed in a Diocesan Archive, Sale, Victoria (Ferguson, 2013). The collection in question encompassed 180 years of Catholic history in Australia and represents over two centuries of local Catholic cultural heritage. That initial research investigated cultural significance using the criteria from *Significance 2.0*, an assessment tool designed to assist "... collecting organisations, agencies and owners that manage or hold collections...", to assess the cultural significance of collections in their care (Russell & Whitworth, 2010, p2). For me, this comment raised more questions than it answered – it invited further questions. What does ‘significance’ actually mean when applied to ecclesiastical textile collections? How does ‘significance’ arise and/or who assigns the significance? What form does ‘significance’ take and how can it be preserved? Do ‘we’ (and who are ‘we’), as the archivist claimed, tend to value the material culture of the Church purely for their aesthetic and/or monetary value or as perceived status symbols?

This thesis sets out to investigate how an Australian textile heritage is understood as ‘heritage’ and is of significance and value to the communities who care for it. This textile heritage is recognised by a wide range of institutions, groups and individuals, but I suggest that its values are in fact understood by very few. This chapter begins with an overview of the concepts of cultural heritage and cultural significance and value which underpin contemporary cultural heritage practices. I go on to explore the range of research methodologies that have been employed within cultural heritage studies in order to understand cultural values and then discuss the methods employed in this research.

Much modern heritage policy is built around the notions of *significance* and *values*. In 1979, in response to the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (*The Venice Charter*), (Venice 1964), the recommendations concerning the safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas (Nairobi, 1976) and the Resolutions of the 5th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (Moscow 1978), Australia ICOMOS commissioned and adopted the *Burra Charter* as a guide for the assessment, management and conservation of places of cultural significance in Australia. The 1979 Burra Charter identified four categories of *value* that contributed to the cultural significance of a place – aesthetic, historic, scientific, and social. In the intervening 40 years the Burra Charter has been reviewed and revised to reflect changing definitions of heritage and cultural significance. The category of ‘spiritual’ was added in 1999 largely in response to concerns about its applicability for Indigenous cultures (Hanna, 2015).

The current version of the Burra Charter (2013) reflects recent UNESCO documents on tangible and intangible heritage and has expanded and explained the definition of cultural significance.

... Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups. The term cultural significance is synonymous with cultural heritage significance and cultural heritage value. Cultural significance may change over time and with use. Understanding of cultural significance may change as a result of new information. (Australia ICOMOS, 2013)

The Burra Charter is complemented by a second Australian heritage document, *Significance 2.0* which was designed to apply to collections rather than places. *Significance 2.0* is an assessment tool, rather than a policy document, designed to assist community groups with the assessment of the cultural significance of their heritage collections. *Significance 2.0* parallels the Burra Charter’s five cultural values with eight criteria for assessment.

... Four primary criteria apply when assessing significance – historic, artistic or aesthetic, scientific or research potential, and social or spiritual.

Four comparative criteria evaluate the degree of significance. These are modifiers of the main criteria – provenance, rarity or representativeness, condition or completeness, and interpretive capacity. (Russell & Winkworth, 2009, p. 10)

3.1 Cultural Heritage

While ‘cultural heritage’ may be categorised in multiple ways, the recognition of cultural significance or value is widely recognised within the heritage community as a ‘driver’ of policy. Marta de la Torre contends that

... Value has always been the reason underlying heritage conservation. It is self-evident that no society makes an effort to conserve what it does not value. (de la Torre, 2014, p.19)

Significance and value may drive the conservation, preservation and management of cultural heritage but what do we mean by cultural heritage? That very much depends, like the concepts of significance and value, on who is asking or answering the question.

UNESCO defines cultural heritage as

... the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations. (UNESCO, n.d.)

UNESCO recognises physical artefacts as *tangible* heritage and defines *intangible* heritage as

... traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. (UNESCO, 2003)

The acceptance of heritage as tangible/intangible is the foundation of current national and international heritage policy and management documents such as the *International Charter*

for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964) (ICOMOS, 1964), the *Convention concerning the protection of cultural and natural heritage (The World Heritage Convention)* (UNESCO, 1972) the *Burra Charter for places of cultural significance*, (Australia ICOMOS, 2013) *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* (Russell & Winkworth, 2009). Intangible heritage was formally recognised by UNESCO in the early twenty-first century with the ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) (The Intangible Heritage Convention). Along with other considerations the Intangible Heritage Convention recognised “a deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO, 2003). Many in the heritage community agree that tangible and intangible heritage are not separate entities but are inextricably linked through the relationships that develop between communities, artefacts and cultural practice. For example, Mounir Bouchenaki acknowledged this link when he used the interdependency of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as the focus for his keynote address to the 14th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: ‘Place, memory, meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites’ in Zimbabwe in 2003.

3.1.1 Official/Unofficial Heritage

Susie West has focused on another heritage dichotomy in terms of *who claims* the heritage and how it is managed rather than on *what constitutes* heritage with the concept of official versus unofficial heritage (West & Ansell, 2010). West (2010) defines official heritage as “recognised and protected by states and more local forms of government ... UNESCO and its sponsored bodies” (p1). Official heritage is characterised by bureaucratic structures, categories, measurements and evaluations, and an adherence to canonical criteria such as aesthetic excellence, relevance to national identity or scientific significance. The notion of official heritage began in the nineteenth century with such organisations as the state-sponsored *Commission des Monuments Historique*, established in France in 1830, and the privately run *Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings*, founded by a group of British designers and architects including William Morris in 1877. Such organisations focussed on the preservation and restoration of the material tangibility of the built environment, notably historically significant buildings, national monuments and ancient ruins. The full name of *The National Trust*, founded in 1895, *The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or*

Natural Beauty, reflects the original aim of this British heritage organisation dedicated to the conservation, and in some cases, restoration of historic buildings and the preservation of the natural environment. The destruction wrought by World War I prompted a call for the establishment of an international organisation responsible for restoration. The *Athens Charter* (ICOMOS, 1931) and the *Venice Charter* (ICOMOS, 1964) laid the foundations for a common international approach towards heritage protection. The emphasis remained on the built environment, but the focus moved from restoration to conservation. The concepts of the preservation of cultural sites and the conservation of nature were officially merged at an international level following the ratification of *The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention)* (UNESCO, 1972). *The World Heritage List* arose out of the World Heritage Convention and set the criteria for the international recognition of a diverse range of significant cultural sites. It reflects a rigid, canonical approach to heritage management.

West characterises unofficial heritage

... as sitting outside bureaucratic processes, lacking formal protection by legislation, under-represented in public collections, under-valued according to canonical criteria. It is more likely to be intangible ... (West, 2010, p. 1)

Unofficial heritage, including objects, places and practices, is characterised by West as that which is particularly significant or culturally meaningful to special interest groups, local communities and minority groups, but which may not fit official definitions of heritage. Rodney Harrison similarly views heritage as official or unofficial and introduces a thought-provoking alternative view of heritage as not relating specifically to the past but being more about how we conceptualise the future. Harrison differentiates between what he calls *objects* of heritage and *practises* of heritage. Objects are the things that are meaningful to us and practices are the intangible customs and habits characteristic of our social groups and the foundation of our shared social memory (Harrison, 2009).

Harrison then introduces the concept of *processes* of heritage to categorise particular 'objects' or 'practises' as official or unofficial. Official heritage processes, according to Harrison, are sanctioned by the State and are essentially political in their objectives, reinforcing social cohesion through the construction of myths of origin. Unofficial heritage processes, on the other hand, may be of greater significance to people and communities,

building links to the past and “building a sense of identity and connecting to places where they live” (Harrison, 2009). Harrison also makes the point that unofficial processes of heritage may not be recognised by those who control what does, and does not meet their criteria for official heritage processes. Harrison’s categorisations support the concept of multiple claimants to, or interpretations of, a heritage place, object or practice that particularly underpins the current management of intangible heritage. More importantly he notes that defining or controlling heritage can be a powerful political tool because state-sanctioned heritage can exclude, and potentially alienate, certain groups from the authorised vision of nationhood.

Harrison sees unofficial heritage as a form of social action. In a 2010 publication he discussed two case studies where marginalised communities employed their unique unofficial heritage to build community identity, re-establish cultural links to place, and bring their history and heritage to the attention of cultural tourism (Harrison, 2010, pp. 248-272). Harrison’s first case study looked at a group of indigenous people from western New South Wales who used the physical remains of the former Dennawen Reserve to create connections between individuals in a community and their past. His second case study explored a tourist walking tour of Brixton, South London. The tour challenged traditional accounts of London’s heritage by emphasising the multi-cultural heritage of the Brixton area, a borough with a history of racial conflict and historically associated with the settlement of migrants from the Caribbean after the 1950s. In the same publication Susie West and Marion Bowman discuss the concept of unofficial heritage as performance. West and Bowman present a case study in performative spiritual heritage at Glastonbury, England. Glastonbury was a traditional site of Christian pilgrimage for medieval Catholics, and today hosts separate annual pilgrimage processions for Anglicans and Catholics. Glastonbury is also considered by some to be a significant centre for Druidic learning and by others as a focus for prehistoric Goddess worship. It “is hailed as the epicentre of ‘New Age in England’, an important node of earth energy lines, a planetary power point and a site of universal significance” (West & Bowman, 2010, p.296). Each claimant group sees Glastonbury as a significant spiritual site and a centre for religious rites and ceremonies. The performances attract large numbers of adherents and tourists and bring far-reaching economic benefits to the local community. It is interesting to note that Glastonbury’s performance heritage is not centuries old but is a product of a mid-twentieth-century reconnection to traditional religious sites, perceived connections to mythical and legendary figures, and a rising interest in ‘alternative’ and non-

Christian religious philosophies. In contrast to Harrison's view that heritage can exclude some from the national identity, West and Bowman see this diverse spread of intangible performative heritage as an important strand in the formation of a national narrative and a significant example of the importance of place in identity making.

Australian federal government legislation on heritage reflects an 'official' stance on the management of cultural heritage. Places of outstanding national heritage value, be they natural, Indigenous or historical (non-indigenous) places of cultural value, are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The Regulations which accompany this Act (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000*) reference the values criteria outlined in the Burra Charter, including social or spiritual connections. For example, under Part 10 of the Regulations dealing with the national heritage criteria for managing National Heritage places, Division 10.2, section 10,01A (2)g specifically includes the criterion

*... has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons*¹⁹;

The protection and management of movable cultural heritage, that is heritage items that are not places or fixed buildings or built installations, is governed by the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*. The Regulations accompanying this Act describe several categories of movable cultural heritage and, interestingly, "objects relating to religion" are included under Schedule 1—national cultural heritage control list Part 9: 9.4 (n) as Objects of **historical** significance²⁰ and there is no specific mention of social or spiritual value. For export purposes, objects of historical significance are classified as Class B objects on the National Cultural Heritage Control List²¹ and require export permits if their monetary value exceeds certain levels; again there is no specific mention of religious or social significance.

¹⁹ The text of the latest (in force) version of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000* can be viewed at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018C00929>

²⁰ The *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Regulations 2018* can be viewed at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L01710>

²¹ The text of the National Cultural Heritage Control List can be viewed at <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/cultural-heritage/movable-cultural-heritage/exporting-cultural-property-australia/national-cultural-heritage-control-list>

3.1.2 Living Heritage

The concept of heritage dichotomies such as tangible/intangible and official/unofficial is not accepted by all working in heritage studies. In 2012 UNESCO, recognising the limitations of the term ‘intangible’, introduced two alternative but interchangeable terms to its definition of intangible heritage and extended it to include current cultural practices.

... Intangible cultural heritage refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills handed down from generation to generation. This heritage provides communities with a sense of identity and is continuously recreated in response to their environment. ... Intangible cultural heritage is also known as "living heritage" or "living culture".
(UNESCO, 2012)

The term *living heritage*, therefore, implies that heritage is not static and fixed at some point in the past. Ioannis Poullos (2014) agrees, arguing that certain heritage sites are *living* sites where a core community has maintained its temporal, spatial and functional links to a ‘place’. Poullos contends, therefore, that an approach to heritage assessment and management based only on historic sites and past practices cannot apply to living heritage where the emphasis is on continuity and, by implication, change. He advocates a *living heritage approach*, which prioritises the role and contribution of the core community (who live at the site) above the broader community (who may use the site) and heritage professionals (who provide a framework to manage the site) (Poullos, 2014, p.129). The *International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property* (ICCROM) also embraces the concepts of continuity and change and advocates a living heritage approach to heritage conservation. ICCROM recently published a guidance paper based on the concepts of living heritage advocating a *People Centred Approach* to the conservation of cultural heritage (Court & Wijesuriya, 2015). This people-centred approach aims to help resolve some of the tensions between heritage practitioners and local communities:

... aims to respect the voice(s) of communities, recognising their identities, sense of heritage ownership/custodianship and capturing benefits that can be delivered. (Wijesuriya, 2015, p. 11)

In the context of UNESCO's statements and the views of writers quoted above, the focus cultural artefacts of this research, ecclesiastical textiles used by the Catholic Church, are cultural heritage that is tangible and intangible, *and* official and unofficial, *and*, perhaps above all, a living heritage. Throughout the Catholic Church's long history, tangible artefacts such as vestments and vesture have changed in response to contemporary interpretations of form, function and ritual. As particular textiles wore out, became obsolete due to changes in vesture rubrics or style, or no longer reflected prevailing community values, they were repaired, re-cycled, replaced, put into storage, destroyed or sold. It must be remembered, however, that new cultural artefacts perpetuate the same symbolic codes, serve the same functions and embody the same cultural significance and values as their predecessors. More importantly, contemporary rites, rituals, ceremonies, protocols and vesture of the Catholic Church are a continuation of centuries old traditions. In essence, specific tangible objects may 'fade away' but their replacements and the intangible aspects of their cultural significance and value continue on - a *living* heritage not frozen at some time in the past.

3.1.3 Vatican patrimony

From the perspective of their original owner communities ecclesiastical textiles are not primarily 'heritage' but part of the working cultural infrastructure of the Catholic Church with very specific roles in the life and work of the Church. The Catholic Church has a clear definition of its own 'patrimony' or 'heritage' as

... not just ... a heritage to be conserved but rather a treasure which should be known and used to carry out the process of new evangelization.
(Marchisano & Chenis, 1994a)

The Catholic Church recognises the heritage value and cultural significance of its material heritage, but sees this patrimony from a quite different perspective.

... While the typology of the cultural goods is analogous to that defined by civil state legislation, the perspective through which they are seen by the Church is above all religious, as is attested by the life of faith of the Christian community, and so it is cultural. According to the definition of John Paul II, they are goods "placed at the service of the mission of the Church" (*Discourse, 12 October*

1995), that is, expressions of liturgical life, of piety and of charity. (Pontifical Council for Culture, 2016)

It appears that, while the secular world may see the cultural goods of the Catholic Church as high art relics of the past, from the Vatican's perspective such goods are living heritage and retain their original functions within the cultural landscape of the Church. The Pontifical Council for Culture, however, does recognise that the useful life of moveable cultural goods is sometimes limited and that these items will then be managed through ecclesiastical archives, galleries and museums.

3.2 Entanglement, significance, values and heritage dissonance

Contemporary heritage practices continue to be driven by the concepts of cultural significance and heritage values, but what is understood by 'heritage values' is debated. L. Harald Fredheim and Manal Khalaf (2016) provided a useful overview of the development of values-based approaches in a wide range of heritage contexts, including, archaeological and historic objects, archaeological sites, historic buildings, and landscapes, and noted that multiple definitions of values and significance, and hence value typologies, do not make the assessment and management of heritage an easy task.

... In attempting to be inclusive, some typologies are very long, while others are presented as incomplete lists, merely giving examples of possible values without making an effort to present a complete typology. The sense that a comprehensive, universally applicable value typology is an impossibility is increasingly evident in the literature... (Fredheim & Khalaf, 2016, p. 467)

Fredheim and Khalaf contend that formalised and/or official interpretations of heritage, for example the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) described by Laurajane Smith (2014), tend to focus on elite, tangible heritage and encourage the view that heritage interpretation is best left to 'the experts'. Fredheim and Khalaf claim that the AHD and similar approaches to heritage are very much at odds with many current conservation practices and may actually impede the conservation of certain heritage (Fredheim & Khalaf, 2016, p. 469). Laurajane Smith (2014), in a review of the first ten years of operation of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, similarly noted that, 'official'

definitions of heritage value that emphasise the value of tangible heritage remain the dominant feature of heritage management policy. She sees intangible heritage being treated as an ‘add on’ to established values systems designed by Western heritage professionals and organisations. Smith reminds her readers that heritage is also a powerful political (as in national and community recognition or identity) and economic (for example through tourism) tool; a situation which can impact on how officially sanctioned World Heritage²² that is also valued by indigenous, minority, marginalised, or disenfranchised groups is recognised and managed (Smith, 2014, p. 139). Smith recounts instances where communities have taken control of their heritage in novel ways, specifically mentioning Sheenagh Pietrobruno’s documentation of how the internet site *YouTube*

... has allowed a number of different expressions and readings of the intangible heritage of the Mevlevi Sema (or whirling dervish) to be expressed and displayed, revealing gender issues not identified in the official documentation and listing by UNESCO in 2005 (Smith, 2014, p. 141).

Pietrobruno (2013) contends that internet sites such as YouTube allow communities and individuals greater control over how their heritage is represented and sustained. Marta de la Torre also recognises that heritage values are not fixed and contends in her discussion of the place of values in heritage -

... These values are attributed, not intrinsic; mutable, not static; multiple and often incommensurable or in conflict – can challenge established conservation principles. The nature of cultural values has serious implications for the impact of conservation on the values of a place, the universality of conservation principles, and the protection of the heritage for future generations. (de la Torre, 2014, p. 155)

Heritage values arise from people-object relationships, an entanglement that also offers a theoretical approach for this research. The concept of ‘entanglement’, as put forward by Ian Hodder, holds that people and objects are ‘entangled’ in webs of cultural meaning, cultural practice and performance.

²² For example, heritage that is included on UNESCO’s World Heritage List or Memory of the World.

... Human dependence on things leads to an entanglement between humans and things that has implications for the ways in which we have evolved and for the ways in which we live in societies today. (Hodder, 2012, p. 10)

Hodder's theory grew out of his work in archaeology but he sees person-thing entanglement as relevant for other fields of study. He contends that humans and their social life depend on things, such as technologies and tools, and that humans have evolved certain physical and cognitive capacities because of a dependency on things. Hodder makes an interesting point that

... if one takes an interactionist view (Jordan 2009²³), much thought may be impossible without something to think of, and certainly memory is closely tied to material mnemonics. (Hodder, 2011, p. 155)

Hodder's concept of *entanglement* builds on concepts which underpin aspects of how and why relationships develop between objects and people. These approaches include Thing Theory (Brown, 2001), Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005; van Oenen, 2011) and the Cartography of Controversies (Venturini, 2010b). People create objects, but through their enduring materiality, objects have agency and vibrancy which in turn has influence and power in social worlds (Knell, 2012; Olsen, 2010). Person-thing relationships are at the heart of intangible heritage embodied in tangible objects. The importance of intangible components of heritage significance, and the place of the voices and rights of traditional owners and custodians of cultural artefacts on exhibition and in storage within secular institutions are recognised in current heritage conventions, museum codes of ethics and management practice. However, the propensity of heritage doctrine to dichotomise tangible and intangible heritage confuses, and draws attention away from, the ways in which all material culture is continually made and remade through its entanglement in networks of use and meaning, and in turn how culture and identity is also made and remade through the process of material entanglement.

With multiple claims to custody or ownership of 'heritage', be it place, practice or object, and consequent multiple relationships and understandings, it is not surprising that disagreements and conflicts over heritage matters can, and do, arise. Tolina Loulanski noted that

²³ Jordan, J.S, (2009). Wild agency: nested intentionalities in cognitive neuroscience and archaeology. In *The sapient mind: archaeology meets neuroscience*. (eds.) C. Renfrew, C. Firth & L. Malafouris, 71-87. Oxford: University Press.

... The increase in heritage-interested groups has brought a growing number of viewpoints, opinions, definitions, and attitudes to heritage, which has further complicated its concept and field of study and increased the number of relevant issues to deal with in theory as well as practice. The new reality has necessitated the birth of heritage studies, another multidisciplinary field exploring the impact of heritage on the present, and the development of new holistic approaches to address the complexities and challenges related to heritage. (Loulanski, 2006, p. 207)

Loulanski advocates *functional heritage* as a conceptual framework and approach to heritage studies. Drawing on the work of numerous researchers Loulanski rejects an object-centric approach to heritage conservation, where the preservation of the object is the primary concern, in favour of a functional approach, where ‘heritage’, be it object, place or action, is best conserved through use. It is interesting to note that a functional heritage approach takes into account the changes in use that can accompany changes in cultural significance or heritage value as perceived by multiple owners/claimants. Loulanski contends that the traditional view of heritage borrowed from archaeology has expanded from moveable objects and built heritage to include *place and space*, and that by breaking the traditional boundaries between time, things, people, places, and spaces anthropology has helped re-invent, reposition and rework cultural heritage

... within a new, globally and locally activated “dense and complex web of people/things/places.”²⁴ (Loulanski, 2006, p. 217)

Loulanski also raises the issue of cultural dissonance, an area of study that has arisen out of the multiplicity of heritage claimants; where the differing values of stakeholders can lead to misunderstanding, discord and conflict, and even the destruction of heritage. The results of dissonance arising from debates about what constitutes ‘authentic’ heritage and who has the ‘right’ to decide on management strategies is increasingly evident in contemporary heritage management, particularly in regions where heritage is used to define identity or support national narratives. For example Visnja Krisic, in her ground-breaking research into cultural dissonance and its impact on heritage management policies in South Eastern Europe advocates the use of the *inclusive heritage discourse* (IHD) as an alternative to the AHD

²⁴ Loulanski cites: Bender, Barbara. (2001) “Landscapes On-The-Move.” *Journal of Social Archaeology* (1)1, pp75–89.

(authorised heritage discourse) mentioned earlier (Kisic, 2016, pp. 70-76). The Inclusive Authorised Discourse arose from the Faro Convention (Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society) which

... is based on the idea that knowledge and use of heritage form part of the citizen's right to participate in cultural life as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [article 26, UNESCO, 1948] ... and ... presents heritage both as a resource for human development, the enhancement of cultural diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. (Council of Europe, 2005)

Krisic claims that the IHD recognizes that heritage encompasses a "... plurality of meanings depending on context..." and that the materiality and intangibility of heritage can be connected by

... articulating heritage as values, beliefs and meanings reflected and expressed through material remains through an interpretative process.
(Krisic, 2016, p. 72)

It is interesting to note that Krisic recognises that the IHD does not 'solve' the problem of who decides the fate of heritage because its use implies choice and responsibility including options for management such as destruction, forgetting and alteration (Krisic, 2016, p. 74).

Deciding on whether a cultural site, object or practice is 'authentic heritage', and thus 'worthy' of conservation, is fundamental to contemporary heritage management policy and practice. The notion of 'authenticity' or what constitutes 'authentic' is seen as an important factor in the assessment of heritage values and in the development of conservation and management plans. This is particularly so when 'unofficial' community significance with an emphasis on meaning and use, meets 'official' national and international heritage policies which focus on aesthetics or tangible materiality, or an apparent preference for a particular political agenda. The Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS 1994), specifically addresses the complexities of defining and recognising authenticity especially where multiple values systems exist. The Nara Document asserts:

... In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties. (Nara Document, section 6)

... It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong. (Nara Document, section 11)

Herb Stovel, one of the editors of the Nara Document, in a paper on the origins and influence of the Nara Document written some 15 years after the Document's publication, notes that the Nara Document does not include a definitive definition of authenticity (Stovel, 2008, p. 11) nor do the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2017). The Operational Guidelines uses the term *conditions of authenticity* and provides a list of attributes of authenticity to consider when nominating a site for inclusion on the World heritage List (UNESCO, 2017, p. 26-27).

As a consequence it is not unusual for today's museum staff to consult original owner communities about the collections in their care and the content and design of display spaces and exhibitions. For example, as part of a three-year programme entitled *Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership*, curatorial staff at the Victoria and Albert Museum of Art and Design, London set up advisory groups with several religious communities to discuss the role and place of religious artefacts held in the museum's collections. The consultation process identified issues around the difficulties of communities accessing collection items, and in documenting the personal, and often hidden, significance of objects to their communities. Other topics under discussion included the use of out-of-date, inaccurate and sometimes offensive terminology in catalogues, museum records and on exhibition labels, the inappropriate interpretation or out-of-context displays, and the challenges of integrating the artistic, cultural and spiritual dimensions of religious objects within a secular space (Nightingale & Greene, 2010). Nightingale and Greene noted that participants from the Christian Advisory Group, comprising people from the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the United Reform Church, Anglican and High Anglican churches and a lay member of the Catholic Church commented that

... in Christianity objects are holy by association rather than intrinsically in theological terms. In their opinion the objects are therefore not as fundamentally sacred as in other faiths. (Nightingale & Greene, 2010, p. 232)

It would be interesting to know whether this view was shared equally by all members of the Christian Advisory Group or was ‘generalised’ from a range of opinions expressed, and indeed how applicable this finding is in the wider community.

The existence of values conflict is widely recognised in the museum profession within the field of indigenous cultural heritage, where owner/community emphasis on meaning and use, meets ‘official’ national and international heritage policies focused on preservation. The management of the heritage significance of religious artefacts, often seen in terms of tangible and intangible heritage, is a more recent phenomenon, and shares many of the issues faced by those working with ethnographic collections. For example, Miriam Clavir (2002), in her seminal work *Preserving what is valued: museums, conservation and First Nations*, outlines the debate surrounding the care and control of indigenous collections in Canadian museums. Clavir acknowledges that while the “State”, i.e. public museums, is primarily concerned with the preservation of the objects themselves, in many cases the traditional owners see the preservation of their customs, traditions and identity closely tied to the preservation of the physical artefact (Clavir, 2002, p. xvii). As we have seen, heritage management concepts and methods have incorporated more anthropologically and ethnographically informed approaches in recent years. Yet in Australia, it remains unusual for this type of consultation based approach to occur for Christian heritage collections. This is largely because the Church tends to retain control of its valued items; religious items have rarely been removed or taken from communities in processes analogous to those affecting indigenous communities. But as I will go on to explore, the Catholic Church is itself a complex hierarchy, and the possibility of dissonance between official and unofficial heritage values exists within this entity.

3.2.1 Religious artefacts as agents of cultural dissonance

Today ‘religious tourism’ is a global industry. In 2013 Julia Ridout investigated contrasting values and significance at three tourist destinations in Canterbury, United Kingdom, namely (a) Canterbury Cathedral, a working cathedral with a long history of pilgrimage dating from

medieval times (b) *The Canterbury Tales*, a commercial ‘heritage’ experience based on Geoffrey Chaucer’s fourteenth-century stories of pilgrims travelling to Canterbury and (c) the museum housed in a low-key, minimum impact building located at the ruins of the sixth-century St Augustine’s Abbey. She found that different value sets drive tourists and pilgrims to visit religious buildings, and religious and quasi-religious heritage sites in England, including the historic connections to the site, the aesthetics of the buildings and artefacts, and the spiritual or numinous experience of a holy place (Ridout, 2000). Janis Chatzigogas (2005) and Giorgios Alexopoulos (2013) discussed the potential impact of western museum conservation projects, and the provision of public access to living religious heritage, on the enclosed monastic communities living at the Greek Orthodox Community of Mount Athos. Jennifer Ryde (2013) investigated the response of the local Catholic Church to the impact of tourism on several Renaissance churches in Tuscany.

... In apparently one of the most devout Catholic countries in the world, it appears that the Catholic Church is faced with the dilemma of maintaining the integrity of its sites as sacred spaces while addressing invasions by visitors whose primary focus may not necessarily be spiritual. (Ryde, 2013, p. viii)

Ryde’s conclusions paint a picture of a Church trying to maintain the primary evangelical nature of its patrimony while recognising that ‘outside’ expertise is vital if it is to effectively manage its vast cultural heritage. To this end, the Church is employing more lay professionals to assist with the administration and management of its cultural heritage (Ryde, 2013, p. 255). Tourism is not the only way in which the values of the secular world have impinged on the Church. William Keenan (1999) extends the concept of religious values and significance to the profanisation and commodification of religious dress by secular interests. He contends that the religious ‘text’ carried by clerical garb can

...float freely between the religious and secular domains and thus belongs to both as signage adding ‘religious’ value to the material body for whatever purposes including commercial, erotic, ludic among others... (Keenan, 1999, p73)

Recent research into the cultural values and practices around cultural artefacts shows that the potential for cultural dissonance around religious artefacts is not confined to well-known and

recognised sites. Paulette Wallace (2009) investigated the debate in New Zealand over the fate of a memorial to a pioneering Methodist minister, The Whiteley Memorial, erected in the 1920s. The memorial was erected on land that was part of a Maori land rights claim in the 1990s. Wallace's analysis of the events surrounding the subsequent destruction of the memorial revealed that

... a tangible expression of heritage, like the memorial, is valued because of its intangible associations. The worth attributed to historic heritage rests less in its intrinsic merit than in a complex array of contemporary values. Therefore it is the 'complex array of contemporary values' that needs closer examination. ... What is explicit about the Whiteley Memorial case study is that this kind of conflict does not have clear right/wrong, good/bad answers. Instead it is a matter of finding balance between conflicting yet legitimate values. (Wallace, 2009, p. 22)

Renja Suominen-Kokkunen (2016) claimed that the cultural heritage of the Orthodox Church in Finland was, for a long time, generally defined as something negative and alien in Finnish memories. Suominen-Kokkunen cites the reluctance of Finnish art historians to include the contribution of the Orthodox Church in Finland as part of Finnish national identity. The art historians claimed that the art and architecture of the Finnish Orthodox Church is a reminder of the time when Finland was under Russian control, and so is by implication, not "Finnish" (Suominen-Kokkonen, 2016).

Interestingly, the potential for a similar cultural dissonance within the Catholic Church is reflected in a long-running debate over the 'correct' or 'authentic' style of the chasuble - the most visible of the sacred vestments worn for the celebration of the Mass. In the case of the 'authenticity' of the shape of the chasuble some groups argue that the simply decorated, draped, medieval *Gothic* style, developed in nineteenth-century England and Germany and based on images from medieval religious statuary and paintings, is more 'authentic' than the stiffened, heavily embroidered, baroque *Roman* style, typical of seventeenth and eighteenth-century France, Spain and Italy. Other groups regard the elaborate decoration typical of this flat 'sandwich board' or 'fiddle-back' Roman chasuble to be more indicative of every aspect of the liturgy being *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* – towards the greater glory of God (Connelly, 1889). Dom Eugene Roulin OSB (1931), in his critique of liturgical art and design in liturgical vesture, includes extensive discussions on 'appropriate' design and ornamentation.

He acknowledges the influences of prevailing taste and fashion, of statements of status and identity, and of community expectations, on an ever-changing vesture, while advocating tasteful design and a return to the simple, flowing vestments of the first Christian or ‘classical’ period, where “the faithful lived a life of charity in an atmosphere of simplicity and dignity” (Dwyer-McNulty, 2014, p. 50). Significantly, the reforms promulgated by Vatican II mirror the desire for a return to nobility and simplicity.

It is fitting that the beauty and nobility of each vestment derive not from abundance of overly lavish ornamentation, but rather from the material that is used and from the design. (Australian Bishops Conference, 2007, GIRM article 344)

The *Gothic* versus *Roman* debate continues today, with the wearing of flat, stiffened Roman chasubles largely confined to the celebration of the *Latin* or *Tridentine Mass* (also known as the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Mass as promulgated by Pope John XXIII in 1962) and identified with the so-called traditionalist or Tridentine communities who continue to lobby for a return to the pre-Vatican II rites that arose from the sixteenth-century Council of Trent (Tribe, 2006).

While current museum codes of ethics and practice emphasise the importance of referencing the intangible heritage values and the voices and rights of traditional owners and custodians of indigenous and non-western religious artefacts on exhibition and in storage in secular institutions, Christian artefacts, including ecclesiastical textiles, are not always recognised in the same way. For example, the ecclesiastical garments which formed a significant part of an exhibition at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art²⁵ were selected for their relevance to colonial exploration and trade networks (Peck, 2012), and an exhibition of ecclesiastical costume at the Art Institute of Chicago²⁶ was curated from an art history perspective (Mayer Thurman 1975). Artefacts in storage may be catalogued or described using out-of-date or inappropriate terminology (Nightingale & Greene, 2010). For example, a stole, one of the *vestes sacrae*, recently discovered in an English military museum had been described in the 1950s as a ribbon (M. Parsons, 2014b). Recent research has revealed that the stole was worn by an Irish military chaplain during World War I and depicted in a significant

²⁵ The exhibition was entitled “Interwoven Globe: The worldwide textile trade 1500-1800” and was open from September 16, 2013 to January 5, 2014.

²⁶ The exhibition was entitled “Raiment for the Lord's service: A thousand years of Western vestments” and was open from November 15, 1975 to January 18, 1976.

contemporary painting of the regiment's march to its last battle (M. Parsons, 2014a). Therefore, the existing description lacked any reference to the ecclesiastical, spiritual and cultural significance of the artefact. Two of the very few references to Australian religious artefacts that appear in secular literature serve to reinforce this apparent ignorance of ecclesiastical significance. Firstly, a catalogue entry from a major exhibition of nineteenth-century South Australian silverwork held at the Art Gallery of South Australia²⁷ in 2012, described the design and manufacture of a chalice and monstrance made for a local Catholic Church in great detail, but made no mention of the religious significance of these sacred artefacts (Reason, 2012). Secondly, the Dress Register of Australia (DRA), a textile survey and cataloguing initiative of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, contains a record for a chasuble salvaged from the Pro-Cathedral of Maitland from debris following a major flood in 1955. The chasuble is now in the collection of the Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles, a local secular museum. The significance statement for the chasuble describes its historical links to the community and comments on its fabric, form and manufacture, but again there is no mention of the spiritual significance of the garment (Dress Register of Australia, n.d.). It should be noted that the management of ecclesiastical artefacts housed in museums and galleries is subject to the same constraints of limited funding and access to expert knowledge shared by all objects in public and private collections.

3.2.2 Significance and Collecting

Objects have been collected for centuries. Phillip Blom's 2002 book, *To have and to hold*, explores the motivations and intentions of centuries of collectors and collecting. Blom discusses the fascination for the exotic and unusual that drove the wealthy and powerful ruling classes of the Renaissance to impress their peers with elaborate cabinets of curiosities filled with nature's rarities. He notes that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment explorers and scientists collected natural history specimens and 'native' artefacts for their wealthy patrons and eighteenth-century English travellers on the European Grand Tour amassed private galleries of classical statuary and European painting. European colonial expansion exploited newly encountered indigenous populations by collecting their artefacts to preserve what were believed to be archaic and 'dying' cultures. Many of these ethnographic and archaeological collections formed the foundations of the great nineteenth-century public

²⁷ The exhibition was entitled "Bounty: Nineteenth-century South Australian gold and silver" and was open from June 2, 2012 to August 5, 2012.

museums, for example the British Museum and the Natural History Museum in London, dedicated to the edification of the ‘masses’ rather than the vanities of the wealthy (Boissoneault, 2017). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, research in anthropology, ethnography and archaeology shifted to a more professional footing as universities took over from explorer/collectors and antiquarians, and wealthy patrons (Stocking, 1985, p. 8). Until well into the twentieth century, while cultural practices and meanings were often documented by archaeologists and anthropologists, objects continued to be exhibited out of context with little, if any, cultural information for visitors (Alexander & Alexander 2007, p. 9-10). The approach to heritage became even more canonical and subject to regulations with the drafting of national and international heritage conventions, for example by the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. As we have seen, official heritage has been defined as that which is recognised and protected by states and other forms of government and international bodies such as UNESCO.

Until the late twentieth century, according to several writers, official heritage, for example UNESCO’s World Heritage List, was largely restricted to ‘significant’ natural sites, monuments, buildings, and artworks; a reflection of a strong Western emphasis on materiality, and a bias towards European sites (Steiner & Frey, 2001). Lynn Meskell, Claudia Liuzza and Nicholas Brown’s 2016 analysis of the locations and dates of World Heritage listings between 1977 and 2014 quantified this perceived bias and revealed some interesting trends. For example, in the years before 2001, 368 of the listed 721 sites (51%) were located in Europe, the USA and Canada. By 2014 the World Heritage List had grown to 1007 sites with 479 (48%) still located in Europe, the USA and Canada (Meskell et al., 2016, p. 449). However, a growing acceptance of the concept of *intangible* heritage including cultural practices, memory, language and oral traditions, and ‘living heritage’ has seen a shift towards a broadening concept of ‘heritage’ and more recognition for ‘heritage’ outside Europe, North America and Canada, an observation supported by the work of Meskell and her colleagues. For example, while the overall proportion of European and North American sites on the World Heritage list may now stand at 48%, a relatively small reduction of 3%, 175 of the 286 sites (61%) added between 2001 and 2014 were located outside this region (Meskell et al., 2016, p. 449). Julie Lawless and Kapila Silva (2017), however, highlighted the wide range of ‘meanings’ still associated with ‘authenticity’ despite the inclusion of authenticity ‘criteria’ based on intangible heritage values being included in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* since 2005. In a review of the nomination dossiers of 31 World

Heritage sites in Asia, Lawless and Silva found that nominations made as recently as 2014 still relied heavily on values associated with materiality and made little reference to the more intangible attributes of authenticity (Lawless & Silva, 2017, pp. 7-9, 11).

Importantly, significance as articulated by UNESCO is seen as generated by the communities which own and use objects and is influenced and interpreted by the knowledge that their owners possess. UNESCO makes an interesting point about who can legitimately assign significance.

... without [the owner community's] recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage. (UNESCO, 2003, article 2)

Perhaps as a result of this understanding of the origin of cultural heritage, local communities, particularly indigenous groups, are increasingly consulted regarding the significance and management of their material heritage and cultural sites.

The late twentieth century saw another shift in focus, particularly in the world of museums, as the concepts of object agency and object biography gained ground (Alberti, 2005). For some heritage professionals objects not only embody cultural beliefs and spiritual symbolism but also tell their 'life stories' through their materials, design and use-wear patterns (Caple, 2006b). Neil Curtis (2006) references entanglement when he discusses the role that the lives of objects play in modern heritage and museum practices, particularly when dealing with such issues as the repatriation of cultural artefacts to their owner communities.

... Museums need to reflect more on the tangled histories of their collections and the many voices that deserve to be heard. ... [this also] involves a closer appreciation of the specifics of particular objects and their multiple meanings in documentation, exhibition planning and the consideration of requests to restrict access or to repatriate items. (Curtis, 2006, p. 125)

Even though the approach to heritage research in the late twentieth century increasingly reflects the recognition and entanglement of tangible materiality and intangible cultural practices and beliefs, and invites community consultation, the emphasis in scholarly literature and practice remains on the cultures of the West's 'others'. Religious cultural heritage of Western Judeo-Christian cultures, including that of the Catholic Church, remains under-

researched in terms of a community focussed approach. This promulgates the notion that this mainstream/powerful group is not made up of ‘communities’ – where community status is only applied to non-powerful groups as a corrective that attempts to redress historical power imbalances.

3.2.3 Collecting and the Acquisition of Knowledge

Objects have a tangible materiality that may appeal to the senses but they also store a wealth of cultural knowledge. As stated earlier, cultural significance or value is generated by the communities which own and use objects and is influenced and interpreted by the knowledge that their owners possess. As objects move from owner to owner this ‘knowledge’ can change. Certain ‘old’ knowledge, particularly hidden or secret knowledge known only to particular groups or individuals within a community, can be lost as ‘new’ knowledge, based on the cultural landscape of new owners, is acquired. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill cites Foucault’s three major epistemes, the *Renaissance*, the *classical*, and the *modern*, as a crucial framework for understanding how knowledge about objects was acquired and shaped. Each of these epistemes had quite specific characteristics or epistemologies, and the shift from one to the next represented a massive cultural upheaval, a rupture that meant the complete re-writing of knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 12). These epistemes influenced the ways in which objects were assigned significance and included in collections.

The Renaissance episteme is epitomised by the cabinet of curiosity, or *Wunderkammer*, collections of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. The seemingly chaotic collections of exotic or rare curios and natural history specimens inspired awe and wonder in their audiences – who were left to create their own links between the objects in an attempt to make sense of the collection (Schwartz & Serrano, 2011, p. 2). Legend, stories, hearsay, and material things all offered possibilities for discovering likenesses and relationships (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, p. 15). The Classical episteme emerged during the Enlightenment, characterised by the observation, classification, and the hierarchical ranking of objects. Knowledge came not from finding relationships connecting diverse objects but by separating objects into categories depending on measurable or visible characteristics. The Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a period of exploration and colonial expansion. Private collectors amassed ever-increasing collections of artefacts and natural history specimens in an attempt to catalogue the world. These collections became the foundations of the great public museums of the nineteenth century where new knowledge arose from the

scientific measuring and analysis of their objects. The modern episteme contends that knowledge arises externally from objective observation and internally from experience. Hooper-Greenhill (2010, p. 214) claims the act of knowing is shaped by a mix of experience, activity, and pleasure, in an environment where both the 'learning' subject and the 'teaching' subject have equal powers. This change in approach coincided with the early twentieth-century shift to a focus on the ways cultural practice and beliefs are embodied in objects. The modern episteme is the context for the development of anthropological and ethnographical research which influenced the development of heritage studies in the mid-twentieth century.

With the emergence of material culture studies in the twentieth century and, material religion studies at the beginning of the twenty first century, the modern episteme continues its influence on the acquisition of 'heritage' knowledge (Woodward, 2013). In a similar vein, West and Ansell (2010) see the history of collecting and managing heritage as a chronological process, encompassing evolving ways of thinking over the past 300 years. They identify significant changes in the definition and management of heritage that align with the epistemes discussed by Hooper-Greenhill. West and Ansell contend that the contemporary sense of 'heritage' begins during The Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a time of rising interest in science and its attendant principles of observation and classification. This period can be seen as the beginning of a systematic collection and preservation culture. Wealthy amateurs and antiquarians amassed collections of the rare, the exotic and the unusual from new worlds opened up by exploration and colonial expansion (Blom, 2002). Objects were sorted, classified, ranked and arranged in various ways, for example in chronological order to show a developmental trend, as taxonomic groups to highlight similarities and differences, or as a hierarchy of increasing complexity and sophistication (West, 2010). In the nineteenth century this 'scientific' approach was extended to the study of indigenous and native cultures, particularly those under colonial administration (Pole, 1993). Ethnographers brought the 'human voice' of cultural heritage to the tangible 'material' cultural artefacts of the great collections and museums in Europe and North America. The material-centred management protocols then favoured by archaeologists were challenged by an awareness that objects have a subjective side – signs and symbols understood by their communities but unknown to outsiders – that defines the relationships or entanglements between people and objects and determines cultural significance and heritage value.

European countries have long recognised the place Christian religious heritage plays in their national identity and heritage. Cathedrals, churches and other religious buildings in France, Italy and Spain feature heavily on the UNESCO World Heritage List. For example, in 2018, of the 39 cultural sites listed for France 19 (48%) are religious buildings or precincts including religious buildings²⁸. The Museum Cartharijneconvent in the Netherlands is a state sponsored museum of Protestant and Catholic religious art and objects from the Netherlands. The results of a survey organised by the organisation Future for Religious Heritage: The European Network for Historic Places of Worship (FRH) found that over 80% of the 6000 respondents believed that religious buildings form an essential part of European cultural heritage (Future for Religious Heritage, 2014, p13). Several countries have enacted legislation to protect ecclesiastical buildings and associated artefacts of national and international significance. For example,

... The basic legal instruments in relation to the protection of religious heritage in the Kingdom of the Netherlands are the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* and the *Monuments Act*. ... The laws stipulate specific criteria of protection which seek to distinguish among the great mass of structures and objects, those cultural elements of particular relevance to Dutch heritage. (Tsivolas, 2014, p. 156)

... The historical cultural value inherent in church buildings, church sites, church furnishings, and burial grounds are protected under the provisions of chapter 4, section1 of the Swedish *Heritage Conservation Act*. (Tsivolas, 2014, p. 165)

While the legislation mentioned above does not specifically mention ecclesiastical textiles, it could be argued that such textiles could fit criteria covering objects (The Netherlands' legislation) and church furnishings (Sweden's legislation).

3.2.4 Ecclesiastical textiles as a focus for research

As noted in chapter 1, ecclesiastical textiles have been the focus of research in a wide range of contexts from fields as diverse as liturgical studies, theology, Church history, archaeology,

²⁸ Of Italy's 49 cultural sites and Spain's 41 cultural sites 21 (43%) and 14 (23%) are religious buildings or include religious buildings. Data extracted from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/fr> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/it> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/es>

anthropology and ethnography, medieval studies and other eras of history, art history, architectural history, sociology and psychology, law, gender studies and politics, material culture, popular culture, heritage conservation and museology. Within the field of heritage studies the specialist journal *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief*, which began publication in 2005, now provides a platform for the publication of research into religious cultural heritage. Personal and public perceptions of the significance, meaning or value of ecclesiastical garments in particular have provided much fodder for secular research. For example, Maureen Miller (2014) used vesture to track the changing role and status of the clergy in Europe from the ninth to the thirteenth century, contending that the style of vesture at any particular time reflected prevailing cultural beliefs about the role of clothing –

... the early church was deeply ambivalent about special liturgical attire, and even after its acceptance in the late fourth century ecclesiastical leaders repeatedly banned the use of expensive materials. ... The emergence of ornate vestments was not a natural development. Its origins were in specific historical circumstances and its acceptance and proliferation depended on political and religious ideas as well as social and economic structures. (M. C. Miller, 2014, p. 5)

Miller supported this last statement by noting that in medieval times a person's clothing identified his or her rank, status and role in accordance with a widespread belief that there existed a relationship between a person's exterior appearance and some inner state: clothing could have "some inner effect and produce powerful 'material memories' " (M. C. Miller, 2014, p.10). Lynne Hume (2013) also linked the dress code of the Catholic clerical hierarchy to power and status within the Church, while Christiane Elster (2013) examined the donation of papal gifts of expensive vestments to bishops as a method of securing loyalty during times of political instability. Danielle Rives (2005) examined the role that a woman's 'taking the veil' and a new name upon entering a convent played in identity transformation. Rives sees a novice's taking the veil and changing her name as a sign that she has left the secular world and, with her new name, entered a community already on the threshold of eternity (Rives, 2005, p.474). Andrew Miller (2012) investigating the implications that the 'mutilation' (i.e. symbolical tearing) of vestments had on the status of a cleric in medieval England reached similar conclusions to Maureen Miller (2014) and saw that

... clothing was a potent, gendered symbol in medieval society, especially in its 'ritual functions' as vestments ... An attack on these symbols, therefore, was a meaningful act intended to convey the message of power, mastery and illegitimacy to the victim and audience alike. (A. G. Miller, 2012, pp. 271-271)

Andrew Miller further contended that clerics targeting the ceremonial garments of their opponents delegitimised their adversaries while an attack by a layman was a symbolic attack on the authority of the Church. (A. G. Miller, 2012, Abstract). John Maiden and Peter Webster (2013) used the failed 1964 attempt by the Anglican Church to force through reforms to the laws governing the vesture of Anglican priests in England as an illustration of the waning influence of Protestantism over the British Parliament. Francoise Piponnier (1997), investigating the sources of fabric used in medieval vestments, revealed that the expensive and precious fabrics used as funeral palls for the nobility were often bequeathed to the church to be made into vestments, an ostentatious show of the donor's status and wealth rather than piety. Thomas Long (1978) investigated the layman's perception of the significance of religious dress, in research designed to assess the effects of uniform (in this case a religious habit) and religious status of interviewers on male and female Catholic and non-Catholic interviewees. Statistical analysis of Long's data

... revealed significant main effect differences in (a) length of interview (interviewees spent more time speaking to nuns dressed in a habit) and (b) interviewee attitude (female interviewees responded more conservatively than males, Catholics responded more conservatively than non-Catholics, and all interviewees responded more conservatively to nuns than non-nuns. (Long, 1978, p. 406)

In a long and detailed analysis of US court cases, Samuel Levine (1998), investigating the potential impact of clerical and other religious dress on proceedings, discussed decisions revolving around the wearing of religious garb, including Christian clerical collars, in courtrooms. Levine looked at a number of landmark cases involving the rights of witnesses, defendants, and/or legal counsel to wear religious garb in the courtroom and its perceived effect on a jury's ability to render a fair verdict. The complex legal arguments and responses by courts at various levels within the US legal system highlighted the complexities of balancing a person's right to religious freedom with the interests of courtroom decorum and

security (Levine, 1998) p1506. An intriguing and interesting study by Mary Ann Littrell and Sandra Evers published in 1985 in a home economics journal investigated the connections between changes in vesture wrought by Vatican II and changes to the role of the priest in his community. The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (the decades immediately before, during and after the dress reforms and liturgical renewal of Vatican II) saw many changes in vesture, the role of the priest and priest-laity relations. Littrell and Evers studied hundreds of chasubles manufactured in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and found that statistically

... Vestments from the 1960s, when the priest role was unclear, were more diverse in percent of area covered by embellishment, number of motifs per garment, and design organization than were vestments from the 1950s or 1970s. Lower percentages of embellishment, fewer motifs per garment, and simpler design organization on 1970s than 1950s chasubles were considered symbolic of change in priest-laity relations. (Littrell & Evers, 1985, p. 152).

Littrell and Evers' findings indirectly support the traditional view that clerical dress/vesture reflects status, power and role.

The scientific and technological significance of vesture is reflected in the number of scientific analyses of the materials found in ecclesiastical textiles and the amount of research into the challenges of conserving these items. For example the metal threads in colonial Andean ecclesiastical robes provided the material for an investigation into the composition, manufacture and deterioration of metal threads in historic textiles (Muros, Warmlander, Scott, & Theile, 2007). Rita Correia and her colleagues, when trialling a multi-pronged analysis methodology designed to date and determine the condition of heritage textiles, used ecclesiastical textiles from the Santarém Diocesan Museum in Portugal as their test objects. Correia and her team employed analytical techniques including FTIR (Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy), EDXRF (Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence) and Raman Spectroscopy (Correia, Armindo, Neves, Vilarigues, & Macedo, 2016). Several articles on textile conservation published in-house by the Victoria and Albert Museum deal with the challenges of treating, conserving and displaying ecclesiastical textiles (Cogram, 1995; Eatman, 2017). Surprisingly, an analysis of the composition of gold lace embroideries in a relic of St Francis was published not in a journal aimed at heritage professionals but in a journal dedicated to nuclear physics (Migliori, Grassi, & Mando, 2008).

Historians, sociologists, psychologists and writers in the field of women's studies have mentioned ecclesiastical textiles in a range of works focussing on the roles of women in the Catholic Church. For example, Isabella Campagnol (2009) discussed the many roles ecclesiastical embroidery played in the lives of women in Venetian convents in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, Susan O'Brien (1992) investigated the role women played in decorating the interior of churches in the nineteenth century and Tania Kohwagner-Nikolai (2010) examined the ways women in medieval convents used church textiles such as tapestries to create an identity in what was essentially a male environment. Jennifer Isaacs (1987), writing on domestic arts and crafts in Australia, included a chapter on the important contributions that women, through their needlework, embroidery and sewing skills, made to the community and spiritual lives of their local churches. While much of this research touched upon the cultural significance of ecclesiastical textiles, this had not been its focus.

Research on the cultural value and significance of Catholic religious heritage that has been published focusses largely on overseas experiences. For example the challenges faced by heritage staff, and the resident monks themselves, reconciling the faith requirements and conservation needs of the Mount Athos World Heritage Site²⁹ are discussed by Janis Chatzigogas (2005) and Georgios Alexopoulos (2013). Laurel Kendall and her colleagues (2013) investigated the conflict between groups of Catholics living inside and outside Vietnam caused by the sale of antique religious statues in secular galleries in Vietnam. Kendall et al. recognised *entanglement* as the basis for this 'dissonance of understanding' as a result of

... The social life of things [colliding] with material religion at the place where statues and other religious paraphernalia are first transacted into artefact, art, folk art, or native handicraft. The bridge between these two domains of inquiry is the recognition that object biographies are propelled in part by notions of object agency that assume particular protocols for interactions between people and things. (Kendall, et al., 2013, p. 66)

One relatively recent area of research into historical Catholic material heritage garnering interest is the English Catholic recusancy resulting from the Reformation. Recusant artefacts,

²⁹ An Orthodox spiritual centre since 1054, Mount Athos has enjoyed an autonomous statute since Byzantine times. The 'Holy Mountain', which is forbidden to women and children, is also a recognized artistic site. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/454>

particularly vestments, have been claimed to be political statements and community identifiers at a time when the Catholic Church was under attack in sixteenth-century Europe (Corthell et al., 2007). In their book of essays Ronald Corthell and his fellow editors explored various themes of the Catholic culture in Early Modern England, including the significance and values placed on religious ‘objects’ including spaces (Davidson, 2007), vestments (Holroyd, 2007) and relics (Myers, 2007). The significance of Catholic ecclesiastical textiles as cultural identifiers and manifestations of their cultural values was evident in Norman Jones’ review of Corthell et al. when he stated –

English Catholics lived among their Protestant neighbours, but they had cultural practices that identified them as Catholics, gave them a sense of community, and quietly asserted their values. These articles do a fine job of opening up the mental and physical worlds they created and represented in their gardens, houses, needlework, conversion narratives and high literature. (Jones, 2007)

At about the same time as the publication of Corthell et al., a major exhibition of historical Catholic artefacts was mounted at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts³⁰. The accompanying catalogue included essays on the cultural significance and importance of Catholic artefacts, including vestments and other textiles. Artefacts dating from the recusancy and the medieval revival of the nineteenth century were portrayed as particularly significant as they helped to maintain and inspire devotion, and maintain the beliefs and traditions of a scattered Catholic community (Raguin, 2006, preface). In his essay for this exhibition’s catalogue, Simon Roffey saw medieval religious objects as an essential part of the life of the church and their survival as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit when faced with overwhelming difficulties. Such objects were not mere decorative pieces but embodied a deep cultural significance as they were

... seen not only as works of art in their own right, but also as symbols of defiance, of resistance and of continuity rooted in long-standing religious tradition. (Roffey, 2006, p. 29).

³⁰ The exhibition was entitled “Catholic Collecting, Catholic Reflection 1538-1850: Objects as a measure of reflection on a Catholic past and the construction of Recusant identity in England and America” and was open from February 22 to April 13, 2006.

Within the Church ecclesiastical scholars have written on the history, theology and liturgy of the Catholic faith, but, unlike literature published in secular sources, much of this literary output is difficult to access outside the Church's private libraries and archives. Few early ecclesiastical works were written in a language other than Latin and so, unless a translation exists, their contents are largely beyond the reach of scholars not conversant with Latin. The same dilemma faces researchers accessing Vatican documents – official correspondence, papal letters and writings, liturgical directives and Canon Law published in the official gazette of the Holy See, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, is historically and traditionally printed in Latin. While parts of Durandus' medieval treatise on architecture, vesture and mystic symbolism have been translated (Durandus, 2010), Joseph Braun's 1907 seminal and much cited work on the form, function and history of vesture remains in its original German. There are also sources of information on Church patrimony in the archives of many religious institutions. For example, among the attendees at a conference on the value and importance of Catholic Recusancy Archives held at Downside Abbey in 2004, were a number of scholars from secular academies "... who spoke of their own findings and of their own experience of using a body of archival and visual material which is neither consistently catalogued nor inevitably well known ..." (Davidson & Nicoll, 2004, p. 4).

Interestingly, the Catholic Church has long seen the value of education for its followers and there exists an important encyclopaedia published expressly for the Catholic laity - *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, known affectionately as the Old Catholic Encyclopedia. The first volume of this monumental 15 volume work, written by dozens of authoritative contributors, was published in 1907 and the last in 1914 and designed to –

... give its readers full and authoritative information on the entire cycle of Catholic interests, action and doctrine. What the Church teaches and has taught; what she has done and is still doing for the highest welfare of mankind; her methods, past and present; her struggles, her triumphs, and the achievements of her members, not only for her own immediate benefit, but for the broadening and deepening of all true science, literature and art.
(Catholic Encyclopedia, 1912, preface)

Supplementary volumes were added over the next few years. The Old Catholic Encyclopedia was superseded by the New Catholic Encyclopedia published in 1967, again supported by

later supplementary volumes. The latest version of the New Catholic Encyclopedia was published in 2002. Entries from the Old Catholic Encyclopedia are particularly relevant to the history, significance, rubrics and regulations of ecclesiastical textiles prior to the liturgical renewal and vesture reforms of Vatican II, the era in which the majority of historical vestments used in Australian churches originated. The works of nineteenth and early twentieth-century liturgical writers and commentators such as Fr Adrian Fortescue and Dom Eugene Roulin OSB, and the ‘how to’ manuals designed for professional vestment makers and members of altar guilds charged with maintaining religious textiles (Antrobus & Preece, 1923; Britt, 1949; Mackrille, 1926), have been out of print for decades. However, thanks to advances in digitisation technology and on-line archives, many of these out-of-print but historically and culturally significant books can now be accessed ‘on-line’ via virtual libraries such as the Open Library program run by the Internet Archive and the HathiTrust digital library and repository.

To summarise, while numerous fields of study offer diverse perspectives and highlight different values and points of significance of Catholic ecclesiastical textiles, there is little published heritage studies research on the significance and values placed on ecclesiastical textiles by ‘owner’ communities. An exception to this apparent lack of focus is the textile collection housed at the New Norcia Benedictine Community in Western Australia. In recent years, this collection has been the subject of several research projects and heritage reports which specifically address significance (Baker, 2017; MacLeod & Car, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016). I will analyse this research further in following chapters.

3.3 Research Approach and Methodology

Many writers assert that heritage studies and critical heritage studies have developed no specialised methodology but continue to borrow from a range of disciplines (Morgan, 2010; Sorensen & Carman, 2009; Stocking, 1985). The interdisciplinary nature of heritage studies has been recognised at an international level with the recent founding of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), a worldwide association of academics and practitioners dedicated to

... the examination of the issues and the social, territorial, economical or cultural impacts of tangible and intangible heritage. It aims at contributing to

the renewal of knowledge and to the improvement of patrimonial practices in communitarian, academic, territorial and political circles, by cross-examining perspectives and questionings and by opening up national and disciplinary perspectives. (Association of Critical Heritage Studies [ACHS], 2016).

The inaugural conference of the ACHS, held in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2012, brought together disciplines as diverse as anthropology, archaeology, architecture, cultural studies, film studies, folklore studies, geography, history, law, museology, musicology, political science, sociology and tourism studies. Critical heritage studies therefore draws on a wide range of approaches and methodologies to investigate the relationships between people and objects. The interdisciplinary nature of cultural heritage studies and the tangible/intangible duality of ecclesiastical textiles beg a multi-disciplinary approach. Methods selected from the methodologies commonly used in archaeology, ethnography, material culture studies and museum studies research offer a range of research and analytical options appropriate to research into various aspects of cultural objects (Caple, 2006a; Filipucci, 2009; Prown, 1982; Sorensen & Carman, 2009; Uzzell, 2009).

Material culture studies grew out of archaeology and ethnography as the concept of objects embracing both tangible and intangible values gained acceptance within the heritage currency. Archaeology has traditionally focused on life in the past reconstructed through the analysis of material objects left behind by past cultures and communities. Ethnography analyses living cultures through the observation of cultural practices and a community's use of artefacts. Material culture research often focuses on historically significant archaeological or cultural artefacts (Caple, 2006b; Jervis, 2011; Lydon & Ireland, 2005), and indigenous artefacts or non-western, non-Christian religious artefacts (Clavir, 2002; Matero, 2000), so analytical methodologies employed by archaeologists investigating the materiality of artefacts are useful starting points for an investigation into the materiality of western/Christian ecclesiastical textiles. For example, archaeologist Chris Caple (2006) outlines several approaches to the study of cultural objects in his book *Objects: reluctant witnesses to the past*. Caple agrees that objects and artefacts

... are historical documents, seeking to collate all the cultural, historical and scientific evidence into an artefact life-cycle (Caple, 2006b, p.13).

but also sees objects as instruments and symbols. More important is his assertion that cultural objects exist in a context be it social, cultural, temporal or spatial (Caple, 2006b, p12). Caple contends that the basic form of an object may be determined by its intended use or function and the materials it is made from, concepts echoing in some ways object typologies and object evolution put forward by the Victorian collector Augustus Pitt-Rivers, but beyond that any variations are culturally determined (Caple, 2006b, p.7). Caple extends the traditional analytical approach of archaeological research to include the object biography and its associated methodologies to develop an investigative methodology he calls OPUS – *Object Production and Use Sequence* (Caple, 2006b, pp. 14-15). Object biographies were the focus of volume 31, issue 2 of the journal *World Archaeology* in which Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall (1999) introduced and summarised the work of several researchers who had investigated artefacts and formulated object biographies from a diverse range of cultural landscapes. Gosden and Marshall, concluded that the notion of object biography is founded on the links that form between people and objects and that while

... There are many ways of understanding these links and many ways of conceptualizing the objects which lie at the heart of these links ... no one theory will ever be adequate to understand all circumstances. (Gosden & Marshall, 1999, p. 172)

Gosden and Marshall also contend that there is a mutual process of value creation between people and things and that objects can derive significance from connections to persons and events and persons can obtain status through possession of certain objects (Gosden & Marshall, 1999, p. 170).

Object biography, therefore, provides a methodology suitable for researching the relationships, and hence cultural significance, that exists between ecclesiastical textiles and the communities/groups which value them. Ethnographically speaking, much cultural research focusses on indigenous and non-western non-Christian cultural practices and artefacts. Ethnographic research's emphasis on 'Others' could be seen to diminish the value of 'western' research into living western Christian religious cultural practices, a view supported by Mary M. Brooks (2012) when she suggested that Christian religious artefacts are recognised more for their aesthetics than for their sacredness. The traditional view of Christian religious artefacts as 'art objects' is, however, being challenged. For example, included in the nine case studies which Caple uses to illustrate the OPUS approach to

material culture research are two Christian artefacts – the Winchester reliquary (Caple, 2006b, pp. 199-204) and a door from Durham Cathedral (Caple, 2006b, pp. 230-239). Interestingly, Len Pole (1993) has also commented upon the tendency for ethnographic methods to only be applied to cultures ‘exotic’ to the researcher.

There is no philosophical or logical distinction between the study of the significance of St Paul’s cathedral to the peoples of seventeenth-century England and the study of the significance of a tambaran men’s house to the peoples of the Sepik River in New Guinea. (Pole, 1993, p. 58).

Mixed methods is an approach exemplified by the *Case Study* methodology commonly encountered in anthropological and ethnographic research. Raymond Madden (2010), approaching the case study from an ethnographic perspective, reminds readers that ethnographic researchers must be aware of the ‘emic’ (participant perspective) and the ‘etic’ (observer perspective) in their research. These twin perspectives are encompassed in the concepts of positionality, as discussed by Margaret W. Pasquini & Oluwashola Olaniyan (2004), and reflexivity, as discussed by Philip Salzman (2002). Madden (2010) illustrates the case study method through a sequential discussion of his work with indigenous communities. My research extends the multi-disciplinary methodologies used for research into indigenous and non-western, non-Christian cultural heritage to western, Christian cultural heritage. Robert Yin (2009), citing many different studies, offers an extensive discussion of the Case Study design process, along with very detailed models and exercises on data collection, analysis and reporting. Marie Sorensen (2009) notes the place of interviews in various fields of research and notes that the anthropological interview

... becomes a matter of listening: emphasising the importance of the interviewer actively avoiding influencing and biasing the conversation, with the role of the interviewer as listener, echoing the tradition of the unobtrusive presence of the participant observer. (Sorensen, 2009, p. 165)

3.4 Conclusion

Overwhelmingly past research into ecclesiastical textiles has focussed on history and materiality rather than on cultural significance and heritage value. In heritage studies, research into Christian artefacts is dominated by scientific studies of their materiality with a

view to the development of conservation treatments (Adriaens, 2005; Karydis, 2010; Migliori, Grassi, & Mando, 2008; Theile, Guarda, & Croquevielle, 2004). Historically, the development and functions of clerical garments are well documented (Dean, 1982; Durandus, 2010; Johnstone, 2012; Macalister, 1896; Norris, 1950; Noonan, 2012;). While the materiality of historically significant vesture has been the subject of much archaeological-style research (Eri, 2009; Armindo, 2010; Karydis, 2010), contemporary vesture has been largely ignored by researchers. Current textile conservation literature concentrates on elaborate, historically significant items manufactured from traditional fibres and fabrics (Boersma, Brokerhof, van den Berg, & Tegelaers, 2007; MacLeod, & Car, 2014c, 2016; Muros et al., 2007; Theile, Guarda, & Croquevielle, 2004; Timar-Balazsy, & Eastop, 1998), a problematic situation given that, as part of a living heritage, contemporary ecclesiastical textiles made from ‘modern’ materials with different conservation needs will be the heritage items of the future.

None of the methodologies discussed provides, by itself, all the tools for this research. The assembled methods combine elements of archaeological analysis, object biography, and a case study approach to investigate and answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Caple sees OPUS and similar object biography methodologies as particularly relevant to

... archaeologists, curators and conservators who need to be aware of all the forms of evidence intrinsic to an object so that they can recover all the available information about the object and do not destroy or obscure information during cleaning, conservation and presentation processes.
(Caple, 2006b, p. 13)

Caple’s OPUS framework describes numerous analytical techniques, many of which are outside the scope and resources of this research. His use of simple visual examinations and photographic records, however, helped build a general picture of the scope and composition of the surveyed collections. The examination of archival and other documentation, another method used by Caple to collect information for object biographies (i.e. stories), provided historical, aesthetic and social contexts for selected textiles and assisted in unravelling the community and personal memories woven into them. The semi-structured and unstructured interview and questionnaire protocol informed by the works of Yin and Madden formed the basis for my research into the heritage value and cultural significance of ecclesiastical textiles. Semi-structured interviews allowed interviewees to tell the stories behind the

ecclesiastical textiles in their care, provide as much or as little information about the significance and value of those textiles as they wished and discuss the challenges of conserving/preserving such a fragile cultural legacy. The data collected was predominantly qualitative and descriptive, rather than quantitative, and focussed on participants' understandings and interpretations of cultural significance and heritage values – concepts that are obviously subjective rather than objective. As the surveyed textiles came from both religious and secular landscapes, it was possible to compare and contrast 'internal' (religious) community values and cultural significance with 'external' (secular) perceptions of the value and significance of the collections. In the following chapter I will describe the data collection and analysis methods used in the research and provide an overview of the participating institutions and their collections.

Chapter 4

Method and Design

Current approaches in heritage studies suggest that cultural objects and artefacts embody multiple ‘significances’ to different groups of owners in a variety of cultural contexts. A study of the cultural significance of ecclesiastical textiles in Australia, therefore, needs to examine the nature of ecclesiastical textiles and the types of cultural contexts they are found in, as well as the thoughts and opinions on the significance of the textiles from their custodian communities.

4.1 Selection of Textile Collections

The diocesan archives, cathedrals, parish churches, chapels, convents, monasteries, abbeys and religious schools within the Catholic Church in Australia that could potentially hold textile collections number in the many hundreds. The Catholic Church in Australia is administratively and geographically divided into seven Archdioceses, and twenty-one Dioceses. The capital cities of the Australian States are Archdioceses, as is the National Capital. The Archdioceses and Dioceses are gathered into Provinces which as a general rule have the same boundaries as the States and Territories. The Provinces are known by the names of those Archdioceses which are central to them. The Dioceses of a Province are described as Suffragan. The Archdiocese of Hobart and the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn have no Suffragan Dioceses, and they collaborate at the Provincial level with the Province of Melbourne and the Province of Sydney respectively. The administrative divisions of the Church in Australia, cover the whole geographical area and are, therefore, not part of any Province (National Council of Priests of Australia, n.d.) (see map).



Map: The archdioceses, dioceses and administrative divisions of the Catholic Church in Australia.
Image courtesy of National Council of Priests of Australia, used with permission.

There are approximately 1350 parishes within the geographic archdioceses and dioceses, many with more than one church. In addition to the provincial archives maintained by religious orders, there are chapels in the many convents and monasteries belonging to over 130 religious congregations of sisters, brothers and priests residing in Australia, and in religious schools (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2018). The textiles and vestments used in Eastern Orthodox rites are different to those used in the Catholic Church, so I chose not to include the textile collections of these churches in this investigation.

The large number of potential sites holding ecclesiastical textiles, the wide geographic spread of collections and the relatively short time available for data collection for this work meant that it was impractical to include all possible collections in the investigation and dictated that research should focus on a selection of collections. The custodians of ecclesiastical textile collections who had been involved with my earlier undergraduate research project provided an initial pool of potential participants (Ferguson, 2013). A further group of textile collections held by religious congregations and by secular museums and galleries was

identified from research into entries in historic ecclesiastical textile exhibition catalogues, contemporary and historical newspaper reports and other print and electronic media articles. Invitations to participate in the research project were also sent to the archivists, or their equivalent, at all archdiocesan and diocesan archives and the Military Ordinariate. In several cases the initial contact led to on-going and fruitful correspondence that stretched over many months, and opened up some unexpected, interesting and fruitful ‘side roads’ off the original research pathway. The importance of the informal information network and corporate memory that exists between institutions caring for heritage textiles was brought home to me when several small but remarkable collections were revealed through suggestions made by those initially contacted. Members of the Collections of Faith Special Interest Group (CoFSIG) of the Australian Society of Archivists completed the group of potential participants. A list of communities and institutions who participated in the research is set out in Tables 1 and 2 in section 4.3.

4.2 Questionnaires, Interviews and Surveys

The collection of data was initially planned in three phases – (I) a questionnaire, (II) face-to-face interviews, and (III) on-site collection surveys. In actuality, Phase I and Phase III were broadened to include other forms of written submission such as personal correspondence and “virtual” website visits of other religious institutions, secular museums and galleries. In all, information was received from the custodians of forty one textile collections housed in a range of localities including large and small diocesan archives, convents, monasteries and religious schools, parish churches and cathedrals, and three secular galleries. In addition, images from the photographic collections of the Australian War Memorial, the National Library of Australia and various State Libraries assisted with the contextualisation of several collection items. One fortuitous opportunity for research and analysis arose from an exhibition³¹ of historic textiles and other artefacts jointly presented by Maitland Regional Museum and the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, which coincided with the site visit to a nearby convent.

³¹ The exhibition was titled *Celebrating 150 Years* and was open from June 20 – July 10, 2016.

4.2.1 Phase I: Questionnaire and other written submissions

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was primarily designed to gather descriptive data on the size, scope and location of textile collections and information on management protocols (Appendix III). In addition it was hoped that responses would reveal a general sense of the significance of the textiles to their custodians and offer a starting point for discussions in Phase II. The questionnaire was accompanied by a Research Information Sheet and a Participant Consent Form³². Participants had the option of downloading and completing the questionnaire or receiving a printed paper copy. Participants could elect to remain anonymous. Completed questionnaires were returned via email and by post. Participants who chose to respond via post were supplied with a return envelope and postage costs were reimbursed. For the convenience of participants, the questionnaire was designed to be as simple and as quick to complete as possible, while still eliciting useful and relevant data. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section was administrative in nature, and was included for collection location identification and contact purposes. The remaining sections were designed to collect information about the collections, ideas about the cultural significance of the textiles and the challenges of managing both the tangible materials and intangible aspects of the participants' 'treasured threads'. A variety of question types were employed in each section, including multiple choice questions, structured questions and unstructured questions. Structured questions, including multiple choice and directed response, were designed to gather 'descriptive' information about the size, composition, storage and use of the collections. Unstructured and open-ended questions were 'interpretive' and allowed respondents to share their opinions about and experiences with their collections. All questions were voluntary and respondents could answer as many or as few as they saw fit. At the end of the questionnaire participants were given the opportunity to comment on any other issues or concerns they had about the textiles in their care and on the research project itself. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, twenty three completed questionnaires were returned from archivists, sacristans and custodians who worked in large and small diocesan archives, cathedrals and parish churches, convents and monasteries, religious schools, and secular public galleries.

³² The research was carried out according to protocols set down by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra. Project number HREC 16-58.

Section 1 of the questionnaire asked participants for their name, position within the institution, contact details, and the name of the institution that held the textile collection. Personal information was treated as private and confidential and so respondents are only identified by name or linked to particular institutions in the research findings if express permission has been given. While the majority of the questions in Section 2 required factual answers, the remaining questions provided the scope for opinion and personal reflections. Initial questions covered the tangible aspects of the textile collections, including the size and scope of the collection, and the age of items in the collection. Respondents were then asked about what they considered to be the most important and/or interesting textiles in their collections. The questions in Section 3 dealt with provenance, documentation, and how the collections are accessed and used. The questions were phrased so as to enable respondents to contribute to the research even when they were unsure or unable to give a definitive answer. In Section 4, respondents were asked about the current state of the collections in their care, the challenges faced when caring for such diverse and inherently fragile artefacts, how (and if) the textiles were used, and the custodians' hopes and aspirations for their collections. The final part of the questionnaire provided an opportunity for participants to add any additional comments or information about their textile collections, and also to comment on the worth, or otherwise, of this project.

Other written submissions

Several custodians who were unable to complete the questionnaire did offer informal comments, anecdotes and personal opinions on the collections in their care. Ongoing correspondence with a number of participants provided additional information about particular textiles and in some cases lead to further lines of enquiry.

4.2.2 Phase II: Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

Given the constraints of travel times and distances, interviewees from as wide a range of collections as practicable were chosen. Thirteen interviews were conducted with custodians of collections in the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales, twelve from religious institutions and one from a secular gallery (see Tables 1 and 2 and Map 2). Semi-structured interviews provided participants with an opportunity to expand on the issues and concepts raised in their responses to the preliminary questionnaire. Interview topics roughly matched those in the questionnaire, with the interviewee dictating the flow, direction

and depth of the discussion. Interviewees were asked about the textiles in their collections, invited to share the stories of individual items and to make further comment about the significance of the textiles to community history and memory. Interviewees also provided opinions and expressed concerns on issues surrounding their textile collections. These included hopes and plans for the ongoing care of collections and the fate of textiles in the event of institution closure or changes to collection policy. Follow-up contact clarified points made during interviews and provided additional information about particular textiles. As well as providing in-depth information on the cultural significance and heritage values of the selected collections, these interviews enabled investigation of custodians' experiences with heritage management issues peculiar to their own collections.

4.2.3 Phase III: Surveys and photographic studies of collections.

The surveys allowed for more detailed investigation of a selection of items from the chosen collections, and revealed much about the scope of collections, the condition of particular textiles and the challenges faced by custodians caring for such fragile cultural heritage. All participants in the Phase II interviews provided a selection of textiles for inspection. While access to storage areas was not always possible, interviewees who could arrange some access did so. It was not possible to survey entire collections as the majority of items were packed and in storage. In some cases, storage was distributed across a number of sites while in other cases it was impossible, within the time available, to examine every item. Despite the challenges posed by limited access, time and display space, the fragile condition of many heritage textiles, and the potential for handling damage to occur, interviewees made a wide variety of items available for inspection and photography. In addition many collections had been catalogued and copies of the catalogues, along with photographic records, were made available.

Respondents to the initial invitation who were not able to participate in Phase I or Phase II of the data collection process did, however, contribute data to Phase III. They provided photographs, historical records, and personal anecdotes about their collections. The staff at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) in Canberra arranged a viewing of a number of items from their Reference Textile Collection which had an ecclesiastical connection. Gallery staff allowed the textiles to be photographed and provided copies of the relevant catalogue entries. The viewing at the NGA provided an opportunity to examine ecclesiastical textiles housed in a secular context. In all, respondents provided information on thirty six

Australian collections featuring ecclesiastical textiles of the Catholic Church (Tables 1 and 2).

4.2.4 Celebrating 150 Years exhibition (June 20 – July 10, 2016)

Serendipitously, an exhibition at St John's Hall in Maitland, New South Wales, coincided with a site visit to the nearby convents at Lochinvar and Singleton. The exhibition, a joint presentation by Maitland Regional Museum and the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, celebrated

... the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first resident bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Murray and recollects the stories of people, families, groups and institutions within the Church or as part of the Church's relationship with wider society, with particular emphasis on our region. Many items not previously on display or seen by the public. (Belcher, 2016)

The exhibition included a large and diverse selection of ecclesiastical textiles from the Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan Archives and the archives at convents in nearby Singleton and Lochinvar. Also on display were textiles associated with Catholic life and the local community, such as the regalia of lay societies and sodalities and items used for personal devotion. Many of these items were on loan from local families who had added notes of personal and community significance to the textiles. The exhibition provided an opportunity to experience the personal and community connections that exist between the textiles on display and the individuals and communities which own them and neatly demonstrated the 'official and unofficial' values of the Church's textile heritage.

4.2.5 Additional Data

As mentioned earlier, local data gathered through the questionnaire responses, interviews and collection surveys were augmented by contributions from eleven Australian correspondents who were unable to complete a questionnaire, be interviewed or visited in person. Further interesting and informative contributions came from a number of overseas sources – the result of recommendations from local participants, information revealed in collection surveys, and serendipitous discoveries made during preliminary background research. Ultimately, information was supplied by community members from four convents and abbeys in

England, Canada and the USA with historical links to Australian communities, staff employed by commercial manufacturers and suppliers of ecclesiastical textiles in England, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium and Italy, academics involved in similar ecclesiastical or textile research in England and The Netherlands, staff working with ecclesiastical textiles in museums and archives in England, The Netherlands and Belgium, and professional and non-professional embroiderers experienced in handling and repairing ecclesiastical textiles in English churches and cathedrals. Information from contacts outside Australia helped to place the textile collections held in Australian institutions into a global context and to further explore the network of threads that ties Australia's seemingly separate and unique collections together and to the world at large.

4.3 The Collections

In all, respondents from forty two religious institutions and sixteen non-religious institutions, organisations or companies participated in the research (Tables 1 and 2). Information on a wide variety of topics and issues relevant to thirty-five ecclesiastical textile collections housed in Australia was provided (these thirty-five collections are shaded blue in Tables 1 and 2)

Participating Religious Institutions		Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Supplementary Information
1	Ampleforth Benedictine Abbey, Ampleforth, Yorkshire, UK				✓
2	Archdiocese of Brisbane Archives, Queensland			✓	
3	Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn Archives, Manuka, ACT & Sts Peter and Paul Old Cathedral, Goulburn, New South Wales	✓	✓	✓	
4	Archdiocese of Hobart Archives & Heritage Collection, Tasmania			✓	
5	Archdiocese of Melbourne Archives & Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, Victoria	✓	✓	✓	
6	Archdiocese of Perth Archives, WA	✓			
7	Archdiocese of Sydney Archives, NSW	✓		✓	
8	Diocese of Ballarat Archives & Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission, Victoria	✓	✓	✓	
9	Diocese of Bathurst Archives, NSW	✓	✓	✓	
10	Diocese of Bundaberg Archives, Queensland	✓			
11	Diocese of Cairns Archives, Queensland			✓	
12	Diocese of Geraldton Archives, WA	✓		✓	
13	Diocese of Lismore Archives, NSW	✓			
14	Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Archives, NSW	✓		✓	
15	Diocese of Sale Archives, Sale, Victoria		✓	✓	

Participating Religious Institutions		Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Supplementary Information
16	Diocese of Sandhurst Archives & Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Bendigo, Victoria	✓	✓	✓	
17	Diocese of Toowoomba Archives, Queensland	✓			
18	Diocese of Townsville Archives, Queensland	✓			
19	Diocese of Wagga Wagga Archives, NSW			✓	
20	Faithful Companions of Jesus, Calgary, Canada				✓
21	Genazzano Convent and College Archives, Melbourne, Victoria	✓	✓	✓	
22	Jamberoo Benedictine Abbey Archives, Jamberoo, NSW		✓	✓	
23	Loreto Sisters Provincial Archives, Ballarat, Victoria.	✓	✓	✓	
24	Marist Fathers Provincial Archives, Hunters Hill, NSW				✓
25	Maryknoll Sisters of St Dominic, Ossining, New York, USA				✓
26	Military Ordinariate of Australia, Campbell, ACT				✓
27	National Jewish Memorial Centre, Forrest, ACT				✓
28	New Norcia Benedictine Community Archives, WA	✓		✓	
29	Pallotine Community Archives, Perth, WA	✓		✓	
30	Sisters of Mercy Convent Archives, Singleton, NSW	✓	✓	✓	
31	Sisters of St Joseph Convent Archives, Lochinvar, NSW	✓	✓	✓	
32	St . Augustine's Parish, Salisbury, SA			✓	
33	St Benedict's Church, Broadway, Sydney, NSW	✓		✓	
34	St Columbans Mission Society Archives, Essendon, Victoria				✓
35	St Dominic's Priory Archives, North Adelaide, SA			✓	
36	St Dymphna's Church, Balranald, NSW	✓			
37	St John's Parish, Kippax, ACT			✓	
38	St Mary's College, Oscott, Birmingham, UK				✓
39	St Patrick's Church, Church Hill, Sydney, NSW			✓	✓
40	Stanbrook Benedictine Abbey, Wass, Yorkshire, UK				✓
41	Ursuline Convent Archives, Sydney, NSW			✓	✓
42	Xavier College Archives, Melbourne, Victoria	✓	✓	✓	

Table 1: Religious communities and institutions who participated in the research.

Participating Non-religious Institutions (supplemented with images from photographic collections held at the National Library of Australia, the State Library of New South Wales and the Australian War Memorial)		Type of institution	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III	Supplementary Information
1	Arte/Grossé, Bruges, Belgium	M				✓
2	Campion Hall, Oxford University, Oxford, UK	Ac				✓
3	Catholic Documentation Centre (Katholiek Documentatiecentrum), Nijmegen, The Netherlands	Ar			✓	✓
4	College of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Ac				✓
5	Ditta Annibale Gammarelli, Rome, Italy	M				✓
6	Embroiderers Guild of Victoria, Malvern, Victoria	Ac				✓

7	Kunstateliers Slabbinck nv, Bruges, Belgium	M				✓
8	M. Perkin & Son Ltd, Alton, Hampshire, UK	M			✓	✓
9	Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (formerly the Powerhouse Museum), Ultimo, Sydney, NSW	G/M			✓	
10	Mr Bernard Stadelmaier of Atelier Stadelmaier, Nijmegen, The Netherlands	M			✓	✓
11	Museum of Clothing, East Maitland, NSW	G/M				✓
12	National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, ACT	G/M		✓	✓	✓
13	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria	G/M	✓			✓
14	The Goldwork Guild, Church Stretton, Shropshire, UK.	Ac				✓
15	The Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK	G/M				✓
16	Watts & Co., Westminster, London, UK	M				✓

Table 2: Secular and non-religious institutions and companies who participated in the research.

(M=manufacturer or supplier Ac= academic or training institution Ar=archives G/M=gallery or museum)

Brief descriptions of twenty-one participating institutions and their collections follow.

4.3.1 Convents, Monasteries and Abbeys

As the Australian colonies expanded, numerous religious communities came to Australia to set up schools and hospitals and to minister to a growing Catholic population. This was particularly so after government financial support ended for religious and independent schools; firstly in Victoria in 1872 and then in other states. If the Catholic Church wanted to maintain existing schools and establish new schools, it had to find all necessary finance and staff. Priests and bishops sought help from religious communities overseas (Buckingham, 2010). The textiles that accompanied members of these pioneering religious provided the foundations for many of the surveyed collections.

St Joseph's Convent Archives, Lochinvar, New South Wales

In 1866 Sister Mary MacKillop, later Saint Mary Mackillop of the Cross, and Father Julian Tenison Woods founded the original community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart at Penola, South Australia. Members from this foundation community established a convent at Perthville, New South Wales in 1872. At the invitation of the Reverend James Murray, Bishop of Maitland, sisters from the Perthville convent founded the St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar, New South Wales in 1883.

... Our Archives hold the official records of the Sisters of St Joseph of Lochinvar from the foundation of the Congregation in 1883. The purpose of the Archives is to preserve for future generations the history and details of the ministries of the Sisters as well the spirit of the Congregation handed on by our founders. (Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar, n.d.)

The Lochinvar textile collection comprises liturgical and non-liturgical garments, paraments and altar linen, personal items such as habits, and a wide range of items used for domestic purposes within the convent and its schools. A large proportion of the items were made by the sisters and have personal or historical connections to the convent. This large collection is stored in archive boxes and map drawers, and at the time of this research was in the throes of relocation to new premises. A small permanent exhibition is located in the Tenison-Woods Education Centre in the adjoining school complex. The exhibition includes personal items made by the sisters and an important collection of artefacts associated with Father Julian Tenison-Woods, co-founder of the Order of Sisters of St Joseph³³.

Sisters of Mercy Convent Archives, Singleton, New South Wales

The Mercy Convent at Singleton was founded in 1875 by sisters who emigrated from Ennis, Ireland. They came at the request of the Reverend James Murray, Bishop of Maitland. The convent textile collection is similar to that of the nearby Lochinvar Convent. The majority of the collection is currently stored in boxes and map drawers in a cool, dry environment. Several items are displayed in a small heritage exhibition space within the convent's *Sacred Spaces* complex.

... Within the buildings are treasured memories and marks of a style of life no longer appropriate for modern religious women. The buildings also bear witness to the culture and wisdom of the remarkable women who built them. ... The Convent houses archives, libraries, a museum collection and the movable heritage of the convent and chapel, all of interest *in situ* and catalogued to provide a valuable resource for research in the future. (Sisters of Mercy, n.d.)

³³ The Tenison-Woods Collection and its significance is discussed in more depth in chapter 7.

The convent and grounds are open for tours, concerts and presentations on the heritage and traditions of the sisters who came to the New South Wales Hunter Valley. Tours of the historic building complex and archives are available during events and by appointment. Organ recitals are held in the historic chapel, which is also available for weddings.

Jamberoo Benedictine Abbey and Heritage Centre, Jamberoo, New South Wales

The Benedictine sisters arrived in Australia in 1848 from Stanbrook Abbey in England, at the request of the Very Reverend John Bede Polding, first Archbishop of Sydney. The sisters established their first Abbey at Rydalmere, Sydney. The community moved to Pennant Hills in 1957 and then in 1988, as suburbia encroached on their cloistered and contemplative lifestyle, to a quiet valley near Jamberoo in the Illawarra Region of New South Wales. The textile collection is in two parts. Items of particular personal, community and/or historical significance, including textiles with connections to the founding sisters from Stanbrook, and the hoods from two Pugin-designed copes, are housed in a small on-site heritage centre. The heritage centre is climate controlled. The heritage collection includes a precious second class relic³⁴, a peasant headscarf worn by one of the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne. The Martyrs were a group of sixteen French Carmelite nuns whose executions by guillotine on July 17th 1794 are credited with bringing about the downfall of Robespierre and the end of the Reign of Terror. The significance of the scarf is discussed in more detail in chapter 6. The Abbey's collection, of vestments, many of which were made by the sisters, is stored in large presses and wardrobes in the chapel vestry. Jamberoo Abbey is a cloistered community and visits are at the discretion of the Community.

St Dominic's Priory Archives and Heritage Museum, North Adelaide, South Australia.

In 1883 the Archbishop of Adelaide, South Australia, the Reverend Christopher Reynolds, invited Dominican sisters from Stone, England to found a hospital. However,

... Archbishop Ullathorne [of Sydney], the Vicar of the Master General of the Dominican Order, was not prepared to let the Sisters engage in nursing in a hospital in which men were admitted. The Sisters agreed to manage the hospital until other arrangements could be made. They decided ... to open an advanced day school. ... To supplement their income the Sisters were engaged in making vestments, painting,

³⁴ A second class relic is an item used or owned by a saint, such as an item of clothing, a prayer book or rosary beads. A first class relic is an actual part of a saint, for example a bone or lock of hair.

decorating pottery, needle work and the art of illumination. (Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide, n.d.)

The heritage textile collection is housed in a small museum in the grounds of the priory. The sisters were noted for their needlework and a number of historic vestments made by the early sisters are displayed in sealed display cases. The remainder of the collection is stored in presses. On occasion, the museum's heritage collections are used by the adjoining school as adjuncts to education programmes. Viewing is by appointment only.

The Provincial Archives of the Loreto Sisters, Ballarat, Victoria

The Loreto sisters arrived in Ballarat from Ireland in 1875 following an invitation from the first Bishop of Ballarat, the Reverend Michael O'Connor, to establish a school for girls. The Ballarat convent includes a purpose built, award winning archives building which holds records and artefacts from Loreto convents across Australia. The textile collection, drawn from several local convents and schools is housed in the Archives. The Archives is climate controlled but the textile collection is bulky and space at a premium. Heritage items are stored in archive boxes and include gifts of exquisitely embroidered hand-made vestments for use in the first convent chapel. In addition to items housed in the Archives, textiles that are still in use are stored in the convent chapel vestry. Visits to the Archives are by appointment only.

Genazzano College Archives, Kew, Victoria

Genazzano College, a secondary college for girls in Kew, Melbourne, was founded in 1880s by sisters of a French religious order, the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ). The convent archives and textile collection are housed within the college archives. Textiles in the collection are similar to those in other convent collections and include vestments and linen for use in the convent and college chapels. Textiles with personal connections to the sisters, and items used by the pupils from the now closed boarding school are also included in the collection. The most historic items were gifts to the founding sisters from FCJ convents in Europe. Storage is predominantly in boxes, some of which are very large and cumbersome. The Archives includes a small display depicting early life in the boarding school and maintains a small museum-style exhibition in the public area of the convent/school complex. Particularly significant items have been displayed at past commemorative events. A

permanent heritage display in The Stanislaus Room³⁵ at Genazzano College includes textiles from the collection. Visits are by appointment.

New Norcia Benedictine Community, New Norcia, Western Australia.

In 1847 two Spanish Benedictine monks, Dom José Benito Serra and Dom Rosendo Salvado, joined the missionary party of the Right Reverend John Brady, the first Bishop of Perth, Western Australia. On arrival in Perth, the monks were sent north to the Victoria Plains³⁶ region to minister to the people and establish the settlement now known as New Norcia. Since establishment, New Norcia has served as a mission to the local Aboriginal people, a monastery and a place of education. Today, New Norcia is a monastery, a place of spiritual retreat and a national heritage site. New Norcia's extensive textile collection includes the *Spanish Collection* – a group of items gifted to the founding monks by Queen Isabella II of Spain. The earliest textiles in the monastery's collection date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The textile collection at New Norcia, which numbers many hundreds of items, is being relocated to a purpose-designed storage area and museum/gallery in one of the town's heritage listed buildings. Four of the original *Spanish Collection* textiles have been the focus of ground-breaking research into the preservation and conservation of fragile heritage textiles incorporating metal thread embroidery.

Ursuline Convent Archives, Sydney

In 1882 a group of exiled Ursuline nuns from Duderstadt in Germany was invited by the Very Reverend Elzear Torreggiani, Bishop of Armidale, New South Wales, to open St Ursula's College, a school for girls, in Armidale, NSW. Like many contemporaries, the sisters brought with them textiles of particular community significance. The sisters remained in the convent until they relocated to Sydney in 2011. A small heritage textile collection is currently stored in boxes housed in the Sydney convent archives. The collection includes a burse dated 1703 and a chasuble dated 1738. This unique collection was periodically displayed whilst in Armidale and is mentioned in newspaper articles from the 1880s through to the 1940s. Several items and their significance are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6

³⁵ The Stanislaus Room is named after Reverend Mother Stanislaus Stock, first principal of Genazzano College. The room is the former Priest's Parlour or First Parlour and was used for formal interviews and meetings. "...Prospective students visited with their parents, bishops conducted canonical visits and priests gave retreats in this parlour. While the Chapel was seen as the most important place in the lives of the Sisters, the Parlour was a genteel and formal social place in Victorian and Edwardian time," (Kennedy, n.d.)

³⁶ Victoria Plains encompasses a cluster of small towns towards the northwest of the Avon Valley, the most famous being the monastic township of New Norcia. It is some 100km north of Perth and an area renowned for its rich history, vibrant wildflower displays and thriving agriculture.

and in Appendix II. The archives also houses numerous lace-making and embroidery pattern books once used by the sisters. Viewing is at the discretion of the sisters and by appointment only.

4.3.2 Archdiocesan and Diocesan Archives and Heritage Bodies

Every Catholic archdiocese and diocese in Australia maintains archives. The roles of the archives are many and varied. The following role statements retrieved from diocesan websites are typical.

The role of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Archive Office (Sydney Archdiocesan Archives) is consistent with the provisions of the Code of Canon Law canons 486-491 relating to the keeping and use of Diocesan Archives. The Sydney Archdiocesan Archives aim is to ensure that the Archdiocesan archives are preserved as authentic evidence of the administrative, cultural, spiritual and intellectual activities of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. (Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, n.d.).

The role of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Archives is to collect, preserve and manage the records generated by the successive Catholic Bishops of Maitland-Newcastle. These records can include correspondence relating to seven previous Bishops from the early 1800s, parish histories, ecclesiastical memorabilia, photographs, the Newcastle and Maitland Catholic Sentinel newspapers and scrapbooks relating to various parishes, priests, religious groups and events in the life of the diocese. (Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, n.d.).

The Rockhampton Catholic Diocesan Archives (RCDA) aims to ensure that diocesan archives are preserved as authentic evidence of the Rockhampton Catholic Diocese's administrative, cultural, spiritual and intellectual activities. The archive works to retain and manage the personal, corporate and social memory of the Rockhampton Catholic Diocese. (Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton. n.d.).

The following is a brief summary of the textile collections housed in five diocesan archives.

Archdiocese of Melbourne Archives, Melbourne, Victoria and the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission (MDHC).

This extensive collection is housed in the Goold Catholic Museum, Melbourne and administered by the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission. The museum is attached to the Melbourne Archdiocesan Archives and is open to the public by appointment. The collection has been inventoried, catalogued, photographed and curated. The collection is composed of vestments, garments and clothing associated with the archbishops of Melbourne and textiles from St Patrick's Cathedral and local churches. The catalogue of images is cross-referenced to storage spaces and documentation files. The Archives and Museum are also repositories for vestments from churches which have closed and other textiles that are no longer housed in their 'parent' communities. Therefore the collection is a living collection.

Diocese of Ballarat Archives, Ballarat, Victoria and the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission (BDHC)

This large collection is housed in a nineteenth-century building. The collection is catalogued and documented and currently stored in large archive-type boxes, on shelves and hanging rails, and in vestry-style presses spread across several rooms. The BDHC textile collection has a large number of nineteenth-century goldwork vestments. A small number of items is displayed in glass cabinets. The collection continues to grow. Recent acquisitions include two deceased clergy estates and a military chaplain's vestments. The archivist maintains contact with local and rural parishes, negotiating the transfer of more significant textiles to safe and secure storage in the archives. The archivist also provides advice on textile care and conservation to communities who wish to keep their collections *in situ*. While the diocese maintains no permanent displays of textiles, collection items are regularly loaned to off-site exhibitions. The diocese has recently appointed a part-time assistant to the archivist.

Diocese of Sandhurst Archives and Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, Victoria

The collection is housed at two locations – the archives building itself and the vestries of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo. It includes heritage items associated with past diocesan bishops and clergy. Unlike the majority of collections in the survey, heritage vestments from the Sandhurst collection have been the focus of academic research (Patullo, 2012). One interesting and unusual textile currently in the temporary care of the archives is the *Heritage Signature Quilt*, a large patchwork quilt embroidered with the names of many local dignitaries and members of local families. The significance of the *Heritage Signature Quilt*

is discussed in more detail in chapter 6. The quilt is a donation to the Aspire Foundation and will eventually go on permanent display in an interpretive centre planned for the re-developed Cathedral Precinct (see section 6.2.3). It is envisioned that other historic items from the diocesan textile collection will be on periodic display in the planned museum and exhibition spaces. The textile collection in the Sandhurst Diocesan Archives continues to accept textiles from local churches. Viewing is by appointment.

Archdiocese of Hobart Archives and Heritage Centre, Hobart, Tasmania

The Archives contain a rich collection of written and pictorial material, as well as memorabilia and artefacts, held in trust for the Archdiocese of Hobart. The wide-ranging collection spans a century and a half of life in the Catholic Church community in Tasmania. The present-day role of the Archivist is to continue collecting and preserving historical material from all parts of the diocese so that the ongoing story of faith and courage will be recorded and available to future generations.

(Archdiocese of Hobart. n.d.)

The Archdiocese's heritage museum collection, including textiles, is currently in storage pending the completion of renovations to the archives building. The heritage textile collection includes Australia's largest collection of vestments designed by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, a noted nineteenth-century English ecclesiastical designer and architect in the Neo-Gothic style. The heritage museum will re-open when building works are completed.

Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Heritage Textile Collection, Goulburn, New South Wales

The heritage textile collections managed by the Archdiocese of Canberra- Goulburn are spread across several sites. The bulk of the collection dating from before the 1950s is housed at Sts. Peter and Paul Old Cathedral, Goulburn, New South Wales. The remainder is stored in churches throughout the Archdiocese. There are plans to amalgamate the archdiocesan heritage collections and house them in the recently opened, purpose built archives situated in the Archdiocese Administration Centre adjacent to St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka, Australian Capital Territory.

The move will enable the Archdiocesan archivist to bring together various items of historical importance into one location for the first time since the collection of archives began. ... “We don’t have one main storage area,” [the archivist] said. “But the plan is that we’ll have everything in the one spot at Manuka. We’ll have an archivist office, an archivist work area, and a reading room facility so people can come in and use the collection.” (Biddle, 2017)

Viewing of the collection at Sts. Peter and Paul Old Cathedral, Goulburn is by appointment.

Diocese of Sale Archives, Sale, Victoria

The textile collection for the Diocese of Sale is housed in rooms in the Chancery. As in similar archives, the collection is predominantly made up of textiles with connections to past bishops and clergy. The large collection of vestments and clerical garments is housed in presses and wardrobes relocated from the original cathedral vestries. A small number of items are on permanent display in glass cabinets and on mannequins in the Chancery Office. The Archives also houses the archives of the local convent of the Religieuses de Notre Dame de Sion (Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, a French order of teaching sisters). The first Sion sisters came to Australia in 1890 at the invitation of the Bishop of Sale, James Francis Corbett, to open two schools. The convent archives includes a number of interesting textile items. Of particular note are devotional banners crafted by the sisters and several rare nineteenth-century books of embroidery patterns.

4.3.3 Other Religious Institutions

Heritage textile collections are cared for by a diverse range of institutions. Four small collections are described below. An appeal to the Collections of Faith Special Interest Group (CoFSIG) of the Australian Society of Archivists gave light to collections at Xavier College, Kew, and St Benedict’s Church, Broadway. St Augustine’s Church, Salisbury, and St John the Apostle Church, Holt, provided examples of collections typically located in parish churches across Australia.

Xavier College Archives, Kew, Melbourne

The small textile collection at Xavier College is being inventoried and catalogued. Items include heritage vestments, religious habits and historic school uniforms. A number of

garments are currently stored under covers on mannequins used for a recent exhibition. Visits are by appointment.

St Augustine's Peace Memorial Church, Catholic Parish of Salisbury, South Australia

St Augustine's Peace Memorial Church, the largest of four churches in the Catholic Parish of Salisbury, South Australia opened in 1972. The first St Augustine's Church (now known as Old St Augustine's Chapel) opened in 1857 and St Finbar's Church, Salisbury North opened a century later in 1958. Holy Family Church, Parafield Gardens was opened in the 1985. A small collection of pre-Vatican II vestments came to light during an inventory carried out in the mid-1990s as part of the lead-up to the 150th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Parish. This collection is stored in the vestry of Old St Augustine's Chapel. Vestments currently in use in the churches in the Parish include items made by parishioners in the 1970s and 1980s and several sets of generic commercially produced vestments of recent manufacture. Of particular local interest are vestments designed and made in the 1980s by a priest of the Parish, Fr Aldo de Luca, who trained as a tailor in Italy before entering the priesthood.

St Benedict's Church, Broadway, Sydney, New South Wales

St Benedict's Church is one of the earliest Catholic churches built in Australia. The present church dates from the mid-1840s. Its foundation stone was laid in 1845 and the building (designed in the Neo-Gothic style by Augustus Pugin) was opened in 1852. The heritage textile collection includes items belonging to the first Archbishop of Sydney, Archbishop John Bede Polding. Parishioners of St Benedict's consider their historic textiles to be living heritage and still use them on important occasions.

St John the Apostle Church, Holt, Australian Capital Territory

St John the Apostle Church, Holt, is an example of the open-plan churches built post Vatican II. With no previous church on-site there was no transfer of 'old' artefacts and textiles and all church fittings and furnishings are post 1972. Traditionally the priests who have served the parish have supplied their own vestments and the parish owns sets of modern vestments, in all liturgical colours, for use by visiting clergy. A few vestments from the 1970s and 1980s no longer in use are stored in the vestry.

4.3.4 Secular Institutions

Christian textile heritage is only rarely represented in secular galleries and museums. The on-line catalogues of Australia's state museums list few, if any, ecclesiastical artefacts and even fewer ecclesiastical textiles. The ecclesiastical textile holdings of three galleries are summarised below. The on-line catalogue of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney includes images of a small number of examples of ecclesiastical lace and fragments of ecclesiastical fabrics, however the accompanying text offers little if any cultural context or provenance, and often only an approximate date and possible location of manufacture.

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia

The Textile Reference Collection of the National Gallery of Australia contains a small number of ecclesiastical textiles. Three copes and a wall hanging are catalogued as examples of eighteenth-century *bizarre* silks. They are included in the collection because of their aesthetic and technical values, rather than their cultural or spiritual significance.

National Gallery of Victoria

The National Gallery of Victoria holds a small number of ecclesiastical textiles in its International Fashion and Textiles Collection. The text accompanying the few available on-line images of vestments and related textiles reveals little about the cultural context or significance of the artefacts.

Museum of Clothing, East Maitland, New South Wales

The Australian Dress Register³⁷ maintained by the Powerhouse Museum (now the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences) lists just one ecclesiastical garment, a worn and much patched chasuble salvaged from the major flood that devastated Maitland, New South Wales, in 1955. The chasuble is in the collection of the privately run Museum of Clothing.

³⁷ "... The Australian Dress Register is a collaborative, online project about dress with Australian provenance. This includes men's, women's and children's clothing ranging from the special occasion to the everyday. Museums and private collectors are encouraged to research their garments and share the stories and photographs while the information is still available and within living memory. " <http://www.australiandressregister.org/>

4.4 Analysis of the Questionnaires, Interviews and Surveys

Responses from the questionnaires, interviews and inspections, and supporting documentation provided much descriptive data about the tangible materiality, the composition of collections and the range of management strategies used in caring for collections. Respondents' opinions, personal stories, and community connections provided the data for an analysis of the intangible cultural heritage embodied in the textiles. The data also provided information about the challenges faced by custodians managing a precious and fragile cultural legacy.

4.4.1 Analysing the *Tangibles*

Descriptive data about the size and scope of collections, date range of textiles and storage options were extracted from responses to multiple choice and directed questions in the questionnaire. Responses were collated on spreadsheets. The optional answers provided in the questionnaire were used as categories. Questionnaire and survey responses about the textile collections yielded data that can best be classified as *categorical* and/or *interval* (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2015). Collated data was displayed pictorially on pie charts and bar graphs. Such pictorial interpretations of data made for easier comparing and contrasting of tangible aspects of collections, revealed some interesting patterns within data sets, and highlighted similarities and differences between collections. A more detailed analysis and interpretation of the collected data, including graphs, is included in Chapter 5.

Photographs taken during the survey and photographs and images supplied by respondents provided a visual record of textile types and styles represented in the collections. Used in conjunction with illustrated glossaries (Vroon, 2005), dated images (Johnstone, 2002; Patullo, 2012) and church requisite catalogues (Gille, c1885; Pellegrini, c1930) these photographs were a valuable tool for identifying and categorising individual items in the collections. The use of photographic evidence to determine, age, origin and provenance is discussed in chapter 6.

4.4.2 Analysing the *Intangibles*

Unlike descriptive data, qualitative information requires different analytical techniques. Digital data analysis tools such as the computer programme NVIVO offer a method for such an analysis (Bazeley, 2007). The digital system *cartography of controversies*, developed by Tommaso Venturini and based on Bruno Latour's work, offers another (Venturini, 2010a). Other data analysis programmes designed for qualitative and mixed methods research exist (Saldana, 2012). In essence these analysis tools code and collate information for content and assist with the identification of themes in text-rich data. These modern tools, however, are not the only ways to analyse and visualise qualitative data. The centuries old technique of concept or 'mind' mapping provides a deceptively simple visual representation of the connections between different 'elements' in an issue.

... It may at first look like a simple arrangement of words into a hierarchy, but when care is used in organizing the concepts represented by the words, and the propositions or ideas are formed with well-chosen linking words, one begins to see that a good concept map is at once simple, but also elegantly complex with profound meanings. Concept mapping has been shown to help ... researchers create new knowledge (Novak & Cañas, 2006, p. 31)

Written responses to questions about the importance of surveyed textile collections to their communities were brief and concise. Manual coding was sufficient to isolate threads pertaining to values and significance and to identify management issues and concerns. Tied together, the threads of the surveyed collections not only provide data for an array of concept maps, but also enabled me to weave a cultural fabric which incorporates memories of historical events of local, national and international importance, famous and not-so-famous secular and clerical personages, eminent architects, designers and manufacturers, perilous journeys and spirited evangelism.

4.5 Conclusion

The process of locating and selecting ecclesiastical collections for this research supports Noel Debien's assertion that ecclesiastical textiles of the Catholic Church in Australia are largely housed in archdiocesan and diocesan archives, the archives and chapels of religious

communities and in cathedrals and local/parish churches (Debien, n.d.). It is indeed rare to find such textiles in public and municipal museums, local historical societies or specialist textile collections, reinforcing the fact that the Catholic Church in Australia has not experienced periods where it has lost control and custodianship of its cultural assets. Data from questionnaires, interviews, site visits and personal correspondence with archivists, custodians, curators, conservators, researchers, and manufacturers and suppliers of ecclesiastical textiles have helped to build a picture of a diverse, extensive and widely dispersed Catholic textile legacy in Australia, which is valued and cared for in a wide range of contexts.

Having identified a range of collections, opened numerous cupboard doors and peeked into a multitude of boxes it is time to reveal the unexpected diversity, beauty, poignant stories and memories which emerged from this analysis of the textile legacy that forms an important part of the living heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia. Chapter 5 reveals what was behind the cupboard doors and inside the boxes, and further investigates the origins and provenance of the collections. The remarkable stories behind the textiles and the many forms of cultural significance and value they embody are the subjects of Chapter 6.

Chapter 5

Behind doors and in boxes

Whether made in Australia or brought from Europe, hand-made in religious institutions or mass-produced in commercial workshops, the textiles used by the Catholic Church in Australia embody over 400 years of liturgical practice, ecclesiastical aesthetics, textile heritage and Church history. As we have seen, the surveyed textile collections are housed in a wide range of localities. These include large and small diocesan archives, convents and monasteries, religious schools, parish churches, cathedrals, and secular galleries. The collections range in size from a few items to many hundreds. Textiles from the late seventeenth century exist alongside items from the twenty-first century. In chapter 4 I identified the institutions, religious and secular, that participated in the research and briefly described a number of the collections surveyed. In this chapter I discuss the nature and range of textiles found in the collections, collection origins, and provenance in more detail.

5.1 Types of Collections

In Australia ecclesiastical textile collections from the Catholic Church are predominantly housed in their primary religious landscapes. Very few textiles are held in secular collections (Debien, n.d.). Parish churches, cathedrals, convents, monasteries and school chapels house liturgical vestments that are currently worn at religious services alongside many historic items which are no longer in use. In addition, individual convents, monasteries, and religious schools, maintain archives which include textiles associated with the history and life of their communities. Diocesan archives store historical and heritage textiles associated with deceased clergy along with textiles from closed or amalgamated churches. Some of the larger and older dioceses such as the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Ballarat, have established historical commissions to assist with the care of historical artefacts including extensive collections of textiles. The Melbourne Diocesan Heritage Commission administers the Goold Catholic Museum named after the Reverend James Alipius Goold, first Catholic Bishop of Melbourne. The provincial houses of several religious orders have established

heritage centres or small museums which include textiles. Two examples are the New Norcia Benedictine Community in Western Australia, which is developing dedicated textile storage and exhibition spaces as part of a larger heritage precinct, and the Mercy Heritage Centre, established by the Sisters of Mercy in Brisbane, which houses a selection of historically significant textiles.

Geographically separated collections do, however, share some interesting connections and the threads that tie them together are often unexpected and surprising. Surveys carried out as part of the research project uncovered numerous examples of the same fabrics, styles, and designs of vestments at widely separated sites. Further investigation revealed links through local, national and international events, architectural design movements, historical and political figures, and trade and commerce routes. An example, of a ‘personnel’ connection exists between exhibitions mounted at two convents of the Sisters of St Joseph – Mary Mackillop Place Museum, Sydney and St Joseph’s Convent, Lochinvar, in the Hunter Valley region of New South Wales. Saint Mary of the Cross Mackillop, Australia’s first saint, and Father Julian Tenison Woods founded the Sisters of St Joseph to serve the poor in South Australia and to educate their children. Subsequently, with the support and assistance of Fr Woods, Sr Mary Mackillop and her fellow sisters founded convents and schools across Australia. Mary Mackillop Place Museum established adjacent to the convent chapel which also contains the grave of St Mary, aims to “... celebrate the legacy of a humble woman and the priest, scientist and explorer who forged a new approach in serving the poor” (Mary Mackillop Place Museum, n.d). The Museum’s permanent and temporary exhibitions have included textiles made and used by the sisters of the community. The pastoral and scientific work of Fr Woods is commemorated in the Tenison Woods Education Centre, a small museum room at the Lochinvar convent of the Sisters of St Joseph. Many scientific papers and books authored by Fr Woods are displayed alongside his cassock, a gift presented to the convent archives.

While the majority of the textiles in the study are preserved in their original religious contexts, a small number reside in public museums and galleries. The on-line catalogues of the National Gallery of Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria list a small number of ecclesiastical textiles, as does the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. The Museum of Clothing, East Maitland, New South Wales, has in its collection, one ecclesiastical textile, a faded and much damaged chasuble salvaged from the debris of a major flood at Maitland in 1955. It

must be remembered that public museums and galleries operate under strict collection accession and management policies that value artefacts for reasons that may differ from those of the original owners. For example a museum with an interest in social history may value a particular textile, be it religious, ethnic, ethnographic or indigenous, for its connections to an historical person or event, while an art gallery may value the same artefact for its aesthetic qualities or workmanship.

5.2 Size and scope of collections

Twenty-nine respondents, two from secular institutions and twenty-seven from religious institutions, provided estimates of the size of the collections in their care. Respondents were provided with size ranges and asked to select the range which best described the size of their collection. The collections surveyed varied in size from small collections of less than twenty-five items (32% of collections surveyed) to large collection numbering in the hundreds (46% of collections surveyed) (figure 30).

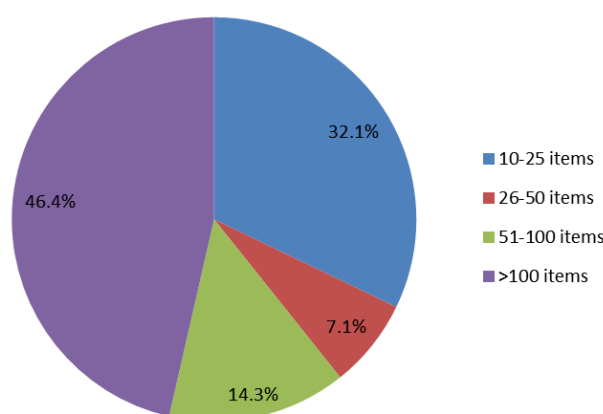


Figure 30: Number of items in surveyed collections (as estimated by respondents)

Comparative analysis showed that surveyed collections in the care of religious communities were generally smaller than those of diocesan collections. For example while 67% of diocesan archive collections surveyed held more than 100 items, only 25% of archives in religious institutions held this number. Conversely 42% of religious institution collections held less than 25 items compared to 20% of diocesan archives (figure 31).

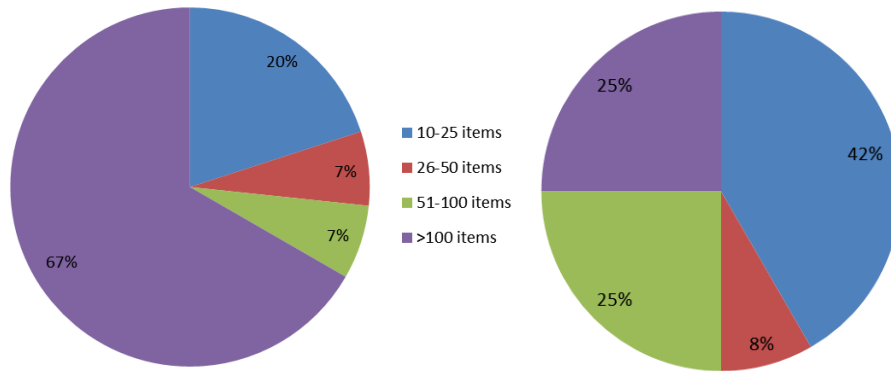


Figure 31: Size of surveyed diocesan collections (left) and religious community collections (right) ranging from small collections of less than 25 items (blue) to large collections of over 100 items (purple).

The Catholic Church has been active in Australia for over 200 years but several textiles in the surveyed collections date from much earlier. Respondents were provided a series of date ranges and asked to estimate, to the best of their knowledge, the age of textiles in their care. The responses from 24 diocesan, parish and religious institutions (convents and monasteries) revealed that their collections contained textiles representing over 350 years of Catholic textile heritage with 3 religious institutions caring for textiles dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the majority of collections including textiles from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (figure 32).

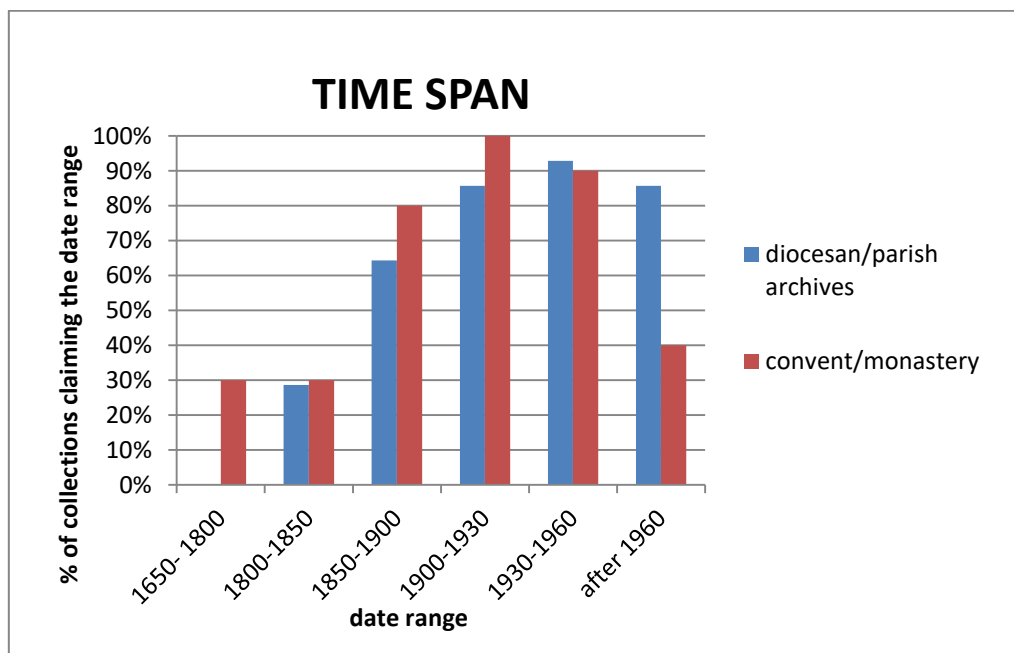


Figure 32: Estimated date ranges of textiles collated from 24 collections cared for by religious institutions.

The absence of modern textiles in some convent collections reflects the closed nature of their collections. One convent archivist noted that visiting priests now bring their own vestments to celebrate the Mass in the convent chapel so there is no need to purchase new items to replace old or worn textiles. The earliest reliably dated article identified in this survey is a burse in the collection of the Ursuline Convent, Sydney. The burse bears the date 1703. A veil in the New Norcia Benedictine Community's *Spanish Collection* has been provisionally dated as mid-seventeenth century (c1650) (Baker, 2017). The values and significance of these and other early textiles are discussed further in Chapter 6. The specialised nature and small number of secular collections in the survey make comparisons about the size and scope of secular collections problematic. For example the ecclesiastical textiles held at the National Gallery of Australia were specifically purchased as seventeenth and eighteenth century examples of a particular style of fabric, i.e. bizarre silk, and not as examples of ecclesiastical textiles.

Nearly all surveyed collections included examples of liturgical and non-liturgical garments and ceremonial textiles. Liturgical garments are those worn by the clergy for the celebration of religious rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. Non-liturgical garments include the now rarely seen cassocks and headwear worn by clergy on formal occasions or when carrying out pastoral duties. The religious habits worn by members of religious orders also fall into this category. The majority of collections also included altar cloths and altar linen, and decorative items such as frontals for altars and lecterns. Devotional banners and wall hangings that once decorated church walls, and regalia and uniforms associated with lay organisations were also tucked away in storage. Small variations in the scope of the collections became evident when the context of surveyed collections was categorised as diocesan archives, religious institutions or secular institutions (see following subsections).

Each collection is, however, unique and each holds items of local and personal significance. For example, pontificals are exclusively worn by prelates (bishops, cardinals and the pope) and were well represented in cathedral and diocesan collections but not in religious community collections, unless there was a specific connection to a person or event. Conversely religious habits featured prominently in the collections of convents and monasteries but not in diocesan archives. The significance of the collections is discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.2.1 Diocesan Archives

Diocesan archives housed the broadest range of textiles. These collections hold textiles associated with past bishops, clergy and their cathedrals and parish churches. The vesture of prelates is interesting as it was more complex prior to the 1960s. A fine example of pre 1960 pontificals is held in the Diocese of Sale Archives. They belonged to Patrick Francis Lyons who was Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand in 1944-1950 and Bishop of Sale from 1959-1967. In addition to the alb, stole, maniple and chasuble worn by all priests, Bishop Lyons also wore the dalmatic of a deacon, the tunicle of a subdeacon, liturgical stockings (knee socks) and slippers (cloth or soft leather shoes), liturgical gloves, and a mitre. Today's prelates wear the same vestments as a presiding priest (alb, stole, cincture and chasuble) but may include a dalmatic when celebrating a Pontifical Mass.

The Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission (MDHC) holds a very large collection of textiles associated with past bishops and clergy, as well as textiles from closed and amalgamated churches. The MDHC's collection includes several unusual items, such as the military cap (see chapter 6) worn by Archbishop Daniel Mannix in his role as Chaplain General of the Australian Armed Forces in 1917, and his formal buckled shoes and green tasselled *capello romano* (Roman hat) (figure 33).



Figure 33: Military cap, buckled shoes and *capello romano* which belonged to Archbishop Daniel Mannix. Note that the tassels on a bishop's *capello romano* are green.

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

Also in the collection is a set of eighteenth-century silk vestments reputedly presented to a local Melbourne priest by the Italian film director Federico Fellini (figure 34). The MDHC catalogue record claims that the vestments came from Fellini's private chapel at his home in Italy.



Figure 34: Vestments reputedly from the private chapel of Federico Fellini, the floral fabric is typical of the late eighteenth century.

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission (BDHC) has the largest collection of nineteenth-century goldwork vestments in Australia. Goldwork was a popular style of metal-thread embroidery from the mid-nineteenth century until the early twentieth century. The BDHC holds examples of goldwork ranging from the finest quality bespoke designs from Italy made in the 1880s to mass-produced, generic patterns manufactured until the 1930s. The archivist said that bishops bought multiple sets of these relatively cheap 'gold' vestments for their parish churches. Gold vestments could be substituted for any of the other liturgical colours, so a poor parish need not purchase a full range of white, red, green, violet and black vestments.

A number of diocesan collections also hold historic non-liturgical garments, such as the trained cassocks, mantelettas and mozettas worn by bishops and cardinals prior to dress reforms promulgated in the 1950s (A. G. C. Cicognani, 1969; Pope Pius XII, 1952). For example, the collection associated with Bishop Patrick Phelan housed at the Sale Diocesan Archives in Victoria dates from the early twentieth century and provides a useful snap-shot of episcopal vesture before the changes wrought by the prelate dress reforms. Two particularly fine sets of goldwork vestments in the then popular ‘Roman’ style were purchased by Bishop Phelan on an *ad limina* visit to Rome in 1913. Local press coverage of the consecration of the new St Mary’s Cathedral at Sale in 1915 reported that the Bishop and assistant priests wore the magnificent and costly vestments procured by Dr Phelan on his last visit to Rome³⁸. These vestments are on periodic display in the chancery offices in Sale (figure 35).



Figure 35: Vestments in the Neo-rococo style of the late nineteenth century.

(Image by the author, 2013).

One of the more unusual textiles in the Perth Archdiocesan Archives is a rare example of the uniform and regalia of a Papal Knight of the Order of St Sylvester (Hiini, 2013a). The items were donated to the archives by the grandson of their owner, Timothy Quinlan. Mr Quinlan was a prominent member of the Western Australian government from 1890 to 1911 and a well-known philanthropist who supported many charitable causes. He was invested with his

³⁸ *Gippsland Mercury*, Tuesday 28 September 1915 p. 3.

knighthood in 1899 at St Mary's Cathedral before a large congregation which included Bishop Rosendo Salvado OSB. The significance of the uniform and regalia are discussed in Chapter 6. Bishop Salvado was the founding abbot of the New Norcia Benedictine Community which now cares for much of the textile heritage related to the bishop's life and times in Western Australia. The significance of New Norcia's extensive textile collection is discussed in chapter 6 and its management in chapter 7.

5.2.2 Religious Institutions

The archives maintained by religious communities house a range of textiles with personal associations to their communities. In convents, in particular, many textiles reflect the sewing, embroidery and lace-making skills of the resident sisters. For example, the archives at St Dominic's Priory at North Adelaide holds the Lundberry Cope. The cope was designed by a founding member of the community, Mother Francis Philomena Ullathorne, and completed by the sisters in 1906. The fine details captured in the embroidered images of various saints on the cope's orphreys are testament to the sisters' skill and expertise (Figure 36).



Figure 36: The Lundberry cope (left) and detail of an orphrey (right).

(Source: New Liturgical Movement, 2012, used with permission. Retrieved from <http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2012/07/the-lundberry-cope.html#.W-eqNuJoS71>)

Convent collections include religious habits, lace-trimmed and embroidered altar cloths and linen made by the sisters. These collections also include a small number of vestments and albs worn by the priests who celebrated the Mass in the convent chapels. It was not uncommon for the sisters to make items for family members who entered religious life. The archivist at St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar, related how the sisters spent their 'spare' or quiet time in the evenings sewing, embroidering and lace making. The archives at the convent hold a lace-trimmed alb that was donated back to the archives on the death of its owner. The lace and the alb was made by the owner's aunt, one of the early sisters in the community. The Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan Archives holds an alb which belonged to Monsignor Vincent Casey. The archivist revealed that the alb's deep lace hem and cuffs were tatted by Fr Casey's cousins, Sr Mary Thecla, Sr Mary de Pazzi, Sr Mary Margaret and Sr Mary Angela, who were sisters at the Convent of Mercy, Singleton (figure 37).



Figure 37: Alb featuring hand-made lace, mid twentieth century.

(Source: Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Archives, 2016, used with permission)

The collections of textiles associated with religious schools are more varied and are thus more difficult to quantify. School uniforms, while not ecclesiastical in nature, are an important part of a school or college's material heritage. Genazzano College, Kew, Victoria, a girl's school established by the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) in 1889, has a textile collection which includes uniforms and the everyday textiles used in the boarding school. The school archive forms part of the larger convent archives. The small ecclesiastical textile

collection at Xavier College, Kew Victoria, a boy's school set up by the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits), is housed within the school archives.

5.2.3 Parish Churches

Local parish church collections hold a range of textiles including retired textiles, such as historic vesture and ceremonial items, and vesture in current use. For example, St Benedict's Church, Broadway, Sydney cares for a number of textiles dating from the time of the early Sydney bishops. Items associated with the Reverend John Bede Polding, first Bishop of Sydney are still in use.

It is not uncommon for priests to own vestments as these were, and still are given as gifts from family at ordination or presented by parish groups to mark milestones. These personal gifts usually travelled with the priest from parish to parish but occasionally remained in the church where the presentation was made. There are many references to presentations in newspapers dating from the early twentieth century. A typical article appeared in the Wagga Wagga Advertiser describing the presentation of a set of vestments (figure 38) to the Very Reverend Father Patrick Dunne on the occasion of the completion of St Michael's Parish Church in 1887.



Figure 38: Chasuble from a set of Goldwork vestments, 1887

(Source: Diocese of Wagga Wagga Archives, 2018, used with permission)

The vestments were procured from Belgium by the women of the parish and presented to Fr Dunne in recognition of his lifetime of service to the early church in New South Wales. (Linane, 1972). In his acceptance speech Fr Dunne thanked these ‘ladies’ for their generous and beautiful gift and accepted it on behalf of the future priests of the parish.

... Again thanking you, Mrs O'Connor, as the promoter of this costly gift, and the other ladies who co-operated with you, I shall ever remember you at the altar, and will make it a condition with my successor that he will make a memento of the donors as often as the vestments are used in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass³⁹.

St Michael's Parish Church became St Michaels Cathedral on the establishment of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga in 1917. The diocesan archivist informed me that this set of vestments is still in existence, and was recently included in an exhibition of archives material celebrating the centenary of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. While liturgical and non-liturgical garments dominate the textile collections surveyed, some church collections hold historic ceremonial ecclesiastical textiles. Examples include the large rectangular *baldacchino* or processional canopy and the smaller umbrella-like *ombrellino* once used in solemn processions. The large processional canopies supported on four or six long poles and held above the priest were essential to celebrations such as the annual *Corpus Christi* processions held in many parishes up until the 1970s.

Textiles associated with lay organisations and sodalities supported by the Church are, while not strictly ecclesiastical, represented in many church collections. Examples include green collars and sashes of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS), long, blue capes worn by the members of the Legion of Mary, and sodality banners carried in ceremonial processions (Figure 39).

³⁹ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, Tuesday 2 August 1887, page 2



Figure 39: A Catholic procession moving out of a church entrance, c1914.

Note the sodality banner at the church door, the priest, who is wearing a cope and a humeral veil, processing under a baldachino and the sodality sashes worn by the participants.

(Source: Searcy Collection, c1914,: State Library of South Australia: PRG 280/1/8/287, used with permission)

The HACBS was founded in 1868 in Ballarat to support Irish miners and their families. The Society spread throughout Australia and to New Zealand. It was one of several Catholic friendly or benefit societies which provided social support and financial services to members in the days before government social security. Interestingly, the distinctive green velvet collars and wide sashes of the HACBS regalia, reminiscent of the regalia worn by secular organisations such as the Freemasons and the Oddfellows, were manufactured in Australia by commercial embroidery firms and by religious sisters in convents (Sweeney, 2005). The significance of textiles associated with the laity is discussed in Chapter 6.

It is not unusual for contemporary textiles to dominate parish church collections. Churches built after Vatican II are unlikely to hold pre-1960s vesture, while older churches regularly replaced worn or damaged textiles and vesture. Anecdotal evidence points to a large clearance and disposal of vestments following the dress reforms of Vatican II. One archivist related the story of his mother and several other women of the parish unpicking old vestments

in the early 1970s. The useable pieces were then returned to the sisters at the local convent for re-use. In addition to individual sets of vestments in liturgical colours a church may also hold a set of identical vestments to be worn when a Mass is concelebrated by several priests.

5.2.4 Secular Institutions

As discussed in section 4.3.4, it is rare to find ecclesiastical textiles in local or national public collections in Australia. One of the few readily accessible examples is held by the privately-owned Museum of Clothing, East Maitland, New South Wales. The museum cares for a chasuble salvaged from the debris of the 1955 Maitland floods (figure 40).



Figure 40: Chasuble salvaged from the Maitland flood of 1955, ca 1935.

(Source: Australian Dress Register, ID 452, date unknown, used with permission)

The museum has entered details of the chasuble, along with a statement of its significance to the local community, into the Australian Dress Register. On a national level, three copes stitched from eighteenth-century bizarre silks and a rare example of a nineteenth-century panel woven with ecclesiastical design motifs form part of the reference textile research collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Bizarre silk and the significance of

the NGA textiles is discussed in Chapter 6. The National Gallery of Victoria holds a small number of chasubles and associated items which are catalogued as sixteenth century artefacts. However, it is important to note that secular museums collect ecclesiastical textiles for their historical and aesthetics value rather than for their spiritual or religious significance.

5.3 Collection history, provenance and sources of textiles

Ecclesiastical textiles travelled many routes into church archives, religious community collections, and museums and galleries in Australia. In many cases ascertaining provenance can be difficult. The majority of textiles, particularly small items, do not carry manufacturers' labels and detailed descriptions are not included in institutional records. There exists, however, documentary evidence in the form of inventories, collection catalogue entries, private correspondence, community memories, and contemporary media reports that describe particular textiles and their entry into a particular institution. For example, up until the 1950s it was not uncommon for local and regional newspapers to include descriptions of vestments and ceremonial textiles when reporting on events associated with eminent persons or important community celebrations.

5.3.1 Religious institutions and their schools

As discussed in section 4.3.1, founding communities of monks, priests and sisters coming to Australia brought requisite textiles with them. These textiles were often gifts of particular significance to their communities. The stories behind these gifts and other textiles of personal and community significance are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The foundations of religious community collections are generally well provenanced. The *Spanish Collection* at the New Norcia Benedictine Community (NNBC) has been recognised as an internationally significant ecclesiastical collection of eighteenth-century ecclesiastical textiles. The Spanish Collection includes a processional banner carried by founding Bishop Rosendo Salvado and his fellow monks from Barcelona to Australia in 1849. The banner, which depicts the Madonna, is awaiting conservation treatment. The *Spanish Collection* came from Spain but not all items are of Spanish manufacture or specifically made for the community.

... when Rosendo came to Western Australia, his patron was Queen Isabella the Second of Spain and she sent especially ecclesiastical copes and capes and clothes for the priests to wear. ... When Queen Isabella gave the garments to Salvado they were old then. They weren't being used in Spain in the court, they were perhaps a little old fashioned so they were handed on to the people coming out to the mission ... (Brandon, 2015)

The collection of the New Norcia Benedictine Community (NNBC) continues to grow. The collection has been the subject of recent scholarly research, particularly in the areas of significance assessment and conservation treatment protocols (MacLeod & Car, 2014a, 2014b). Even though the NNBC collection has been on the same site for its entire history, the origins and stories of many items are unrecorded.

Another 'Spanish' vestment is preserved in the archives of the Loreto Convent, Ballarat. The convent archivist explained that the finely-worked, hand-embroidered cope was made by the sisters at a Loreto convent in Spain as a special gift to the new community (figure 41). In 1875 the cope was brought by the founding group of Loreto Sisters (who are formally known as members of The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) from their home in Ireland to their newly established convent at Ballarat.



Figure 41: Cope, mid nineteenth century.
(Image by the author, 2016)

The provenance of the heritage textile collection from the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion Convent, Sale, Victoria is also well documented. The convent archive was passed onto the

Sale Diocesan archives when the convent closed. The sisters, like many others of their era, were involved in the production of church textiles. The *Sion Collection* includes banners and vestments made by the sisters along with pattern books and embroidery charts similar to those held in the collection of the Ursuline Convent, Sydney.

Many convents have a tradition of vestment making, both by their sisters and through the teaching of embroidery in their schools and missions. Several of the surveyed collections include examples of so-called *Chinese* vestments. For example, the Ballarat diocesan archives holds an example with the label ST COLUMBAN'S EMBROIDERY SCHOOL / HANYANG, HUPEH, CHINA, as does the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission (figure 42).



Figure 42: Silk chasuble made at the St Columban's Embroidery School, Hanyang, Hupeh, China, c1930.

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission.

The “Chinese” vestments were made by students in schools set up in pre-revolutionary China by religious orders such as St Columbans Mission Society. Embroidery was a respected skill in areas such as Hankow and Hanyang and the missionaries provided local girls with an education and an opportunity to use a traditional skill for the benefit of their communities. The sale of these distinctively embroidered ecclesiastical textiles raised much-needed funds to support the education and welfare work of the missionaries (Barrett, 1967). Revolutionary action in the 1930s and 40s saw the schools closed and the missionaries expelled. The surviving vestments provide a unique record of the embroidery skills of the local Chinese

girls and women. The story of the Chinese vestments has an interesting rider. One respondent, in a passing comment, mentioned the work of the Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic at convents and schools in Hong Kong. An email to Maryknoll Convent, New York, resulted in the following reply which documents the history of their involvement in the wider story of “Chinese” vestments.

... The Maryknoll Sisters did engage in the making of vestments, all done in beautiful Chinese silk. We ran what we called the “Industrial Department” in Hong Kong for 43 years. This work played a large role in the development of our Hong Kong Region. One of our Chinese Sisters, an expert in embroidery, trained girls and women in need of work, especially during the exodus of so many refugees from Mainland China following the Communist victory. They produced hand-embroidered vestments in lightweight silk. These vestments were sold by mail order through our Motherhouse in New York. Priests through the whole United States loved these light beautiful vestments. With the death of Sister Theresa and the many changes in religious life, not to mention the changes in Hong Kong society, we closed the department in 1971.

Vestments also arrived in Australia from other overseas missions. The following is an excerpt from a report in 1930 from the Sydney Catholic newspaper, *The Catholic Press*.⁴⁰ The report describes a Mass celebrated in the chapel of St Ursula’s College at Armidale to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of St Augustine:

... As a strange mingling, of East and West, it is interesting to note that some of the altar linen used was worked for the new chapel by the native girls in an Ursuline Mission School at Ranchi Chota, Nagpur, British India, and the large altar cloth was embroidered by Chinese orphans at the Ursuline Mission School in Swatow, China.

Swatow embroidery was also very popular in the secular world, particularly America, during the first half of the twentieth century. Swatow was the centre of a vast cottage industry manufacturing fine embroidery. Fabric and thread were provided to villagers in their own homes with the finished embroideries returned to central points for finishing, packing and

⁴⁰ *Catholic Press*, Thursday 4 September 1930, page 34

despatch. The embroiderers of Swatow were largely employed in the manufacture of fine linen handkerchiefs embroidered in a combination of intricate ‘white work’, similar to Aryshire embroidery, and fine drawn-thread work⁴¹. This Western style of embroidery had been introduced to China by American Baptist missionaries as employment for local women and a means of supporting the work of the missions (Herman, 1956). Other mission societies set up similar enterprises in Swatow and the industry expanded. Students at the mission schools learned fine embroidery, and on graduation many women joined the workshops which flourished across the region. The industry became increasingly secularised, particularly with the arrival of foreign buyers and dealers after World War I (Cai, 2012; York Lo, 2017). The Ursuline Mission began in 1922, opening schools for orphans and, more importantly a workshop for poor women who could find no other work. Unlike the secular workshops, the output from the Ursuline workshop maintained an ethos of ‘work for the missions’ (Cai, 2012, p. 171). The work of the mission schools and the embroidery industry in general, were disrupted by the Communist Revolution and the Japanese invasion of mainland China in the Second World War (Wong, 1949; Herman, 1956). The secular production and international export of Swatow embroidery was a major industry in post-Revolution Hong Kong (York Lo, 2017) and continues today (Snyder, 2009).

Many of the sisters in Australian convents were renowned needlewomen and their work was much in demand by other churches and cathedrals. Contemporary media reports from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mention vestments made by local convents, and indeed vestment-making was a major source of funds for many of these communities. For example, when papal enclosure⁴² was set in place in 1921 the Benedictine nuns, then at Rydalmere, Sydney and now at Jamberoo, had to close their school and find other means of support. The rules of enclosure severely restricted contact between the members of enclosed (cloistered) religious orders and the ‘outside world’. During World War II the Rydalmere Benedictine nuns were able to support themselves by the baking of altar breads for churches and the military chaplaincy and by vestment making. Sadly the nuns no longer make vestments, as the archivist commented -

⁴¹ Wong (1949) claims that 25,000,000 handkerchiefs were exported to America and Europe annually. Cai (2012, p. 165) reports that in 1938, a year in which there was regular production, 3,600,000 dozen handkerchiefs, 1,050,000 tablecloth sets, 18,000 kg of lace and 42,000 kg of crocheted gloves were exported.

⁴² The document outlining the current enclosure rules is entitled *Instruction on the Contemplative Life and on the Enclosure of Nuns: Verbi Sponsa*. Published in 1999, it can be accessed through the Vatican website http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc_con_ccsclife_doc_13051999_verbi-sponsa_en.html

... Our Nuns stopped making vestments about 1985, when they became an item on the rack in Pellegrini's or E.J. Dwyer's. In other words, when people wanted everything quickly, we stopped making them. Ecclesiastical embroidery in our tradition was all hand-sewn.

A few convents, for example St Dominic's Priory, North Adelaide, South Australia, and the Carmelite Monastery, Longford, Tasmania, periodically, and discretely, advertised their vestment and altar linen-making services in the local Catholic press. The Dominican sisters at St Dominic's Priory, in particular, were noted for their fine needlework. The sisters also took commissions for secular work, as an article from a 1932 newspaper reveals that

... Orders are taken for vestments, and there is also a workroom where the most dainty lingerie, trousseaux, children's frocks, etc., are hand-made. Hem stitching is done, and all the work turned out bears the hall mark of perfect finish ... (Cor Unum, 1932).

Religious communities have a long tradition of teaching embroidery not only in mission areas but also in their local schools. The School for Deaf Girls (formerly the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb) at Waratah, New South Wales was a school attached to the Rosary Convent of the Dominican Sisters. The sisters taught fine embroidery skills and needlework and the students made many fine vestments. A newspaper article in *The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*⁴³ from 1937 describes the intricate gold bullion embroidery that the students stitched onto the processional canopy for the Eucharistic Congress held in Newcastle, New South Wales, the following year. The secular world impinged occasionally on the work of the convent schools. A 1907 article in *Freeman's Journal*, a prominent Catholic newspaper published in Sydney, extolled the virtues of the *Singer* brand sewing machine with a recommendation that

... It would be well for those directing convent and church schools to make personal inspection of this perfect machine. Such highly-finished needlework as is required for ecclesiastical vestments and church linen can be done upon it infinitely more quicker than by hand, and a great deal more neatly and strongly also. Religious institutions and schools

⁴³ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, Monday 29 November 1937, page 3

which undertake the instruction of girls in the art of fine needlework
may obtain these machines on specially favourable terms⁴⁴ ...

A modern chasuble in the Ballarat diocesan archives bears the label *Piae Discipulae D.M. Apostolatus Liturgicus, Tokyo*. This chasuble was made by the sisters at a Japanese convent of the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master (PPDM), an order of missionary nuns founded in Italy in 1924. The order has convents in Australia, and continues to support its missionary and community service work through the manufacture and sale of liturgical requisites and other religious items.

It is not surprising that sisters in Australian convents were involved in the making of fine embroideries and ecclesiastical textiles. Convents have been a source of such textiles for centuries. An extensive survey of historical documents and actual textiles dating from the early Middle Ages to the Renaissance carried out in 2011 by Annmarie Carr and her colleagues revealed that cloistered nuns in monastic communities across Europe were involved in the production of fine embroidered textiles for the Church (Carr, Derbes, Gerson, Oliver, & Patton, 2011). The authors cite many exquisite and costly items made by or commissioned from abbesses and their communities; three examples being the silken shroud of St Wilfrid (died c709) provided by an abbess, the signed embroideries of Sister Johanna of Beverley⁴⁵ in England currently in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and three embroideries acquired by a pope in the first half of the twelfth century from the mystic and nun Christina of Markyate⁴⁶ (Carr et al., pp. 5, 6). Jo Koster (2013) argues that the tradition of fine needlework from English convents in particular grew out of tenth-century political reforms to the rules governing monasteries and abbeys. Prior to these changes nuns had followed the same artistic pursuits as monks in copying and illuminating manuscripts in the scriptoria of their abbeys. The new regulations restricted scriptoria work to monks so the nuns

... stopped writing with their styli and took up their needles' ... [and] that the embroidery salon may well have succeeded the scriptorium as the provenance of

⁴⁴ [Sydney] *Freeman's Journal*, Thursday 2 May 1907, page 38

⁴⁵ The embroideries are signed on the back DOMNA IOHANNA BEVERLAI MONACA ME FECIT, and probably date from the early 1300s. A detailed catalogue entry for this article can be accessed at <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O111536/frontal-band-unknown/>

⁴⁶ An article published on the University of Aberdeen website identifies these embroideries as three mitres and sandals acquired by Pope Adrian IV in 1155. Adrian IV is the only English-born Pope. <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/essays/personalities.shtml>

talented English women, providing them a continuing outlet for their artistic visions when theological politics closed the doors of manuscript production to them. (Koster, 2013)

With the suppression of Catholic religious communities and the dissolution of monasteries following the Protestant Reformation in England the tradition of convent-based production of ecclesiastical textiles in England disappeared (Johnstone, 2002). Production, however, continued in convents in Catholic Europe, as evidenced by the fine silk and brocade vestments brought to Australia by religious communities such as the New Norcia Benedictine Community, The Ursuline Sisters, Armidale, and the Loreto Sisters, Ballarat. Recent research into the role of women in textile manufacture has revealed that convents were one place where women were able to express their artistic skills. For example, Isabella Campagnol (2009), in her analysis of the needlework culture in the cloistered convents of Venice during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, contends that the manufacture of fine textiles, particularly lace for both ecclesiastical and secular use, was a major source of income for the community.

5.3.2 Lay persons, individual craftspeople and the contribution of women

It may seem that ecclesiastical embroidery and vestment making were confined to convents and convent schools, but there is a long history of lay people, particularly women, making, and caring for, vestments and other textiles for their local churches. Church walls were hung with banners and hangings marking feast days and the liturgical seasons, while devotional images acted as a focus for prayer (Fortescue, 1910b). It is particularly challenging to identify specific textiles made, commissioned, or donated by lay persons in the surveyed collections as they are generally not labelled. Identification relies on anecdotes, reports in local media or incidental records in the Church's archives.

Despite the potential difficulties in ascertaining provenance, several interesting and important textiles can be attributed to the work of lay persons. Of particular interest are the *convict vestments* in the collection of heritage textiles at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. While the actual maker is not recorded, the chasuble and stole were reportedly made for the first official Catholic Mass celebrated in the colony of New South Wales in 1803 (Moran, 1896). The chasuble was made from a silk damask curtain. The celebrant priest had arrived in the colony as a convict, not by invitation to found a community, and had brought no requisites with him.

In a similar vein, when Fr Patrick Geoghegan was sent from Sydney in 1839 as the first priest appointed to the new church in Melbourne, he brought with him a set of red vestments hastily made in Sydney. The story and significance of these ‘first vestments’ is discussed in Chapter 6.

The recycling of secular textiles into ecclesiastical textiles is apparent in several collections. The Sale Diocesan Archives includes a cope made from fabric woven with a simple floral design typical of mid-twentieth-century evening gowns, while a report in Adelaide’s Catholic newspaper, *The Southern Cross*, from July 30 (page 2) 1948, records the donation by Mrs John Garnaut of a chasuble made from a wedding dress. The chasuble was a gift to the St Mark Cathedral, Port Pirie, South Australia, rebuilding appeal set up following a fire which destroyed the building in 1947. An interesting example of a chasuble made from a secular garment came to light during my correspondence with staff at Campion Hall, Oxford University. The chapel at Campion Hall holds three chasubles made from donated evening gowns, including one spectacular example made from a ball gown designed by the Paris couturier Christian Dior (figure 43).



Figure 43: Chasuble front (left) and back (right) made from a Christian Dior ball gown, mid-twentieth century. The beaded motif is reminiscent of tongues of fire, a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the season of Pentecost. (Source: Campion Hall, Oxford University, 2017, used with permission)

A stole recently acquired by the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission had been presented to a rural parish priest in the 1920s. The stole is hand-painted with liturgical symbols and

was the work of a local parishioner, Mary Glowrey. The unexpected and extraordinary significance of this simple stole is explored in chapter 6.

Sewing Guilds established in many churches during the early twentieth century are a source of vestments and church linen which somewhat parallels the work of the sisters in religious communities. The fruits of their labour appeared regularly in contemporary reports in the Catholic press. The Guilds made, repaired and maintained vestments and other ecclesiastical garments and altar linens, and made clothing and provided material aid such as food for distribution to the poor. A typical newspaper report in *The Catholic Press*⁴⁷ from 1918 cites the work of St Patrick's Sewing Guild from Church Hill in Sydney –

... There are 35 honorary members, 44 active members, and during the year 81 families were clothed as a result of the guild's operations. The number of ... garments distributed 793, pairs of boots distributed 245 and the number of garments worked by active members was 576. ... With regard to church work, there were made four sets of vestments, one set of dalmatics, 30 collars, 18 soutanes, 36 surplices, and renovations included five sets of vestments, 36 surplices, and eight soutanes.

An interesting example of the involvement of the laity in large scale liturgical textile production occurred in the lead-up to the papal visit of Pope John Paul II to Adelaide in 1986. All priests who attended and assisted at the Papal Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II wore identical chasubles and stoles. These cream-coloured vestments decorated with simple gold braid crosses were sewn by local dressmakers and seamstresses using pre-cut kits supplied to parishes (figure 44). The chasubles returned to the parishes at the end of the event. St Augustine's Parish, Salisbury, South Australia refers to these chasubles as the 'papal chasubles' and still uses them for concelebrated Masses.

⁴⁷ [Sydney] *The Catholic Press*, Thursday 8 August 1918, p. 25



Figure 44: Chasuble made for priests concelebrating the Papal Mass with Pope John Paul II at Adelaide, South Australia, 1986.

(Source: Catholic Parish of Salisbury, South Australia, 2013, used with permission)

Ecclesiastical embroidery and the sewing of fine linen has, for centuries, provided a way for women to be involved in the life of a church, particularly at times when opportunities for active participation in the liturgy were severely limited. Since the early Middle Ages women have endowed churches with fine textiles. Carr et al. (2011), in their investigation of women artists in the Middle Ages cite documentary evidence of the active involvement of both lay and cloistered in the production of shrouds, wall hangings, altar frontals, stoles and vestments. Women embroiderers and their aristocratic or religious patrons and patronesses are credited with making fine embroidery and tapestries worked in silks, gold and precious jewels. By the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance the working of fine embroidery, particularly gold embroidery and the distinctive *Opus Anglicanum*, had shifted from gifted amateurs and noble women and their households to professional guilds that employed men and women. By the thirteenth century London was recognised as the centre for embroidered textiles, supplying both the English Royal Family and the Pope with fine garments (Carr, et al., 2011) p7). Not surprisingly, the Protestant rejection of ‘papist’ trappings such as vestments and fine embroidered altar frontals in the aftermath of the Reformation severely curtailed the production of ecclesiastical textiles in England. The Catholic community in England did, however, continue to celebrate its liturgies in secret, keeping vestments hidden. (Dean, 1981). Recent increased interest and research into recusant history has revealed that ecclesiastical textiles continued to be made by members of English Catholic families for use

in their private homes and chapels, albeit often ‘disguised’ to escape detection (Holroyd, 2007). Within the context of secrecy and hidden artefacts it is somewhat surprising that any ecclesiastical textiles were openly manufactured by the English recusant Catholic community. There survives today a remarkable set of vestments held at Stonyhurst College in Lancashire completed in 1655 by Helena Wintour, a member of a prominent Catholic family. The Wintour vestments epitomise the faith and piety of recusant families in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Helena Wintour’s father and several members of her family were executed for their involvement in the infamous Gunpowder Plot of 1604. At considerable personal risk Helena spent many years working on the exquisite embroideries rich in religious symbolism. Despite her will stating that the vestments be sent to the Jesuit priests who had secretly ministered to England’s recusant Catholics, the collection was split in two with one part going to her nephew’s widow and the other passing to the Jesuits (Graffius, 2016).

The Catholic community re-emerged in the late eighteenth century following the passing of several Parliamentary Acts⁴⁸ relating to Catholic Emancipation. Catholics were free to worship openly which led to the building and furnishing of new churches. These required suitable furnishings and fittings including textiles (Little, 1966). At the same time the Oxford Movement, a group of influential ‘high’ Church of England academics and clergymen, advocated for a return to the rituals and rich symbolism of the pre-Reformation church. These two events led to a resurgence in ecclesiastical embroidery and vestment-making in England. Church community members, particularly women, were encouraged to provide churches with decorative textiles and many pattern books and ‘how to’ articles appeared in the press. Publications ranged from single project articles in journals such as *Art Amateur* (Higgin, 1888) and *The Decorator and Furnisher* to books containing detailed patterns and extensive explanations of materials, symbols and manufacturing techniques (Antrobus & Preece, 1923; Dean, 1981; Dolby, 1867; Mackrille, 1939). Jennifer Isaacs included a chapter on the ‘religious arts’ in her investigation of the role of women in the decorative arts scene in Australia (Isaacs, 1987, pp. 44-53). Isaacs champions the hidden and unrecognised contributions of ordinary women to the community lives of their churches, specifically mentioning the embroidered banners and kneelers found in many Anglican churches and the delicate lace and intricate embroidery on vestments made in Catholic convents. The nineteenth century also saw a rise in the use of devotional and other decorative textiles in

⁴⁸ Papists Act 1778, Roman Catholic Relief Act 1791, Catholic Relief Act (Act of Emancipation) 1829

churches (Anson, 1965; O'Brien, 1992). The designs and materials used in church decoration reflected contemporary art and architecture. For example, early nineteenth-century ecclesiastical design was influenced by the Neo Gothic Revival Movement, and late nineteenth design reflected the Arts and Crafts Movement (The Church Standard, 1913).

While most, if not all the literature surrounding the 'domestic' manufacture of ecclesiastical textiles originates overseas, the design and manufacture of ecclesiastical or religious embroidery was not entirely unknown to, or unrecognised by, the secular arts/crafts community in Australia. A short article published in a 1950s issue of the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine revealed this interest. The article describing a recent exhibition of work by the NSW Society of Arts and Crafts, reported that Church embroidery and vestment making was a craft taught at the society's Double Bay, Sydney, studio.⁴⁹ Members of the Victorian Embroiderers Guild have been actively involved with the design, manufacture, repair and maintenance of fragile historical ecclesiastical textiles for many years (Divall, 1996) as have a group of experienced and talented volunteers at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney (A stitch in time, 2013). Patterns for religious textiles were still appearing in publications aimed at the home craftsperson as recently as the 1970s. Included in the *Australian Book of Crochet*, (1972) published in response to a revival in the use of crochet in fashion and home wares, were instructions for a wide lace edging for a communion table or altar cloth; the design incorporates the IHS monogram and crosses (pp. 39-41). The meaning of the IHS monogram is explained in Appendix I.

5.3.3 Commercial or secular studios and suppliers

While few of the textiles surveyed for this research carry manufacturers' labels, sufficient examples exist to show that Australian Catholic churches sourced textile requirements from local and overseas commercial suppliers and secular manufacturers. For example, advertisements in newspapers and entries in trade catalogues listed, and occasionally illustrated, an abundance of ecclesiastical textiles from European manufacturers (Gille, 1885: Pelligrini, 1930). The range included sacred vestments, clerical garments, altar linen, decorative banners and sodality regalia and fabrics and trimmings by the yard for the home sewer.

⁴⁹ *The Australian Women's Weekly*, September 23, p84

In colonial times Australian parish churches were provided with textile requisites by the diocesan bishops and later by their own clergy or parishioners. Beginning in the 1860s, in line with expanding settlement across Australia and a consequent growth in the establishment of new churches, an increasing number of commercial suppliers of church requisites offered vestments and other textile requisites. Mail order catalogues listed a wide range of styles fabrics and prices, generally sourced from European manufacturers (Patullo, 2012). In the collections surveyed for this research the presence of particular fabrics and styles of decoration reflects the ubiquity of these commercially mass-produced vestments. The firm of Louis Gille & Co. Lyons (France) was a major supplier of church requisites to the General Australian Catholic Depot in Sydney. According to contemporary newspaper advertisements, Louis Gille & Co. was a supplier by special appointment to His Holiness Pope Pius X, and under the patronage of His Eminence Cardinal Moran⁵⁰. Surviving early catalogues of the General Australian Catholic Depot, and firms such as Pelligrini & Co. and Church Stores, chart the otherwise poorly documented changes of style and fashion in ecclesiastical textiles in Australia. For example, the flowing ‘Gothic’ style of chasuble promoted by the Neo-Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architect and designer Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin and his followers is evident in the styles and designs of much of the vesture sourced from England in the latter half of the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries. The influence of such an internationally known architect and designer stems from his friendship with the first Bishop of Hobart, Robert Willson. The story of Pugin’s ecclesiastical legacy in Australia is covered in Chapter 6. Much of the ‘Pugin’ legacy is managed by the Archdiocese of Hobart Archives. Further examples of Pugin-designed vestments are held in the collections of the Goold Catholic Museum, Melbourne and the Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo. Interestingly, Bishop Willson purchased his vestments from only two manufacturers: the Birmingham firm of John Hardman and his nephew John Hardman Powell (who had married Pugin’s eldest daughter) and following the death of Pugin, the Manchester firm of Thomas Brown. The distinctive embroidery appearing on Willson’s Pugin vestments has been identified as coming from the workshops of Lucy Powell, a sister of John Hardman, and her daughters (Andrews, 2002, pp. 69, 115, 118).

European manufacturers of Catholic ecclesiastical requisites, particularly those from France, Belgium and Italy, continued to supply the elaborately decorated and stiffened baroque-style ‘Roman’ style vesture until well into the twentieth century. While most of the manufacturers

⁵⁰ The Catholic Press, 30 March 1911, p. 36.

of ecclesiastical fabrics have long ceased production, a few of the fabrics in heritage vestments can be identified and traced to companies still in operation. In response to emailed questions, staff at the British firm of M. Perkins & Son, a weaver of ecclesiastical textiles established in the early nineteenth century, and Art/Grossé, the modern incarnation of the Belgian weaving firm of Louis Grosse founded in the late 1700s, identified several of the fabrics used in vestments found in the surveyed collections (figure 45). They also provided an interesting insight into the history and demise of ecclesiastical fabric manufacture in Europe.

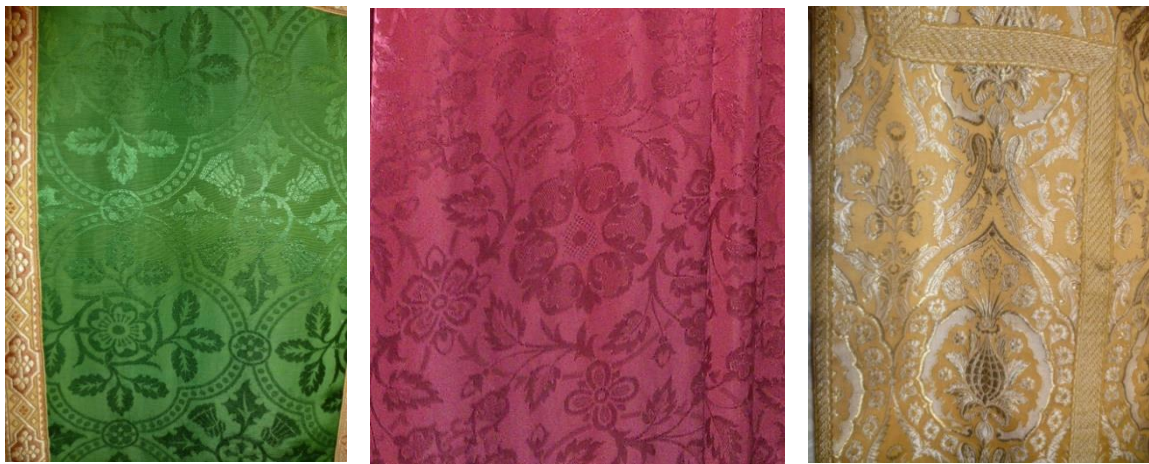


Figure 45: Examples of fabrics by English manufacturer M. Perkins & Son: Cloister (left), St Aidan (centre) and Wakefield (right).

(Images by author, 2013)

The vestments made by Louis Grosse were widely advertised in Australian church requisites catalogues. Their patterns and designs were typically elaborate, with brocade and tapestry fabrics and heavy baroque- and rococo-style embroidery a feature. The company's current director was able to confirm that Louis Grosse also carried out goldwork embroidery commissions for several Italian manufacturers. The English weaving firm of M. Perkins & Son still manufactures ecclesiastical fabrics to designs dating from the mid nineteenth century. The company's sales director was able to match several fabrics used in vestments held in a number of surveyed collections to those of his firm. The Perkins' fabrics range from elaborate tapestries, brocatelles and metallic brocades based on fifteenth and sixteenth century Renaissance motifs designed in the 1850s, to the simpler damasks and brocades featuring repeating tile-like patterns favoured by supporters of the late-nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Liturgical Movement. Perkins' fabrics proved useful in dating

vestments in several collections, a topic discussed in Chapter 6. The Genazzano College Archives, Melbourne, holds a beautiful red chasuble with a label that links the Grosse and Perkins companies (figure 46). The label identifies the maker as Billaux-Grosse, Bruxelles [Brussels, Belgium]. Billaux-Grosse was a subsidiary company of Louis Grosse, which also operated an outlet in London (Schoeser, 1998). When the London store closed in the 1980s some of the staff, including a descendant of M. Billaux, moved to M. Perkins & Son⁵¹.



Figure 46: Chasuble with links to two major manufacturers, one French and the other English.

(Source: Genazzano College Archives, Kew, Victoria, 2016, used with permission)

European manufacturers' labels appearing on individual vestments and garments in several of the surveyed collections identify a number of manufacturers not specifically named in advertisements. For example, the MDHC cares for a striking black chasuble and stole made by Stadelmaier B.V. of the Netherlands. The chasuble's distinctive angular figure of a phoenix is typical of the colourful hand-embroidered designs produced by Stadelmaier in the mid twentieth century. Stadelmaier vestments are also held in the Archdiocese of Hobart Archives and examples are still in use in some Australian churches⁵². The story of the significance of Stadelmaier to vesture following the liturgical reforms of Vatican II is told in Chapter 6. Two sets of vestments, including copes and dalmatics, held at Sts. Peter and Paul's Old Cathedral, Goulburn bear the label of an Irish manufacturer, Wm. Egan & Sons Ltd of 22 Patrick Street, Cork. These vestments are made from Irish poplin and feature

⁵¹ Information provided by Mr Peter Doneux from M Perkins & Son.

⁵² Information provided by the Provincial of the Marist Fathers community in Australia and staff from the Archdiocese of Hobart.

orphrey bands machine embroidered in an intricate Celtic knot pattern: the decoration on the white set is stitched in an unusual graded polychrome thread while the embroidery on the black set is a delicate mauve and gold (figure 47).



Figure 47: Vestments made in Ireland, mid twentieth century.

The Celtic knot motifs are a feature of the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement of which Barry Egan, a descendant of the founder and manager of the family firm, was a follower. The chain stitch embroidery was probably stitched on a Cornely machine.

(Images by author, 2013)

Wm. Egan & Sons Ltd was a silversmith who, like several firms in Australia, also made and supplied vestments to the Church (see section 5.3.3). The company's factory included an embroidery school and large workshop which trained and employed local women. Irish poplin has a distinctive ribbed appearance and is woven with a silk warp and a wool weft. The Egan vestments have an additional connection to Australia. The fine merino wool used in the weaving of Irish poplin often came from Australia (Heckett, 2000, p. 168).

The Goulburn heritage textile collection holds a very plain mid-twentieth-century chasuble labelled *Made in France*. The chasuble bears a separate label for E.J. Dwyer, George Street, Sydney – a major importer and supplier of church requisites, bookseller and publisher. Labels from the rival Italian firms of Gammerelli and Tanfani appear in the collections held at the Diocese of Ballarat Archives and Diocese of Sandhurst Archives, predominately on

Roman style chasubles featuring elaborate ‘all-over’ scrolling floriated goldwork designs (also known as rinceaux designs). These vestments date from the latter quarters of the nineteenth century. Gammerelli is still in operation⁵³ but Tanfani seems to have closed for business sometime in the 1960s (Patullo, 2012). Claire Patullo (2012), in her extensive investigation of the vestment collections held at the Sandhurst Diocesan Archives and Sacred Heart Cathedral in Bendigo, identified other manufacturers not noted in the current survey. Along with secular European firms such as Barbiconi, Rome and Francis Tucker & Co., London, Patullo identified several current makers from South East Asian countries. Two examples of labels from Asian manufacturers are Maris Stella Church Vestments, Singapore, supported by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and *DUC ME NHA SECH* [Our Lady of Perpetual Help Bookstore], Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, a project of the Redemptorist Congregation. It appears that as secular European manufacture has declined there has been growth in non-European manufacturers sponsored or established by religious orders as a way of providing local employment and support for missionary and welfare programmes.

Interestingly, it was not just dedicated suppliers of Catholic requisites that provided buyers with their textile requirements. Up to the mid twentieth century many secular department stores, for example David Jones and Marcus Clark’s in Sydney and The Mutual Store and Buckley & Nunn in Melbourne, maintained ecclesiastical departments where vestments, religious garments and other textiles could be purchased, often made-to-order⁵⁴. For example, Mark Foy’s Ltd of Sydney, advertising frequently in *Freeman’s Journal* (a prominent Catholic newspaper published in Sydney and fore-runner to today’s *Catholic Weekly*) catered for the needs of both religious and lay persons. Their stock included an extensive range of ecclesiastical garments. Soutanes and surplices were available in the Menswear Department⁵⁵, and sodality cloaks for the Children of Mary and the Holy Angels, and white Holy Communion dresses and veils could be purchased in the Girl’s Wear Department⁵⁶. When the Melbourne firm of Messrs Craig, Williamson Pty Ltd closed in 1936 its ecclesiastical department was bought by The Mutual Store which continued to supply ecclesiastical textiles for some years⁵⁷. A similar merger occurred in 1952 when

⁵³ Information provided via email by M. Stephan Gammerelli, current director of the firm of Ditta Annibale Gammarelli.

⁵⁴ For example – *Advocate*, Thursday 24 March 1938 p. 2. Adjacent advertisements for Buckley & Nunn and The Mutual Store offer made to measure clerical outfits and lace for albs and surplices by the yard respectively.

⁵⁵ For example – *Freeman’s Journal*, Thursday 24 October 1929 p. 19

⁵⁶ For example – *Catholic Weekly*, Thursday 28 August 1952 p. 6

⁵⁷ *Advocate*, Thursday 29 April 1937 p. 12

Pellegrini & Co, a leading supplier of church requisites from the late nineteenth century onwards, announced that it was opening two departments within the Myer Emporium, a major department store, in Melbourne⁵⁸. It was not unusual for manufacturing jewellers to include vestments as well as church plate in their inventories, as shown by the numerous advertisements for rival jewellers and watchmakers, Denis Brothers and Gaunts. Both operated stores in Bourke Street, Melbourne⁵⁹. In fact, Gaunts bought the stock of Denis Bros when the latter closed its store in 1909⁶⁰. ‘Metalworkers’ supplying vestments to churches is not restricted to Australia. The archives at Genazzano College cares for a cope bearing the label *P. Brunet / Ornaments d’Eglise / 13 R. de Grenelle, Paris* (figure 48). Paul Brunet was a respected French silversmith who specialised in ecclesiastical metalwork. Brunet’s business operated from 1871 to 1913, and it is apparent from this label that he also supplied ecclesiastical textiles to his customers.



Figure 48: Purple cope bears the label of Paul Brunet, a French silversmith and supplier of ecclesiastical textiles.

The ground fabric features a double phoenix design, the phoenix is a symbol of the Resurrection.

(Source: Genazzano College Archives, 2016, used with permission)

⁵⁸ *Advocate*, Thursday 24 January 1952 p. 18

⁵⁹ For example – *Advocate*, Saturday 8 February 1902 p. 22 and *Advocate*, Saturday 31 May 1902 p. 7

⁶⁰ *Advocate*, Saturday 20 November 1909 p. 39

Not all Australian Catholic ecclesiastical textile heritage was sourced from overseas manufacturers or produced in convents and their schools. Many items were made by small local manufacturers. Again, it is newspaper reports that occasionally record the works or identity of local makers. For example, an 1888 account of the ecclesiastical exhibits shown at the Centennial Exhibition in Melbourne describes the vestments provided by the firm of J. F. Rowe, Carlton⁶¹. While J. F. Rowe advertised in the local Catholic press as *manufacturers* and importers of ecclesiastical wares including vestments, laces and fabrics, it is likely that a set of vestments presented to the Reverend W. G. Lawler by members of the sodality of the Children of Mary at Bendigo in 1888 were imported items:

... The vestments were also ... admired. They are of cloth of gold, interlaced with cloth of silver, having in the centre of the cross on the chasuble the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. They were obtained at the establishment of Mrs J. F. Rowe, Carlton⁶². ...

The supply of non-liturgical garments was also in the hands of small business. As mentioned earlier, several major department stores advertised soutanes and clerical hats for sale. Tailors and Gentlemen's Outfitters offered ecclesiastical garments such as soutanes and habits as part of their range. For example, in a 1904 advertisement the firm of Chas. Anderson, Clerical Outfitters, Sydney, claimed the patronage of His Eminence, Cardinal Moran. A black bishop's cassock in the collection at the Bathurst Diocesan Archives is not, however, the work of a local tailor. Attached to the garment hanger is a paper bag stamped with the details of the Roman firm of Gammerelli, tailors to the popes. The bag contains red buttons and fine red braid (figure 49).

⁶¹ *Advocate*, Saturday 22 September 1888 p. 7

⁶² *Advocate*, Saturday 17 December 1887, p. 16



Figure 49: Paper bag of extra buttons and red piping for repairs.

(Image by author, 2016)

In answer to an email enquiry, the firm's present owner, Stefano Gammerelli, replied that customers often asked for extra buttons and braid in case repairs were needed. Patullo (2012) records an Australian manufacturer, not of garments but of episcopal 'slippers'. The Sandhurst Diocesan Archives holds three pairs of episcopal slippers in the liturgical colours of red, green and purple made by Harkness Shoes Pty Ltd of Sydney⁶³. The shoes were worn by Bishop Bernard Stewart in the 1960s. Episcopal slippers are a specialised product and would have been made for the bishop.

5.4 Conclusion

Collections surveyed for this research varied in location, size, composition and provenance. Diocesan archives care for the widest variety of ecclesiastical textiles. These archives hold textiles used in cathedrals and parish churches, garments worn by cardinals, bishops and priests, and textiles donated by families and parishioners with associations to particular persons or events. Other textiles were salvaged from closed churches or came to the archives for conservation or safe-keeping. Convent archives, in particular, hold items made by community members for the community. These archives are, in the main, closed collections. Custodians noted that new acquisitions were unlikely, but that items offered to them would be assessed and included based on their connections to community members or events. Unlike convent and monastery archives, diocesan archives regularly acquire new textiles as parishes 'downsize', churches amalgamate or close and their material heritage goes into

⁶³ Harkness Shoes Pty Ltd closed in 1967 (Patullo 2012)

storage. This means that diocesan archive collections are, in essence, open or ‘living’ collections. Public museums accession textiles according to their specific collection policies and it appears that ecclesiastical textiles are included for their potential contributions to the study of, and research into, the history of textiles, fabrics and design.

In this research I have categorised collections according to type, i.e. diocesan archives, religious institution, local church, museum etc. However, type is not an indicator of cultural significance as each collection is the product of the personal experiences, connections and values unique to its owner community. In chapter 6 I delve into the stories behind these treasured threads and tease out strands of community significance and cultural value.

Chapter 6

Treasured Threads: values and meanings

The concept that artefacts are collected because they are ‘significant’ or ‘valued’ was discussed in Chapter 3. The numerous criteria used by the heritage industry to assess the significance of a cultural entity are testament to the fact that cultural values are not, however, fixed in one time or place. While the physical ‘biography’ of an artefact, including a textile, can be read through its tangible form, materials and patterns of ‘use-wear’ (Caple, 2006a) its cultural significance and value is contingent upon, and is revealed through, its place in the stories and cultural practices of the owner community.

Analysis of the data collected during the research revealed a multiplicity of cultural significances and values ascribed to the surveyed textile collections as revealed through surveys, interviews and follow up discussions with custodians. Historical and archival research, reviews of specialist studies, and the opinions and perceptions of non-custodians provided additional perspectives. The nature of significance and value means that textiles from all stages of the history of the Catholic Church in Australia, including the twenty-first century, can reflect the prevailing, and changing, cultural significance and heritage values of this living culture. Chapter 6.1 tells the stories of a dozen textiles and collections which follow three narrative strands revealed through responses to the questionnaire, interviews and correspondence. Chapter 6.2 investigates four themes of significance and value identified by participants, themes that were consistent across the surveyed collections regardless of location, age and origin.

6.1 Many stories, three strands

Each item uncovered in the survey has a story to tell, stories that weave the rich tapestry that is the textile legacy of the Catholic Church in Australia. Reading the research responses revealed several narrative strands spun from the threads that tie the stories together. Three such strands track journeys, recall persons and events, and record the faith of members of religious communities and parishes across the country. The first strand draws together stories

spun from a cultural memory formed from centuries of religious and political upheaval in Europe. The textiles described here recall the suppression of the Catholic Church in sixteenth-century Reformation England, the terror of the French Revolution and the grandeur of Napoleonic France, the struggle for educational freedom during the German *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s and the pastoral and spiritual welfare of Australian service personnel during wars fought in the twentieth century.

The second strand weaves together threads tracing the foundation and growth of the Catholic Church and its communities across Australia. The simply-styled, locally produced vestments made for the first Masses celebrated in Sydney and Melbourne, the elaborate brocaded and embroidered eighteenth-century vestments sent from the royal palaces of Spain and workshops of continental Europe, and the medievaesque motifs of Neo-Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture and design in nineteenth-century England represent the myriad styles of significant textiles linked to ‘pioneer’ narratives of the establishment of the church in Australia.

The third and final strand brings together stories tied to personal devotion, faith and service to the Church. The diversity of such personal values is reflected in two very different textiles from the surveyed collections – an early twentieth-century hand-painted stole made by a local parishioner and presented to the priest of her rural parish, and the church wall hangings which represent the contributions of laypersons, particularly women, to the furnishing of local churches.

6.1.1 First Strand: In the shadows of war and revolution

War and revolution has fuelled the journeys of countless communities. The stories of the textiles in the first narrative thread are tied to wars and revolutions spanning 300 years of history. Carefully stored in the archives of the Sisters of the Company of St Ursula (known as the Ursulines) in Sydney is a small collection of ecclesiastical textiles made in Germany in the early eighteenth century. From a slightly later time, the nuns at the Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo, New South Wales, have in their care a simple peasant scarf, a precious relic from their time in Revolutionary France. St Patrick’s Church, Church Hill, Sydney is custodian of a chasuble that also has links, though somewhat tenuous, to the personalities of post-Revolutionary Napoleonic Europe in the form of a chasuble and stole belonging to a maternal uncle of Napoleon Bonaparte, Joseph Cardinal Fesch. Among the more unusual items in the

collection of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Archives is the military cap issued to Archbishop Daniel Mannix in his role as Chaplain General to the Australian Army during World War I. The Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission has recently received the vestments of a military chaplain who served in Vietnam. Together these stories record journeys of exile and lives of service in the name of the Church during times of political and cultural discord.

The Ursuline Heritage Collection: Ursuline Convent Archives, Sydney.

The fragile 300 year old German textiles cared for by the Ursulines are preserved not only for their exquisite workmanship but also for their personal connections to earlier sisters. The journey of the Ursuline Collection began in Europe. The Ursuline Sisters who founded the Armidale community had lived through some of the most turbulent times for the Catholic Church in Europe. The Company of St Ursula was founded in 1535, in Brescia, northern Italy, by St Angela Merici. The order was dedicated to the religious education of girls at a time when the prospects for young women were largely restricted to marriage or life in an enclosed convent (Campagnol, 2009). In 1544 the order was formally recognised by the Vatican and, along with the three solemn vows of poverty, chastity and obedience taken by all members of monastic orders, the sisters took a fourth vow of providing education for girls (Fidelis, 1912). The Ursulines in Australia trace their origins to an Ursuline community formed in Paris in the 1590s. In 1660, a small group of sisters moved from Paris to Erfurt in Saxony, and then, in 1700, to Duderstadt in Hanover. The Paris monastery was destroyed during the French Revolution and never re-established. The German monasteries suffered a similar fate during the Napoleonic Wars.

... About the year 1813, a fierce war was raging throughout nearly the whole of Europe. Our Convent at Duderstadt was turned into a Hospital while the Sisters had to live in the town. When, at last, peace was restored, they found themselves destitute and the Monastery almost in ruins ... (Ursuline Annals, 1886)

The Duderstadt monastery was rebuilt and continued to educate girls until the defeat of France by the Prussian general Otto von Bismarck during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). In a now-unified Germany the anti-clerical policies of Bismarck culminated in the early 1870s with the *Kulturkampf*, where the state took control of all education, closed religious schools and expelled the sisters. The exiled Ursuline sisters from Duderstadt

established a convent in Greenwich, England, and opened a school. While there they met a young Capuchin priest, Fr Elzear Torreggiani, who promised to help them if ever he had the opportunity. In 1879 Fr Torreggiani was made Bishop of Armidale in New South Wales and promptly invited the Ursulines to his diocese to set up a school. Around this time many religious congregations came to Australia at the invitation of bishops, as by 1882, the government had largely withdrawn financial aid from independent schools (Moran, 1896). In 1882 ten sisters, one English and nine German, travelled from Greenwich to Armidale to open their school, the first school of several Ursuline schools established in Australia (Kneipp, 1988). The Armidale convent closed in 2011 when the sisters moved into smaller houses and the heritage textiles, along with the convent archives, were relocated to Sydney. Through all their struggles, upheavals and moves the sisters carried with them a small collection of precious textiles, threads that traced their journey across Europe and ultimately to the other side of the world. In the course of our extended correspondence, the sisters made several references to the significance of their heritage textiles. The Ursuline heritage textiles embody significance on many levels, from their role as mnemonics of community members and life, through the hermeneutic symbolism of their iconography, to the aesthetic and technological significance of their design, materials and fine workmanship. Further discussion of the multiple significances of the Ursuline Collection of heritage textiles is included in sections 6.1.2, 6.2.2 and 6.2.4.

In many ways the history of the heritage textiles in the care of the Benedictine sisters at Jamberoo Abbey mirrors that of the Ursuline Collection. Their story follows.

The Heritage Collection: Benedictine Abbey Archives, Jamberoo, New South Wales.

Jamberoo Abbey sits in a serene and quiet valley in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales and is the home of the only community of enclosed Benedictine nuns in Australia. Like the Ursulines at Armidale, the Benedictine sisters were invited to Australia to open a school; in this case by Archbishop John Bede Polding of Sydney, in 1847. The founding sisters came from two communities in England, Stanbrook Abbey and Princethorpe Priory, and, like the Ursulines, they carried with them a precious textile heritage. From these small beginnings the Abbey's textile collection has grown to include many gifts and donations of historical significance or with connections to the community. For much of the twentieth century the sisters were also active vestment-makers, and the archivist spoke of a tradition of the sisters making vestments from the wedding dresses they wore when they took their vows.

Many of the historic and heritage vestments made by the sisters are still in use (figure 50). The archivist confided that it was sometimes difficult to find a priest who was willing to wear the heavy, embroidered chasubles, instead of his own of lightweight modern materials and simple design.



Figure 50: Chasubles made by the sisters at Jamberoo Abbey, 1948 (left) and 1950 (right).

The cream chasuble (left) is part of a set of vestments made for the centenary of the founding of the Abbey. The ground fabric has been identified as the *Cloister* damask woven by M. Perkins & Son Pty Ltd, Hampshire, England. The white chasuble (right) was made using fabric from a wedding gown.

(Images by the author, 2017)

The Carmelite relic

Carefully preserved in the Jamberoo Abbey archives is a plain cardboard box which holds a remarkable and fragile peasant scarf which, in the words of the community archivist, “... embodies a story of persecution, suffering and ultimately martyrdom ...”. The scarf (figure 51) was a gift from Stanbrook Abbey and arrived with the first sisters in 1848. The scarf is a secondary relic⁶⁴ of the *Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne*, a community of nuns from the French Discalced Carmelite Monastery at Compiègne in northern France who were executed for their faith during the French Revolution.

⁶⁴ In the context of Catholicism, secondary relics are objects such as clothing associated with a martyr/saint as distinct from primary relics which are the physical remains, for example bones, of the person. Relics embody a religious significance as focus objects for prayer.



Figure 51: Peasant scarf worn by one of the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne.
(Image by the author, 2016)

The story behind their execution was included in a newspaper account of the beatification ceremony⁶⁵ of the Compiègne martyrs published in the Freeman's Journal (July 14, 1906 p9), a leading Sydney Catholic newspaper. The threads that tie a Carmelite relic to the Benedictine Abbey archives at Jamberoo in rural New South Wales were spun in the turmoil and anti-religious fervour of the French Revolution.

The first thread appears with the founding of an 'English' Benedictine Abbey at Cambrai, Northern France, in 1625. Many English Catholic religious orders founded communities-in-exile in Europe following the Dissolution of the Monasteries by England's King Henry VIII and the turmoil of the Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century. Interestingly, one of the nine founding sisters at the Benedictine Abbey at Cambrai was Helen More, later Mother Gertrude More, the great, great granddaughter of St Thomas More (Weld-Blundell, 1911). Thomas More had been Lord High Chancellor of England in the reign of Henry VIII, but was tried for treason and executed in 1535 for his refusal to recognise the annulment of Henry's

⁶⁵ Beatification is the first step in the canonization of a person as a Catholic saint. The current process for canonization can be accessed at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_25011983_divinus-perfectionis-magister.html. The cause for the canonization of the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne has advanced to the beatification stage. The nuns beatified on 27th May, 1906 by Pope Pius X and are designated as *Blessed*. Their feast day is 17th July, the date of their deaths (Tripepi, 1906).

marriage to Katherine of Aragon and to acknowledge the king's claim as head of the Church in England (Huddleston,1912).

The second thread appears during the French Revolution when French monasteries and convents, and their communities, suffered a similar fate to the English Catholic Church during the Protestant Reformation in England some 250 years earlier. The story begins in 1792 when the Carmelite Monastery at Compiègne in Northern France was closed and the nuns were dispersed. They were forbidden to wear their habits and were forced into tattered, immodest peasant garments, adding large scarves around their shoulders to preserve their modesty. Against the law the sisters remained in the town and, after taking a vow of martyrdom, quietly followed their vocation as best they could (Macca, n.d.). In 1794 the sisters were denounced, arrested and imprisoned as enemies of the state, victims of the Reign of Terror instigated by Maximilien Robespierre in the early 1790s⁶⁶. On the day that the sisters were ordered to Paris for their trial and eventual conviction their civilian clothes were soaking in washtubs and so they left the prison, wearing the long white mantles of their outlawed habits (Mann, 2013). The sisters were executed on July 17, 1794, still wearing their habits. The fate of the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne has been the inspiration for a fictionalised novella (*Song at the Scaffold* by Gertrude von De Fort (1931) and an opera (*Les Dialogues des Carmelites* by Francis Poulenc (1957). Catholic martyrologies, for example *The book of saints : a dictionary of servants of God canonized by the Catholic Church* compiled by the Benedictine monks of St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, extensive research using contemporary sources and eyewitness reports by academics such as William Bush (*To Quell the Terror: The True Story of the Carmelite Martyrs of Compiègne*, 1999), recent commentaries (for example, *The Martyrs of Compiègne as Prophets of Modern Age* by Terrye Newkirk, OCDS) and other articles cited below present a story of the deep religious faith embodied in a simple peasant scarf cared for by the Benedictine sisters at Jamberoo. It is at the prison in Compiègne that the threads connecting the Carmelite's scarf to the English Benedictines from Cambrai come together. In 1793 the Benedictine sisters from Cambrai had been arrested and eventually incarcerated in the same prison as the Carmelites. After the Carmelites were taken to Paris, the Compiègne jailers made the Benedictines wear the Carmelites' abandoned civilian clothes. The Benedictines were still wearing them when they

⁶⁶ The Carmelite nuns were amongst the last of the victims of the Reign of Terror. A few days after the execution of the Carmelites Robespierre was deposed, and he with several of his followers suffered the same fate as the nuns: the Reign of Terror was over. Contemporary reports noted that, in contrast to the raucous cheering that greeted most guillotinings, the crowd was silent during the executions of the sisters. (Mann, 2013).

were finally allowed to sail for England in 1795 (McCarthy, 2010). This community eventually founded England's famous Stanbrook Abbey, the motherhouse of the Jamberoo community. Today, Benedictines at Stanbrook still honour the Carmelites as martyrs whose deaths somehow stopped the killing and saved the jailed Benedictine sisters from the guillotine (Mann, 2013).

When the Benedictine sisters left Stanbrook Abbey for Australia in 1848 they brought with them one of the precious peasant scarves, a testament to the faith and vocation of Carmelite Martyrs of Compiegne. The Carmelite scarf, like the Ursuline sermon cloth and chasuble, holds an embroidered message. The archivist at Jamberoo Abbey pointed out a tiny letter "A" embroidered in white thread on one corner of the scarf (figure 52, left)). She explained that the letter is a code, but it does not hide a date or a religious message. There is a tradition in the Carmelite and Benedictine communities wherein each sister is assigned a letter on joining the community. She then embroiders all her clothing and linen with this letter, positioning it on each item according to certain rubrics (figure 52 (right)). The letters have no significance other than as an identification mark which allowed laundered clothing to be sorted and returned to its owner.



Figure 52: The identification letter embroidered on the Carmelite scarf (left) and the pattern chart and rubric (right) used by the sisters at Jamberoo Abbey to label their clothing.

(Image by the author, 2017)

It is not known if the "A" on the scarf was assigned to one of the Carmelite martyrs or to the Benedictine sister who subsequently received the scarf, but the practice continues to this day. The Jamberoo Abbey archivist commented that she had been assigned the letter "T" on her entry into the order and that the letter has no connection with her name or seniority, it was just the next one to be assigned.

Two further surprising links to the past

The heritage collection at Jamberoo Abby holds two more treasured items. The first also harks back to the French revolution while the second has family links to another martyr, in this case to the Irish Catholic martyr, St Oliver Plunkett. Laid out in a drawer is, at first glance, a simple white silk chasuble. The floral design is worked in shadow stitch and outline stitch; there is no elaborate goldwork or heavy satin stitch (figure 53). Its simplicity belies its age and community connection. The Abbey's records show that the chasuble, and the Carmelite's scarf, arrived with Mother Magdalen Le Clerc, the foundress from Stanbrook Abbey. Mother Magdalen, the daughter of a French father and an English mother, was born Constance Le Clerc in Yorkshire, England. The chasuble belonged to her great-uncle who was a priest in France during the French Revolution.



Figure 53: Chasuble dating from the time of the French Revolution and detail of the shadow work embroidery. (Image by the author, 2017)

The second treasure is a circular plaque embroidered with a paschal lamb and $\alpha\omega$ (the alpha-omega monogram) (figure 54). On the back, hand-written in black ink, is the inscription

Worked by exiled German nuns
 Given by Mr Merewether (D M Justina's father).
 To dear Mother 1876
 used for antependium⁶⁷
 to be taken great care of

⁶⁷ An antependium, or antependium, is an altar frontal; a decorative cloth that traditionally hangs like a curtain from the front edge of the altar to the floor. It is separate to the altar cloths.



Figure 54: Embroidered plaque (left) and part of the inscription on the back. (right).
(Image by the author, 2017)

D M Justina was Mother Mary Justina Merewether and her father was Francis Merewether, former Auditor-General of the colony of N.S.W. While the plaque is not the work of the Jamberoo Abbey sisters there is a link through Mother Justina's family to the anti-Catholic hysteria of the Popish Plot⁶⁸ in England and Scotland during the late 1670s and early 1680s and also to the notorious Myall Creek massacre in Australia in 1838. Mother Justina's mother was Kate Amelia Plunkett. Kate Plunkett and her brother John Hubert Plunkett were members of the prominent Irish Catholic Plunkett family. John Plunkett was the noted lawyer and politician who successfully brought about the conviction of a group of white men who carried out the massacre of a tribe of Aboriginals at Myall Creek, NSW in 1838 (Suttor 1967). Kate and John Plunkett were related to Oliver Plunkett, a seventeenth-century Archbishop of Armagh, Prelate of Ireland and saint who was executed in 1681, the last victim of the Popish Plot. Interestingly, a chasuble belonging to St Oliver Plunkett⁶⁹ is on display in the heritage exhibition at Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. The German nuns mentioned in the inscription would have been exiled as a result of the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* or Imperial Deputation, of 1803. The Imperial Deputation was the final act in a long campaign of political secularisation and military action that saw many Catholic universities, abbeys, convents and monasteries closed and their communities sent into exile (Besse, 1911).

⁶⁸ The 'Popish Plot' was a conspiracy campaign perpetrated against the Catholic Church, and particularly the Jesuits, in England by one Titus Oates. Oates's fictitious claims of a Catholic plot to kill the king, Charles II, led to the trials and executions of many innocent men including Oliver Plunkett and several Jesuit priests.

⁶⁹ Like the Carmelite sisters of Compiegne, Oliver Plunkett was declared a martyr of the Church. He was canonised by Pope Paul VI in 1975. https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/homilies/1975/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19751012.html

The community significance of the Carmelite's scarf and other heritage textiles is summarised in an article published in the Abbey magazine *Pax* for ANZAC Day in 2015. The article reminds readers that such objects embody a community memory of people we have known -

The famous words: LEST WE FORGET are etched into the heart of each of us. ... there are "mementos" which we keep because we want to REMEMBER a person or persons. ... Why do we keep all this and more? We keep it all so that we don't forget the story which has made us who we are today. ... We don't suddenly arrive at Eastertide 2015 without a past. ... ("Remembering," 2015)

It is apt that the article includes the phrase "lest we forget", words most often associated with the memorial services conducted to remember the sacrifices made by Australian military personnel in the wars and conflicts. The surprising stories of two textiles with ecclesiastical associations and connections to the Australian military follow.

The military cap of Archbishop Daniel Mannix: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission.

While Catholic chaplains have served in, and supported, the military in Australia for over a century very little 'military' ecclesiastical textile heritage exists in the surveyed collections. Among the many items associated with Archbishop Daniel Patrick Mannix that are held by the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission is one of the few garments found in the survey that has military connections – an officer's cap. Archbishop Mannix was appointed Chaplain General for the Australian Forces in 1917 (National Archives of Australia: A2013, A82/1/215), a post he held until his death, aged 99, in 1963. Mannix was a controversial choice for Chaplain- General given his views on conscription. As James Griffin notes in his brief biography of Mannix in the Australian Dictionary of Biography:

... Mannix approved of Britain's declaration of war in 1914 but did not preach the heroics of holy war or take part in recruiting ... he [deplored] the 1916 Easter Rising, but he quashed [Archbishop] Kelly's proposed episcopal protest against it because he held England culpable ... Mannix's scorn for his chaplain-general's uniform was reported to King George V

who suggested he be transferred to Rome: 'God forbid', replied Cardinal Gasquet⁷⁰ ... (Griffin, 1986)

It is interesting to note that Mannix was the only Catholic bishop to speak out against conscription during both debates surrounding that issue during World War I (Kildea, 2002). While Mannix's opinions may seem at variance with his appointment and role as Chaplain-General, he was greatly respected by the military, as the following comment shows:

... While he may never have worn the uniform to which he was entitled – that of a major general, and it was said that wild horses could not have dragged him into military attire – the Army gave him a final salute of 13 guns fired at one-minute intervals as his body was being laid to rest in a vault in Melbourne's St Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday 10 November, 1963 ... (Steinback, 2001)

Though not strictly an ecclesiastical hat, the military cap of Archbishop Mannix reminds us that the clergy do not always live apart from the secular world. Chaplains have played an important role in supporting military personnel, in Australia and overseas, for over a century (Gladwin, 2013).

Australian Army Chaplain's vestments and portable altar: Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission

In the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission sits a wooden box with a plainness that belies its significance (figure 55). The Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission's archivist recounted the story behind the box, identified as a travelling altar from the candle sconces, candles and crucifix fitted inside. The travelling altar was dedicated in Rome in 1914 and saw service on the beaches of Gallipoli and the battlefields of Western France. It was then used as a travelling altar for the celebration of the Mass in community halls scattered around the Mallee Region of western Victoria until the 1950s when it came to rest at the church in Patchewollock.

⁷⁰ Francis Aidan Gasquet was an English Benedictine monk who was appointed cardinal in 1914. "...Gasquet's influence was considerable and owed much to his amiable personality and ready wit, his ability to make friends and to influence those in the highest echelons of church and state..." (Bellenger, 1999).



Figure 55: World War I travelling altar (left) and a similar altar in use on the Gallipoli Peninsular (1915) (right). (Sources: Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission, 2018, (left) and Photographic Collection of the Australian War Memorial, image number P04917.004, 1915, (right) used with permission)

There is some debate as to the identity of the chaplain who used the altar but the archivist surmises that

... it belonged to either Fr Tom Woods or Fr Goidenach MC who both serviced the [Mallee] region. Both had been chaplains in World War I, Goidenach at Gallipoli and the Western Front. There is also a letter from Birdwood⁷¹ thanking Goidenach for his service over and above what was required of him (information via email from staff at the Diocese of Ballarat Archives).

The box is the equivalent of the modern Navy chaplain's portable combat kit held in the collection at the Australian War Memorial. Chaplains' combat kits or boxes held all the essential requisites for the celebration of Mass 'in the field' including altar cloths, linen and vestments. A checklist stitched inside the closing flap of the modern naval chaplain's kit details the complete liturgical requisites of a chaplain. The Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission also has in its care a set of field vestments belonging to Fr Henry Nolan who

⁷¹ William Riddell Birdwood (1865-1951), 1st Baron Birdwood of Anzac and Totnes, was appointed commander of the Australian and New Zealand forces during World War I by Lord Kitchener. Birdwood was a much respected commander who followed a policy of appointing Australian and New Zealand personnel to commanding and staff positions. Birdwood relinquished command of the Australian forces to General John Monash in mid-1918. Information retrieved from <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/birdwood-william-riddell-baron-birdwood-5240>

was a Military Chaplain in Vietnam. The vestments are unusual in that they are not a liturgical colour, but army khaki (figure 56).



Figure 56: Khaki vestments worn by a Catholic chaplain in Vietnam, mid-twentieth century.
(Source: Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission, 2018, used with permission)

This unexpected and surprising feature supports the claim made in a short article dated November 29, 1944 (p4), in the *Advocate* (the Catholic newspaper of Victoria) that the Right Reverend Monsignor James H. Griffiths, Chancellor of the Military Ordinate, had requested that silk, the colour of army uniforms, be found, and vestments be made as quickly as possible. The request followed the Vatican sanctioning the wearing of camouflage vestments in the field during World War II because vestments in white and liturgical colours were highly visible and posed a danger in the field. The article goes on to say that the permission was apparently only for the duration of WWII, and priests were required to wear vesture in correct liturgical colours for indoor services. A respondent from the Military Ordinariate of Australia, the diocese that ministers to the military and its families, when asked about ‘camouflage vestments’, commented on this unique variation in the mandated liturgical colour code and indicated that this sanction is still in place. My search for ‘camouflage’ vestments would have ended there had it not been for a passing comment made by a diocesan archivist during an unrelated discussion. The archivist had heard that the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission had recently received a donation of vestments that included an army

chaplain's military vestments. The military chasuble and stole mentioned proved to be Fr Nolan's vestments.

While few physical examples of ecclesiastical textiles with a military connection reside in archive collections, the photographic collection at the Australian War Memorial contains several photographs of chaplains ministering in the field. The images show the vesture worn by Catholic chaplains serving in World Wars I and II, the Korean and Vietnam campaigns and recent deployments to Iran and Afghanistan, including one image of a chaplain celebrating a Mass 'in camouflage' (figure 57).



Figure 57: Catholic chaplains wearing khaki vestments while celebrating a Mass in the field.

Interestingly, both images were taken during the Vietnam Conflict and show pre- and post-Vatican II vestments.

(Source: Photographic Collection of the Australian War Memorial, image numbers THO/68/0747/VN and WAR/70/0140/VN, 1968 (top) and 1970 (bottom), used with permission)

Sadly, the predominance of black vesture in these historic photographs highlights the chaplains' essential role in funeral and burial rites and commemoration services. Interestingly some of the chasubles appear to be reversible, white on the outside and black on the inside (or vice versa) making them multi-occasion vestments. Modern vesture rubrics specify white for funerals so black chasubles no longer appear on the battlefield. Even though Archbishop Mannix may not have worn his uniform, his cap and Fr Nolan's vestments are reminders of the pastoral and spiritual care provided by chaplains to the military.

6.1.2 Second Thread: Beginnings

Patrick Francis Cardinal Moran dedicated his *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia* to the

... Bishops and priests, past and present, of Australasia, who by their zeal, piety, and self-sacrifice beneath the Southern Cross have laid deep and broad the foundations ... of a Glorious Church. (Moran, 1896)

The following stories of treasured 'origin' artefacts, recall the many and varied foundation communities of the Catholic Church in Australia. It is perhaps surprising to note that the first vestments worn for the celebration of the Mass in both Sydney and Melbourne were not the ornate, sumptuously embroidered garments expected at such historical events in the life of the Church. St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney has in its care the so-called convict chasuble worn by Fr James Dixon in 1803 when he celebrated the first officially sanctioned Mass in the colony of New South Wales. The Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission houses the 'home-made' vestments brought from Sydney by Fr Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan when he celebrated the first Mass in the new settlement of Melbourne in 1838. The simple designs of the 'first' vestments are in stark contrast to the elaborate baroque textiles carried to Australia by the foundation community of the Benedictine monastery at New Norcia, Western Australia, and the Neo-Gothic textiles purchased for his new churches by Tasmania's first bishop, Robert Willson.

The Convict Vestments worn by Fr James Dixon: St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney

A faded chasuble, stole and chalice veil stored at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney are reputedly the vestments made for Fr, James Dixon when he celebrated the first officially sanctioned mass in the colony of New South Wales in 1803. The story of the so-called

‘convict vestments’ is told in Moran’s monumental *History of the Catholic Church in Australasia* published in 1896. Citing letters and official documents Cardinal Moran charts the first century of the history of the Catholic Church in a new land as follows. No Catholic bishop or priest accompanied the first settlers in 1788, and Government regulations of the time mandated that all inhabitants, regardless of religion, attend the Protestant services directed by Mr Reverend Johnson, a Methodist minister who had been appointed Chaplain of the settlement just before the First fleet set sail (Moran, 1896, p8). Despite appeals by the small community of Catholic emancipists and convicts and the arrival of three priests, James Harold, James Dixon and Peter O’Neil who had all been transported for alleged involvement in political uprisings in Ireland, there was no officially sanctioned celebration of a Catholic Mass in the colony for the first fifteen years. In 1803 Governor King granted Fr Dixon conditional emancipation and issued a proclamation granting him permission, with conditions⁷², to celebrate the Mass (V. Parsons, 1966; Moran 1896). The first Mass was celebrated on 15th May 1803, in Sydney. Masses were subsequently said at Parramatta and Hawkesbury. Cardinal Moran describes the difficulties that Fr Dixon faced in carrying out his liturgical duties.

... A small tin chalice was made for him by one of the convicts. Some old damask curtains were transformed into a many-coloured vestment. There was, for a time at least, no altar-stone, and the consecrated oils had to be procured from Rio Janeiro. (Moran (1896) p39)

Fr Dixon’s permission to say the Mass was revoked in 1804 following an uprising of Irish convicts at Castle Hill. Fr Dixon returned to Ireland in 1809 and it would be eleven years before the celebration of a Catholic Mass was again officially sanctioned by the Colonial Government. Moran makes no reference to the fate or location of the vestments worn by Fr Dixon after his departure but there is a tradition that items associated with the first Masses were left in the care of the devoutly Catholic Dempsey or Davis families when the last remaining priest in the colony, Fr Jeremiah Flynn, was deported by Governor Macquarie in 1818 (Doyle, 1952). It may well be that the vestments now known as the convict vestments were amongst these items. In an article published in the *Catholic Weekly* (April 16, 1953) to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first Mass in Australia historian Brian Doyle hints that the vestments are pre-1803 and that they were in use prior to the first official Mass but he

⁷² *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 24 April 1803, Page 1

gives no hint as to where the vestments had been or who had cared for them over the years (Doyle, 1953). Interestingly a memorial stained glass window in the cathedral depicts the celebration of a clandestine Mass: a lookout is stationed at the door and the priest says the Mass wearing a red chasuble that features what appear to be curtain rings along the edge – perhaps a coded reference to the origins of the fabric. There is no documentary evidence that the chasuble was originally red. Cardinal Moran (see above) refers to a ‘many-coloured vestment’. A textile conservator who worked on the vestments some years ago provided images and information that show that the vestments are of a light coloured silk fabric patterned with flowers. The cross on the back of the chasuble and other decorative details are delineated with cream ribbon (figure 58).



Figure 58: The so-called convict vestments worn by Fr Dixon when he celebrated the first officially sanctioned Mass in the colony in 1803.

(Source: Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences, Sydney, 2018, used with permission)

The convict vestments worn by Fr, Dixon are significant on many levels. They are the first threads of a Catholic community that spread as the colony grew; a tangible link to the very beginnings of the colony. The convict vestments also reflect the religious significance of the

‘correct’ liturgical attire, a thread that ties the tiny colonial community to two millennia of Catholic religious practice.

The Melbourne First Mass Vestments worn by Fr Patrick Geoghegan: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission

In 1839 Bishop Polding of Sydney sent Fr Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan south from Sydney to establish the first Catholic mission in Melbourne.

... Some three thousand Catholics were then in the area out of a population of about ten thousand. Geoghegan lost no time in putting up ‘almost in the open air ... a poor temporary altar’ and celebrated the first Mass on Pentecost Sunday, 19 May. (Thorpe, 1972)

The vestments worn by Fr Geoghegan for the celebration of that first Mass in Melbourne were made in Australia. A previous version of the provenance of the *First Mass* vestments claims that they were made by local Melbourne women from scraps – pieces of velvet and cloth probably from a wedding dress – and decorated with a simple everyday braid (Divall, 1996). In his address at the opening of an exhibition of sacred embroidery, mentioned earlier, Divall also commented on the personal and community significance of vestments.

... the simplicity and obvious faith and love given by the women of Melbourne in their embroidery of the vestments used by Fr Geoghegan at the first Mass in Melbourne. ... Here scraps of velvet and probably cloth from a wedding dress have been used with simple everyday braid applied. Handmade, embroidered with devotion by the local ladies and now one of our most treasured historical possessions. (Divall, 1996, p. 497)

The archivist for the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission related that, as a result of recent research, the long-accepted story of the vestments local Melbourne manufacture was in doubt. It is now believed that Fr Geoghegan, realising that red vestments would be required for the celebration of Mass on Pentecost Sunday, had the women of Sydney make him a matching chasuble, stole and chalice veil in ‘everyday fabrics’ – red velvet and white silk – in the prevailing Roman style. He brought the vestments with him when he sailed from Sydney. The vestments were

on display for many years at Corpus Christi College, Melbourne, and, as a result of prolonged exposure to light, the original red fabric has faded (figure 59).



Figure 59: The red vestments worn by Fr Geoghegan when he celebrated the first Mass in Melbourne in 1839. (Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The Spanish Collection: New Norcia Benedictine Community, Western Australia

The New Norcia Benedictine Community is unique amongst religious communities in Australia because it is Australia's only monastic town⁷³. The entire town of New Norcia is registered as part of the National Estate⁷⁴ and 27 of its 65 buildings are classified by the National Trust. The story of the founding of the New Norcia Benedictine Community eerily parallels those of the Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo and the Ursuline Convent at Armidale. The founding monks of New Norcia came from the Monastery of San Martiño Pinario at Santiago de Compostela in Spain. In 1835 political upheaval and anti-clerical feelings came

⁷³ New Norcia is situated approximately 130km Northwest of Perth. It has a permanent population of about 60, including 8 monks.

⁷⁴ The Benedictine Monastic Precinct at New Norcia was entered onto the Permanent Register of the National Estate on October 21st 1980 (Place ID 10233). The Precinct was placed on the Register of the Heritage Council of Western Australia on 30th May 1989 (Place ID 02622).

to a head with the *Ecclesiastical Confiscations of Mendizábal*⁷⁵ which dissolved the religious orders and confiscated their estates. All the movable and immovable property was confiscated and communities dispersed outside their monasteries, abbeys and convents (Besse, 1911). Many religious became diocesan priests or returned to their families. Some religious sought refuge in Italy and in France, including two Benedictine monks, Dom José Benito Serra and Dom Rosendo Salvado, who joined the Abbey of the Most Holy Trinity of Cava, near Salerno in Italy. In 1844, fired by missionary zeal, the two monks applied to the authorities in Rome to be missionaries and were assigned to the newly appointed first Bishop of Perth, Rt. Reverend John Brady⁷⁶. Brady divided the WA Mission into three districts and it was to the Central District that the two Spanish Benedictines were sent (Smith, 2008). The Benedictines initially set up a mission to educate and train the local aboriginal population in agricultural techniques, and at the same time offered pastoral support to a number of widely dispersed parishes. Over the next century the mission became a town, with a large monastery, separate schools for the education of boys and girls, and numerous small businesses, for example a bakery and blacksmith, to support the town and local community. In 1849 Dom Rosendo Salvado was appointed Bishop of Victoria, pre-cursor to the Diocese of Darwin, but returned to New Norcia in 1853 as Abbot to the monastery. The foundations of New Norcia's significant collection of moveable heritage were laid in the time of Bishop Salvado, who was also a gifted organist and composer⁷⁷. Bishop Salvado made several fundraising trips to Europe which provided him with the means to acquire land, to construct buildings and to purchase books, vestments, art works and ritual objects as well as stock and equipment. The archivist at the Benedictine Community revealed that the archives hold nearly 20,000 documents including letters recording many gifts of vestments from across Europe. The most significant heritage textiles form the *Spanish Collection*, named for its associations with the royal court of Spain, particularly Queen Isabella II. It is thought that Isabella gifted a number of vestments and other ecclesiastical textiles to the new mission (Baker 2017). Extensive repairs, signs of wear, stains from sweat, and deposits of red dust reinforce the fact that these textiles were not museum pieces or works of art but that they

⁷⁵ Juan Álvarez Mendizábal was a Spanish economist and politician who served as finance minister of Spain from September 25, 1835 to May 15, 1836.

⁷⁶ The monks had initially applied to join Archbishop John Bede Polding in Sydney.

⁷⁷ "...None of his music was printed but there are extant some of his sacred compositions written for his Western Australian Aborigines and for convicts in Fremantle gaol, and a major work *Fantasia*, with variations and finale. ..." Dom William (1967). *Salvado, Rosendo (1814–1900)*, Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/salvado-rosendo-2627/text3635>

were first and foremost ‘working’ artefacts in the liturgical life of the Church: some have seen centuries of use. The ongoing spiritual significance of these heritage and historic textiles is reflected in the fact that some items were still in use as recently as the mid twentieth century. Four items from the *Spanish Collection*, a cope, mitre, chalice veil and processional banner, have undergone conservation and are now on periodic display in a newly completed museum. The *Spanish Collection* has been the focus of several heritage research projects, including a pioneering study into the assessment of cultural significance and its role in textile conservation protocols (MacLeod & Car, 2014a) and the development of ground-breaking conservation techniques for fragile textiles incorporating metallic threads (MacLeod & Car, 2014c, 2016).

A recent article in *Chimes*, the New Norcia Community magazine, summarised the investigative and conservation work carried out by staff at the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the Textile Conservation Studio, Denmark (WA). The results of exhaustive visual assessment and scientific analyses offered some intriguing insights into the potential research value of the *Spanish Collection* to the fields of art history, craft and design aesthetics, and world history (Baker, 2017).

The significance of the mitre, cope, and chalice veil from the Spanish Collection

The chalice veil, believed to date from 1640, is a square of silk fabric heavily embroidered with gold and silver threads and coloured silk (figure 60). The overlap of the spiritual and aesthetic significance of the veil is perfectly summarised by the collection manager of the museum:

... This is an exquisite work, with exotic birds, insects and flowers entwined around the hovering central motif of the Holy Spirit. It tells of new lands, empires and exploration, while the extraordinary complexity and intricacy of the embroidery expresses the height of a sophisticated textile tradition. The restored Chalice Veil now clearly celebrates the beauty of the natural world, both as evidence of God's creation, and meshed with the symbolic ritual and transmutation of the Mass. (Baker, 2017, p. 8)



Figure 60: Detail of a peacock embroidered on a chalice veil in the *Spanish Collection*, ca 1640.

(Source: Baker, 2017, p8, used with permission).

The conservators outlined their findings at a ceremony held to celebrate the return of the veil to the community. From a study of the motifs used in the decoration, they concluded that the chalice veil was possibly made in Holland (in the present day Netherlands), and not Spain as previously thought. It does, however, have an unexpected ‘material’ link to Spain and its New World colonies. The high level of platinum in the silver threads is similar to that in coins salvaged from the shipwreck of the *Batavia* (Gentelli, 2016). The *Batavia*, built in Amsterdam in 1628 for the Dutch East India Company (often referred to as VOC from the Dutch *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*), was shipwrecked on Morning Reef near Beacon Island, part of the Houtman Abrolhos, about 80km off the coast of Geraldton, Western Australia,⁷⁸ on June 4th 1629. The ship’s cargo included precious metal objects specifically manufactured for trade with the East Indies which can therefore be dated with reasonable accuracy to 1628-1629. Gentelli’s research into the composition of metal artefacts and coins from the wreck revealed that the silver contained traces of palladium, an impurity indicative of silver ores mined in South America. At the time of the sailing of the *Batavia* and the veil’s manufacture, Holland and its neighbouring states were at war with Spain⁷⁹. A trade embargo and sea blockade effectively cut the Dutch off from the direct supply of silver flowing from

⁷⁸ Information from the Shipwrecks Database at the Western Australian Museum <http://museum.wa.gov.au/maritime-archaeology-db/wrecks/id-812>

⁷⁹ The Eighty Year’s War or Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648) “... is the term given to the armed struggle of the Northern Netherlands to shake off Spanish rule. In addition to fighting against foreign dominion, the revolt was also a desperate civil war between two key sections of the Dutch population ...” (*Rijksmuseum* website) <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio/timeline-dutch-history>

the Spanish colonies in South America. The Dutch were, however, able to obtain precious metals, including silver from Spain and its South American colonies, indirectly through its trading partners in England, France and the Hanseatic League city of Hamburg (Gentelli, 2016). Piracy was another possible source of contemporary ‘Spanish’ silver. In 1628 the Dutch admiral Piet Heyn captured a large portion of the so-called *Silver Fleet*, the annual convoy transporting silver to Spain from its colonies in the Caribbean and South America. Metals expert Ian MacLeod, recently retired from the Western Australia Museum, contended that booty from the *Silver Fleet* injected billions into the Dutch economy and introduced palladium into European silver from this date (Baker, 2017). This poses a tantalising and intriguing question – was clandestinely-traded or openly-pirated Spanish-American silver the source of the traces of palladium found in the veil’s silver embroidery? It is a tantalising and intriguing possibility. The silver threads in the veil could be another tangible reminder of turbulent times in global history lived through by the Catholic Church.

The largest item in the *Spanish Collection*, the semi-circular cope, was one of the first items to undergo intensive conservation (Macleod & Car, 2014c). The silk ground fabric and front orphrey panels are heavily embroidered with silk and gilded silver alloy threads. The conservation team identified tulips, carnations, strawberries, hellebores, roses and forget-me-nots in the intricate baroque design. Like the chalice veil, the cope was not made in Spain, “... stylistic analysis of [the] heavily degraded ecclesiastical cope established it was a mid-18th-century northern Italian garment ...” (Macleod & Car, 2014c, p.1). The assessment and conservation of the cope perfectly illustrates the complexities in dealing with the tangible materiality and intangible values of heritage objects of such spiritual, historical, and aesthetic significance. The story of the conservation of the cope is covered in more detail in the chapter 7. The conservation assessment of a third textile from the *Spanish Collection*, a pretiosa mitre presented to Bishop Salvado on a trip to Europe in the 1860s, revealed that it was made much later than other textiles in the *Spanish Collection*. Stylistically the mitre dates from no earlier than the mid nineteenth century, while the sequins and ‘jewels’ used in its decoration were typical elements of Neo-Gothic ecclesiastical designs for the same era.

Analysis of the metal threads again revealed traces of palladium leading researchers to strongly suggest the mitre was constructed for the Catholic Church incorporating silver sourced from the Catholic Spanish colonies (MacLeod & Car, 2016, p. 101). The jewels proved to be faceted lead crystal and not, as initially thought by the conservators, genuine

diamonds and sapphires. The mitre may have a closer personal connection to the community as all material information supports the conclusion that it was given to Bishop Salvado on the occasion of his consecration as bishop (MacLeod & Car, 2016, p. 98). The *Spanish Collection* textiles, including the examples discussed above, embody the same liturgical functions and religious significance as any of the simply decorated, commercially produced vestments of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the New Norcia textile collection. Modern research techniques, however, have highlighted the research potential of a group of largely unknown heritage textiles of national, and international, significance.

The Pugin textiles of colonial Tasmania: Archdiocese of Hobart Heritage Museum and Archives

Scattered throughout Tasmania is a unique legacy of nineteenth-century Neo-Gothic ecclesiastical architecture and design, the result of a friendship between the Right Reverend Robert Willson, first Bishop of Hobart Town, and Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, celebrated English architect and designer⁸⁰. Brian Andrews's (2002) definitive work, *Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes* explored Bishop Willson's connections, both personal and professional, to Pugin. Bishop Willson's eldest brother, Edward, was an architect and antiquarian whose contributions to contemporary publications on medieval architecture and archaeology laid the foundations of the English Gothic Revival Movement. In 1928 Bishop Willson, then simply Reverend Father Willson, was assigned to the parish of Nottingham and there built the Church of St John the Evangelist to his brother's design. Willson shared Pugin's vision for the liturgical revivification of medieval Catholic life and, in 1841, supported Pugin on the building of St Barnabas's Church (which became St Barnabas's Cathedral), the replacement for his by now over-crowded Church of St John. Willson's elevation to Bishop of Hobart Town in 1842 provided Pugin with an opportunity to

... create a Gothic paradise in a pristine land with another soul whose views exactly corresponded with his own. ... Here there would be no exhaustive battles for rood screens, no condemnations of vestments, no ignorance of the functions of his churches. [but] a shared vision, not for

⁸⁰ Pugin was responsible for the interior design of the Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament) in London, and designed many major ecclesiastical buildings in England including St Chad's Cathedral (properly the Metropolitan Cathedral Church and Basilica of Saint Chad) and the chapel at New Oscott College, both in Birmingham. Interestingly, it was at the dedication of St Chad's Cathedral that Archbishop Polding of Sydney first met Pugin, and where Willson was later consecrated Bishop of Hobart Town (with Polding as principal co-consecrator). Polding subsequently commissioned Pugin to design churches for his expanding flock in New South Wales. Bishop Willson trained at Old Oscott College.

one church or one set of furnishings but for the total needs of a diocese and its people. (Andrews, 2002 p54)

In January 1844 Bishop Willson sailed on the *Bella Marina* from England to Tasmania, bringing with him Pugin's plans, models and designs for the churches that he would build in the colony. Included in the cargo loaded onto the *Bella Marina* were all the fittings, furniture, and church requisites, including vestments, needed to celebrate the liturgies of the Church.

... In this Gothic Jerusalem envisaged by Pugin and Willson, the faithful of Van Diemen's Land would be baptised in a Pugin font, attend Mass in a Pugin-designed and furnished church by a priest wearing Pugin vestments and using Pugin altar vessels, then at life's end would be buried in the shadow of a Pugin churchyard cross, their final resting place marked by a Pugin headstone. (Andrews, 2002, p. 55)

Willson purchased more Pugin-designed vestments and church requisites on subsequent trips to England. Pugin's designs for church plate and other metal wares were manufactured exclusively by John Hardman and Co. of Birmingham, a company noted for its expertise in ecclesiastical metalwork and stained glass. The Hardman family worked closely with Pugin, and later his sons, making windows and metal work for numerous churches and civic buildings across England, Ireland and in Australia. The stained glass windows designed for St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney by William Wardell, a follower of Pugin, were made by Hardman's. There were also close family ties between Pugin and Hardman. Pugin's eldest daughter, Anne, married John Hardman Powell, nephew of the founder of Hardman and Co., John Hardman. John Hardman Powell's mother, Lucy Powell (née Hardman, half-sister to John Hardman), and her staff were responsible for the embroidery on Pugin's vestments. After Pugin's death in 1852, Hardman and Co. continued to manufacture to Pugin's designs and Bishop Willson continued to support the company as far as his limited finances would allow. Bishop Willson appears to have purchased cheaper vestments from Thomas Brown and Son of Manchester whose designs closely resemble, but lack the quality of, the work of Pugin, Hardman and Lucy Powell (Andrews, 2002, p.121).

It has long been known that many churches in Tasmania and on the Australian mainland were either built to Pugin designs or designed by architects influenced by Pugin. For example,

three churches in Tasmania – St John the Evangelist's Church at Richmond, St Patrick's Church at Colebrook and St Paul's Church at Oatlands and the mainland churches of St Francis Xavier at Berrima (NSW) the original St Benedict's at Broadway, Sydney, and St Stephen's in Brisbane are Pugin designs. The present St Mary's Cathedral⁸¹ in Sydney (properly the Cathedral Church and Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Mother of God, Help of Christians) and St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne (properly the Cathedral Church and Minor Basilica of Saint Patrick) were designed by Sir William Wardell, a pupil of Pugin. The death of Pugin did not end Bishop Willson's vision for "a Gothic Jerusalem" in his fledgling diocese. He commissioned a young local architect, Henry Hunter, to design and build churches for his ever-expanding flock. Henry Hunter was born in Nottingham in 1832 and had studied for a short time at the Nottingham Government School of Design (now part of the prestigious Nottingham Trent University), before emigrating to South Australia with his family in 1849. His father, Walter Hunter, set up as a builder, and, perhaps with Henry's help, designed and built the Church of St Augustine, Salisbury, a little two-compartment stone church in the Early English style (Andrews, 2002, p.142). Henry Hunter's parents died in 1851 and he moved to Hobart, where his elder brother, George, had recently been ordained into the priesthood by Bishop Willson. George Hunter, a seminarian at the time, was in the original party that accompanied Bishop Willson to Hobart Town in 1844. It is intriguing, but hardly surprising given the small Catholic population at the time and the personal and professional links between Catholic families and the clergy, that many heritage threads weave together. For example, Henry Hunter's links to this research go further than the connection to Hobart. The textile collection at St Augustine's Church, Salisbury, which was built by his father, was surveyed for this project. Reverend George Hunter died in 1868, aged just 44, but his memory lives on in a remarkable Pugin chasuble found in one of the churches he served and a Hardman stained glass memorial window⁸² in St Joseph's Church, Hobart (Andrews, 2002, pp. 69-70).

Given the passage of time and the inherent vices of textiles, it was assumed that little, if any, movable ecclesiastical heritage associated directly with Pugin still existed. It was only in the

⁸¹ The original St Mary's Cathedral, built to a Pugin design, was destroyed by fire in 1865. Archbishop Polding commissioned Sir William Wardell to design a new cathedral but before it could be completed, the church built as a temporary replacement burned to the ground in 1868. The Pugin vestments and plate which had miraculously survived the first fire were lost.

⁸² This window, and another to the memory of Bishop Willson, were designed by Henry Hunter, and made by the Hardman Company under the supervision of T. J. Willson, Esq., architect, and nephew of the late Bishop (*The Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston) Friday 10 September 1869, p. 2*). Thomas John Willson was the son of Bishop Willson's architect brother Edward.

late 1990s that the true extent of Pugin's Tasmanian ecclesiastical legacy was realised when a survey of local churches revealed unsuspected treasures, including vestments and church vessels, still in use or lying long-forgotten in vestry cupboards and presses (Andrews, 2002). In 2002 the Museum and Gallery of Tasmania mounted a major exhibition to honour the prodigious talents of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin and to mark the 150th anniversary of his death in 1852⁸³. The exhibition was the culmination of intensive and exhaustive research by local historian Brian Andrews. In 1997 Mr Andrews had carried out a cultural heritage survey for the Diocese of Hobart, visiting and documenting the contents of all ninety-nine of its churches. He subsequently visited other Pugin buildings on mainland Australia. His meticulous investigations uncovered an unexpected treasure trove of *Pugin* works including books, vestments, plate, tombstones, stained glass and drawings (Andrews, 2002, p. vii). The significance of the discovery of so many undocumented Pugin artefacts and the paradox of their location were not lost on the director of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. In his preface to Brian Andrews's 2002 book Bill Bleathman wrote

... How extraordinary that the only coherent collection of works outside Britain and Ireland by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, the greatest designer of his age, should come to this island [Tasmania] during the 1840s and 50s to be used for the service of those on the lowest rungs of Tasmanian society. What must wretched shackled convicts have made of brilliantly coloured embroidered silk vestments and supremely elegant silver altar vessels designed at the same time as their creator was conceiving his incomparable interiors in the British Houses of Parliament?
... (Bleathman in Andrews, 2002, p. vi)

Bleathman's comments underline the primary liturgical and evangelical significance of ecclesiastical artefacts, including vestments, regardless of their origin and consequent re-location. Pugin's glorious textiles were designed to be used as much in the tiny rural churches of Tasmania as in the grand cathedral in Hobart.

The wear and repair, restyling and actual loss of much of Willson's Pugin artefacts bears testament to their long use, natural decay, and the influence of fashion. Andrews's extensive research revealed two time periods crucial to the survival, or otherwise, of Pugin's remaining

⁸³ The exhibition was entitled "Creating a Gothic paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes" and ran at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery from September 14 until November 10, 2002.

Tasmanian legacy. Firstly, Bishop Willson's successor, Bishop Daniel Murphy, was not a follower of the Neo-Gothic and favoured Roman-style vestments. New vestments purchased by Bishop Murphy would have been in the Roman style and the 'old' Neo-Gothic items relegated to storage or disposal (Andrews, 2002, p. 64). In fact, two Pugin-designed chasubles housed in the collection at the Archdiocese of Hobart Museum and Archives have been "clipped" (re-cut) to the Roman style (Andrews, 2002 pp. 62, 69). Secondly, there appears to have been a 'clear-out' of old, worn textiles by Monsignor John Hugh Cullen between 1934 and 1956. Sound chasubles were clipped into the more fashionable Roman style, orphrey bands and motifs were removed from un-useable items and applied to new backgrounds and other items burned (as per the accepted disposal protocols for sacred items). Andrews postulates that, paradoxically, it was the beauty and design of one Pugin chasuble that had saved it from the 1866 purge by Bishop Murphy only to have it clipped by Monsignor Cullen a century later (Andrews, 2002, p. 64). The orphrey bands on the back of a third red Pugin chasuble, which escaped clipping and thus retains its original Neo-Gothic shape, were replaced with plain fabric in the latter part of the twentieth century (figure 61).



Figure 61: Replaced orphrey cross on a Pugin chasuble.

The original cross was replaced in the 1980s.

(Source: Hobart Archives and Heritage Centre, 2018, used with permission)

A fourth intact chasuble and its attendant stole, maniple and chalice veil are a later purchase of Bishop Willson, most likely in 1854. This rare blue and white "Marian" set of vestments were given to Father John Fitzgerald, first parish priest at Campbell Town for use in his new church (figure 62). The fate of Tasmania's Pugin textile legacy provides ample evidence of the changes to the significance and values of living heritage wrought by the passage of time, breaks in ownership, and the formation of new connections to the vestments.



Figure 62: Blue 'Marian' chasuble designed by Augustus Pugin, ca 1854.

(Source: Archdiocese of Hobart Archives and Heritage Centre, 2018, used with permission)

Pugin's influence on ecclesiastical design in Australia endured for some time after his untimely death. The Archdiocese of Hobart archives holds a number of textiles recognisable as *Puginesque*, including items made in the colony. Several of the surveyed collections also house similar items. Sadly, the vestments belonging to Archbishop John Bede Polding of Sydney exist only in photographs. The fire which destroyed St Mary's Cathedral in 1868 also consumed the precious textiles (see footnote 19). On a happier note, a red cope purchased by Archbishop James Alipius Goold of Melbourne survives, as do two cope hoods held in the heritage collection at Jamberoo Abbey (figure 63).



Figure 63: Two cope hoods from copes designed by Augustus Pugin, mid-nineteenth century. (Images by the author, 2017).

The importance of Pugin's antipodean legacy to the secular heritage community, a rich source of research material for the fields of art history, architecture, aesthetics and design, and the historic and traditional craft skills of ecclesiastical embroidery and weaving, is discussed later in this chapter.

6.1.3 Third Strand: Symbols of faith and service

For centuries the making and care of ecclesiastical textiles have offered a way for people to express their faith and involvement in the life of the Church. The collections of habits at convents and monasteries such as St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar and New Norcia Benedictine Community, Western Australia are representative of the collections of community textile history cared for by religious communities across Australia. Amongst the myriad of textiles held in the collections of the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission is a simple hand-painted stole. It was presented to the parish priest of a small church in rural Victoria by its maker, a local woman, Dr Mary Glowrey. Finally, a large patchwork quilt made a century ago in Bendigo reflects a community's involvement in the works of its parish.

The Stole painted by Mary Glowrey: Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission

When asked to nominate an important textile in the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission collection, the archivist chose a simple hand-painted stole containing two scenes, the familiar AΩ (alpha omega) monogram and a triumphant Paschal lamb, framed by wheat and grapes (figure 64).



Figure 64: Details of the painted motifs on a hand-painted stole.

(Source: Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The archives record that it was presented ca 1920 to the parish priest, Reverend John Barry, of St Joseph's Church at Watchem in country Victoria by its maker, a local woman, Dr Mary Glowrey. Mary Glowrey was the world's first 'Doctor Sister'⁸⁴. After graduating in 1910 from the University of Melbourne, she worked for several years at St Vincent's Hospital and the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital before completing post-graduate studies in obstetrics, gynaecology and ophthalmology. It was during this time that she was elected founding President of the Catholic Women's Social Guild, now known as the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga. This was "... a new ecclesiastical movement founded in 1916 by a small group of visionary young professional women who sought to change the world through prayer and action" (Catholic Women's League of Australia, n.d.). In a brief biography published in the Ivanhoe Parish Newsletter in November 2015 Louise McGrath wrote of her great aunt's vocation to missionary work and the difficulties she faced in realising that call.

... In 1915 after attending Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, she happened to read a pamphlet about the appalling death rate amongst babies in India, and the urgent need for medical missionaries there. She knew then that God was calling her to a life of medical mission work in India. ... She had to gain special permission from Pope Pius XI to perform her medical mission work, for [at that time] nuns were not permitted to practice as doctors. (McGrath, 2015)

In 1920 Dr Glowrey left her successful medical practice in Melbourne to join the Congregation of the Society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, a Dutch order of medical missionary nuns, in Guntur, India. In religious life she took the name Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart. In the years that followed she treated thousands of patients, often as sole practitioner and travelling to outlying villages and encampments in severely deprived areas. On a broader scale she played a pivotal role in the education and training of local women as nurses, midwives and pharmacists and her legacy includes the establishment of the Catholic Hospital Association of India, one of the largest providers of health care in India. Her vision of a medical college was realised in 1963 with the opening of St John's Medical College in Bangalore, seven years after her untimely death from cancer in 1957 (Krohn, 2017). At the

⁸⁴ At the time Church Canon Law prevented religious sisters with public vows from the practice of medicine but Dr Glowrey was able to secure a papal dispensation to practise as a doctor in her medical missionary work. On February 11, 1936 the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith issued the decree *Constans ac Sedula*, which removed the restriction on nuns working as doctors (Winter, 2016)

opening of a new building named in her honour at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, ACU Associate Vice-Chancellor (Victoria) Dr John Ballard said,

...Dr Sr Mary Glowrey, a graduate in medicine from Melbourne University at a time when few women did so, was a pioneer in so many ways. Her story and her extraordinary, drive, humility and dedication is an inspiration to all who hear of her. (Mary Glowrey's story revived. 2015)

The Catholic Women's League is currently engaged in the cause for the canonisation of Sr Mary of the Sacred Heart. This simple stole given into the care of the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission by its owner parish may, if Sr Mary Glowrey is canonised, be considered a secondary relic (see footnote 56). Until then it remains a tangible reminder of the devotion, faith and work of a remarkable woman.

The Heritage Signature Quilt: Diocese of Sandhurst, Victoria

The Sandhurst Diocesan Archives is the temporary custodian of a late nineteenth-century embroidered quilt known as the Heritage Signature Quilt (figure 65). The large quilt, stitched by a group of women in 1895, was the prize in a fundraising raffle for the new St Mary's School, Bendigo.



Figure 65: The *Heritage Signature Quilt*.
(Source: Diocese of Sandhurst Archives, 2018, used with permission)

Though not strictly ecclesiastical in nature, the quilt's iconography includes symbols referencing Catholic theology, ideals and community values. The quilt of 270 white squares features a large central motif of a red Maltese Cross embroidered with a lily (figure 66).

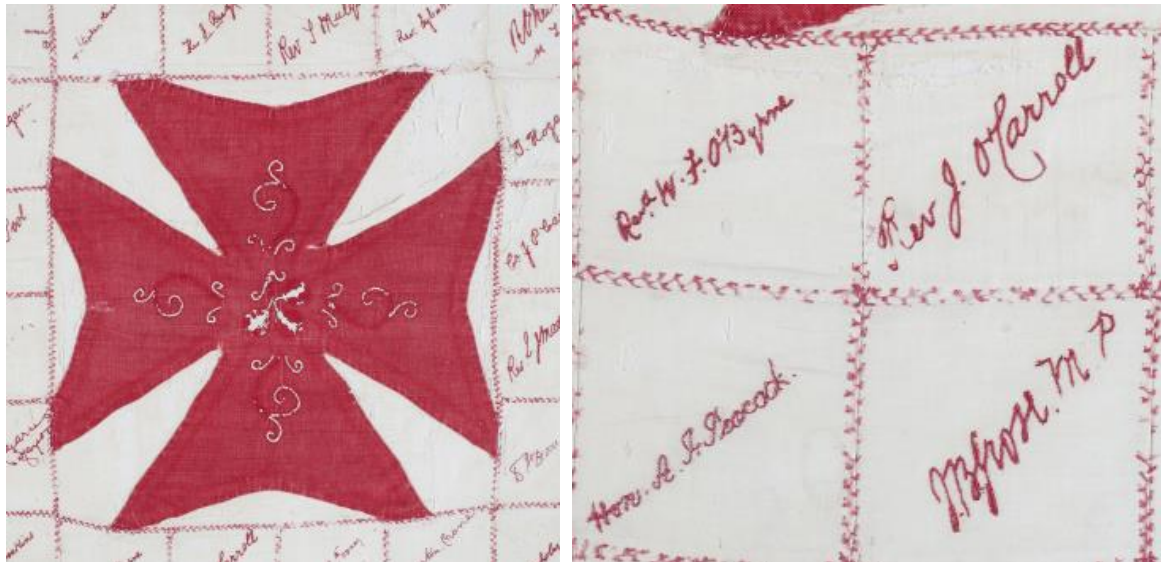


Figure 66: The central motif of the *Heritage Signature Quilt* (left) and four signatures (right).

(Source: Diocese of Sandhurst Archives, 2018, used with permission)

The central Maltese Cross is derived from the emblem of the *Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta* (now known as the Order of Malta), an ancient religious confraternity founded in the eleventh century to provide care and protection to pilgrims. The Order pre-dates the Crusades. The number of points on the cross is eight – a visual representation of the eight days between Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and his resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday. The points themselves recall the *Beatitudes* preached by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-10) and represent loyalty, piety, frankness, bravery, glory and honour, contempt of death, helpfulness towards the poor and sick, and respect for the Church (Noonan, 2012). The lily embroidered in the centre of the cross is a symbol of rebirth, purity, chastity, virtue, and innocence (Taylor, 2003). The 270 squares contain the embroidered signatures of many dignitaries, local identities, and members of local families. The signatories included ten Catholic clergy, including the incumbent Bishop of Sandhurst the Very Reverend Martin Crane OSA, seven Members of Parliament, and sixteen local councillors. Interestingly, a number of the prominent signatories were not Catholic, including the mayor, Daniel Benjamin Lazarus, who was of the Jewish faith (Jackman, 2012). The Sandhurst diocesan

archivist commented that “anyone who was anyone signed”. The quilt remained in the family of the raffle-winner, Mrs M. A. Hill, for just over a century. Her great grandchildren donated the quilt to the Bendigo (Strathdale) Quilters in 2003 who, with assistance from the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria (Jackman, 2012), repaired and restored the quilt. The quilt has been returned to the local Bendigo community for inclusion in the ecclesiastical textile collection being assembled by the Aspire Foundation. The Foundation is funding the *Faith on the Goldfields* museum project currently under construction adjacent to Sacred Heart Cathedral. In a move reminiscent of the original quilt’s function, the Bendigo (Strathdale) Quilters are constructing a modern version of the quilt as a fundraiser for the Aspire Foundation. It is interesting to note that descendants of some of the original signatories have ‘signed up’ to a square (Hurley, 2105), thus keeping the story of the Heritage Signature Quilt alive.

6.2 Themes of significance

Section 6.1 explored the stories behind some of the surveyed textiles. Those stories revealed the textiles’ links to origin stories of the Church in Australia, community memories of persecution and conflict in Europe, as well as exemplars of community life and of service to others.

This section (6.2) classifies the textiles into groups according to a different set of significance criteria – criteria linked more directly to perceived ‘importance’. When asked to select three items in their collections which they considered to be important or interesting, custodians expressed a wide range of views on the importance, significance and value of the textiles in their care. To a certain extent this diversity could reflect the respondent’s own experience with ecclesiastical textiles, knowledge of the owner community and collection, or personal interpretation of ‘important’ or ‘interesting’. One comment from a respondent well-versed in the concept of significance neatly summarised their personal perception of how ecclesiastical textiles, specifically vestments, are valued by the ‘world’ at large:

... that we in this country [Australia] have so little appreciation of the significance of these vestments symbolically, culturally or didactically. We tend to evaluate them purely as perceived status symbols ...
(Diocesan Archivist A, email response)

Such a comment recognises that significance operates on many levels. In this archivist's opinion, perhaps informed by long experience with the collection and frequent requests for items destined for exhibition, the richly decorated antique textiles that are wondered at in the context of an exhibition reflect just one aspect of significance and ignore other values. While many responses mirrored the 'values' categorised in 'official' secular heritage management and conservation protocols such as links to historical persons or events and aesthetics, there was frequent reference to personal and community values or significance. In essence, custodians saw their ecclesiastical textiles as the cultural heritage and cultural legacy of their own communities, be they religious houses, pariah churches or diocesan archives, a concept defined by UNESCO as

... the legacy of *physical artefact* and *intangible attributes* of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations ... (UNESCO, n.d.)

At first glance, the significance, importance and value of this legacy as categorised in questionnaire responses superficially conforms to this deceptively simple secular definition. Custodians recognised that their historic textiles have been inherited from past generations, are being cared for in the present, and, if they have their way, will be of benefit to future generations. A deeper analysis, however, reveals many complex relationships between the tangible textiles, the intangible attributes embodied in their forms and functions and the 'insider' knowledge and understanding of the 'owner' communities contained in the stories behind the textiles. These relationships are not fixed but can change in response to changes in ownership and cultural contexts, producing a living heritage. The analysis of questionnaire and interview responses identified several persistent themes of significance and value. These themes were not confined to the stories of individual textiles, but were identified across collections. In this part of the chapter I will explore four of these cross-collection themes of significance and value, and discuss the similarities and differences in how heritage ecclesiastical textiles were valued in religious and secular institutions.

6.2.1 Theme 1: Textiles as cultural legacy – memory and connections

One value consistently cited across collections was community memory - the connection of a textile or collection of textiles to past community members and the important events that shaped community experiences. While the heritage collections of the Ursuline and

Benedictine sisters exemplify the deep personal connections that tie specific textiles to their particular communities, all respondents caring for religious collections recognised the importance of textiles in preserving their cultural legacy through community memory. The responses from archivists in religious communities particularly encapsulate the concept of legacy – something handed down from past generations, a reminder of the past – and of community memory.

... Garments and textiles were preserved because of individual sisters' work and their relevance to the history of the Congregation and the diocese ... (religious archivist E, questionnaire response)

... [The textiles] are included in the collection because they represent the history and timeline of our establishment ... (Diocesan Archivist M, questionnaire response)

... They [the habits] tell the story of the convent and the sisters, they are our family memories, particularly those made by and for the early sisters ... (Religious Archivist L, questionnaire response)

... Some sets were brought to Australia by the sisters as gifts from their sister convents, about 1883 ... (Religious Archivist N, questionnaire response)

Several respondents recounted personal anecdotes and feelings.

... Our collection is small and is still being processed, holds very little of national significance but of course is a 'treasure' to us ... (Diocesan Archivist H, questionnaire response)

... Sister Mary Jackson told us that as a young Sister she had to sit by Sr Bertrand and get the knots out of the cotton as she tatted the alb ... (Convent E, archives catalogue entry)

... These vestments were central to worship and devotion of the nuns. The Mass has a special Sacristy cupboard, with beautiful timber, wide flat drawers, and the timber on the doors was set an angle. The sister who was the Sacristan took great care to lay out and keep the vestments.

One sister I have interviewed, and who is still with us, told me that her task, as a very young nun, was to be an assistant to the sacristan ...

(Religious Archivist N, questionnaire response)

Of particular interest, then, is how community memory and identity is embodied in the textiles preserved by convent communities, who see their textiles as devices for recalling people and past events. Founding religious communities brought with them textiles to furnish their monasteries, abbeys and convents, to correctly perform religious ceremonies and rites, and to clothe the priests who celebrated Mass in their chapels. These gifts from their home congregations often had historic and community significance. For example, as mentioned in section 5.3.1 a richly embroidered cope in the textile collection was worked by the sisters at the order's convent in Spain and given to the founding sisters when they left Ireland for Australia. The story of the journey of the Ursuline Collection and its continued connections to its convent community is discussed in section 6.1.1. The Carmelite Relic cared for at the Benedictine Abbey at Jamberoo (also section 6.1.1) holds deeply personal memories of faith for its owner community.

Diocesan archives house many hundreds of textiles associated with particular people and events. Contemporary media reports, especially from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often mention vestments either worn at a particular function or presented to the church or celebrant. It is possible to link some exhibition catalogue and media references to specific textiles held in the surveyed collections. For example, a search of the digitised newspaper collection at the National Library of Australia uncovered a description of the fragile eighteenth-century silk sermon veil in the Ursuline Collection – described in more detail in Appendix II. The discovery of the article, published in Freeman's Journal on January 1 1887, led to a long and fruitful correspondence with the Ursuline convent archivist who provided more details, stories and images of the veil and other heritage textiles. The community memories and cultural legacy of the Ursuline Collection is discussed in more detail at the end of this section.

A search of the National Library of Australia's online Photographic Collection produced a 1920s image of Fr Jean Pierre Piquet, a Marist priest from St Patrick's Church, Church Hill, Sydney, holding an elaborately embroidered chasuble and stole (figure 67).

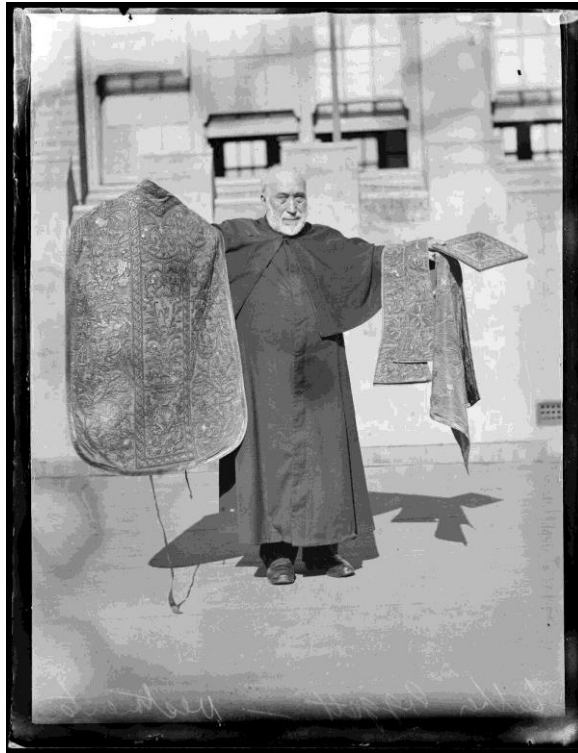


Figure 67: Fr Piquet with vestments reputedly belonging to Cardinal Fesch, uncle of Napoleon Bonaparte (1920).

(Source: Fairfax archive of glass plate negatives: number 4034. 1920, National Library of Australia, used with permission)

A subsequent search of the digitised newspaper files and contact with the staff at St Patrick's revealed that these vestments have a surprising connection to an important figure in early nineteenth-century post-Revolutionary France – Joseph Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyons and Napoleon Bonaparte's ambassador to Rome. Joseph Fesch was in fact related to Napoleon as he was the half-brother of Napoleon's mother, thus making him Napoleon's 'half'-uncle. Cardinal Fesch, a noted art collector, left a part of his collection to the city of Lyons on his death in 1839 (Goyau 1909). Goyau contends that Fesch took a genuine interest in the education of priests and so, as the Marist Fathers were founded in Lyons in 1816, it is possible that they acquired vestments belonging to Cardinal Fesch, as a gift or a bequest. The staff at St Patrick's Church provided a coloured image of the chasuble that revealed the detail of the elaborate embroidery (figure 68). The staff also mentioned that 2018 is the 150th anniversary of the appointment of the Marist Priests to the parish of St Patrick's, Church Hill, Sydney, and that the chasuble and stole will be exhibited at a planned exhibition of historic artefacts.



Figure 68: Fesch chasuble (left) and detail of embroidery (right).

(Source: St. Patrick's Church, Church Hill. New South Wales, 2018, used with permission)

The provincial archivist for the Marist Fathers could find no mention in the order's archives of the vestments' arrival in Australia, but he did provide a copy of a newspaper clipping from a 1930 issue of the *Daily Pictorial*, that made reference to the vestments. The archivist commented that the article contained several factual inaccuracies⁸⁵, so the information provided in the article must be treated with caution.

... [the vestments] belonged to Cardinal Fesh [sic], uncle of Napoleon, Archbishop of Lyons till the downfall of his illustrious nephew in 1815. They passed on to Fr Collins SM, founder of the Society of Mary, who on leaving for missionary work in Oceania, brought them with him. When the Marist Bros. were entrusted with St Patrick's Parish in 1868 the vestments were given for the use of the parish. (Rare link with Napoleon, 1930)

⁸⁵ Information provided by the Provincial of the Marist Fathers community in Australia. (1) The founder of the Society of Mary was Fr Jean Claude Colin *not* Collins. (2) Fr Colin *did not* travel to Oceania, he never left Europe. (3) The Marist Bros [Brothers] are *a different order* to the Marist Fathers who administer St Patrick's Parish. (4) The article refers to Cardinal Fesh, *instead of* Fesch. .

These inaccuracies do not preclude the possibility that the vestments did come to Sydney with the first Marist Priests in 1848, or were sent from Lyon to St Patrick's when the Marists took over the administration of the parish in 1868. Intriguingly, the article reports that there were originally two sets of vestments – this red set and a white set which “had not withstood time like the other”. The few media reports that mention the red vestments agree that they once belonged to Cardinal Fesch. However, the reports are inconsistent in how the vestments came to Australia. One article contends that the vestments were a gift from Cardinal Fesch to the Australian people in the early 1800s, and that they narrowly missed being lost in the fire that destroyed Sydney's first cathedral in 1865 (A stitch in time, 2013) – in the absence of any supporting documentary evidence, that particular ‘origin story’ must be treated with some reservation. While the vestments of Cardinal Fesch are of liturgical, community and aesthetic significance, any potential heritage significance or value linked to provenance is problematic.

Community memories and cultural legacy of the Ursuline collection

The chasubles, altar cloths and associated items associated with the Ursuline community are treasured for their links to the members of the convents who made them. The earliest textiles held in the Ursuline collection travelled with the exiled sisters to Greenwich from Duderstadt in the former kingdom of Saxony, during the German *Kulturkampf*, in 1877. In her reply to the question “why are the textiles important to the community” the convent archivist neatly encapsulated the notion of community memory and cultural legacy woven into the historic textiles.

... Because they are so beautifully handcrafted, and it would honour the memory of the sisters who so lovingly and carefully carried out these works of art.

In 1979 the Ursuline Sisters organised an exhibition at their convent in Armidale, to acknowledge their gratitude to the people of Armidale for their support over the years. The archivist commented on the significance of the exhibition to the memory, faith and devotion of the early sisters –

... In the front of the catalogue it says: “Now, what traditional things we have – the centuries-old prayer books, so cherished and beloved, vestments lovingly embroidered for the celebration of Mass, ... we are

happy to share today with the people of the city, who cared for, and gave hospitality to our exiles of 1882. (Archivist F, questionnaire response)

The story behind another textile in the collection, one of more recent manufacture, forms an equally important link to the community memory of the Ursuline sisters.

... a cloth embroidered by Chinese orphans. This is of interest because it relates to the Ursuline Mission [*Ursuline Institute of Swatow*⁸⁶] in China from 1922 to 1952. ... They used to do lots of embroidery, the nuns and the school children, and sell it to help them with their finances. I presume that the Australian sisters purchased it. This would have been about 1920s or 1930s. (Religious Archivist F, questionnaire response)

The design on the Chinese cloth is very similar to that on another, much older, cloth held in the collection. It features two peacocks and a tree of life (figures 69 and 70).



Figure 69: Cloth embroidered at the Ursuline Mission in Swatow, China, c1930 (left) and detail of central motif (right)

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

⁸⁶ As previously mentioned, the Swatow area has a long association with fine embroidery, particularly from the mid-nineteenth century onwards when Christian missionaries began teaching European embroidery techniques to local women. (Cai, 2012; Herman, 1956)



Figure 70: The peacock cloth made by the Ursuline sisters at Armidale.

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

It is not known whether the two cloths were made using the same pattern. Given the similarities in the designs, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that the embroidery pattern books used in the Ursuline Archives in Sydney would be similar to those used by embroiderers at the Ursuline Mission in Swatow, China. The Swatow cloth is a significant legacy of the work of the Ursulines in China and a memorial to the sisters who worked there.

6.2.2 Theme 2: Textiles as cultural legacy - religious practice, hermeneutics and iconography

Hermeneutics and Iconography

Symbols have been a part of Christian heritage since the beginning of the Church. Thurston (1912) defines symbolism as the ‘investing of outward things or actions with an inner meaning, more especially for the expression of religious ideas’. He asserts that the Church is not alone in the use of the symbolic, but that all cultures at all times have recognised and employed significant actions in their rites and rituals. The early Church developed in a climate of threats and persecution so Christians adopted symbols, recognisable to each other but indecipherable to their Roman overlords, to camouflage their identity and protect their meeting places (Antrobus & Preece, 1923; Noonan, 2012). As the Church grew so did its iconography. Many of the symbols of the early Church came from the Old Testament or are of Greek and Roman origin. Over time the Church borrowed symbols from the natural world, co-opted others from legends and fairy stories, and adapted still more from pre-

Christian traditions and the cultural symbolism of the peoples it evangelised (Antrobus & Preece, 1923; Taylor, 2003). Even numbers, letters, shapes, and colours took on symbolic meanings. Signs and symbols were borrowed from biblical texts, secular legends and cultures that the Church encountered as it spread across the world. Catholic heritage is living heritage so finding centuries old signs and symbols on the surveyed textiles was not unexpected. In fact how the Church community valued its iconography at a particular time in history is embodied in the motifs, designs, and materials used in contemporary textiles. An in-depth analysis of Catholic iconography is beyond the scope of this research. What follows is a brief discussion of the origin and meanings of the signs and symbols of a small sample of textiles found on the surveyed collections as a reflection of what was valued at the time of their use. Further information on motifs can be found in Appendix I.

Hermeneutics and religious symbolism of the Ursuline Collection

As with all decoration on the material culture of the Catholic Church, the motifs and designs found on the Ursuline textiles follow a long-standing but ever-changing, hermeneutic system of signs and symbols. A comment made by the archivist at the Ursuline convent supports the notion that in a living heritage, it is not unusual for symbols to take on new meanings and therefore be valued differently at different times in different contexts.

... As I looked more closely at the textiles I recognised the deep symbolism that is present, for example, one of the chalice veils in particular. The Centre motif is IHS, i.e. Jesus, and in the four corners are embroidered the names of St Maria, St Joseph, St Anna and St Joachim⁸⁷, that is, the Holy Family. The Convent in Armidale was named the Convent of the Holy Family. Perhaps the sisters had special devotion to the Holy Family. The chalice veil is dated 1707 and was repaired in 1893. It is obviously very precious (figure 71).

The archivist had seen personal connections to her own community in the iconography of a chalice veil made over 200 years before the Armidale convent was founded.

⁸⁷ St Maria is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ (Maas, 1912); St Joseph is her husband (Souvay, 1910b); St Anna and St Joachim are the parents of Mary (Holweck, 1907; Souvay, 1910a).



Figure 71: Chalice veil embroidered with emblems of the Holy Family, dated 1707 (right) and detail of dates (right).

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

The Ursuline textiles display a diverse and interesting array of signs and symbols, some still in common use and others whose meanings and narratives have faded over time. In addition to representations of various religious figures, events and traditional Catholic symbols, there are surprising and unexpected messages worked into the Latin inscriptions on the Ursuline textiles. These multiple layers of symbolism and significance are demonstrated by the iconographies on a large, cream silk sermon veil and a white silk chasuble. The Ursuline Annals record a visit to the chapel at the Armidale convent by Cardinal Moran. The report notes the cardinal's interest in the Latin inscriptions.

... On three of these Art Needlework treasures, Scriptural Texts are embroidered in connection with the representations, and until His Eminence's visit, we do not remember any admirer interpreting the words beyond what they present to the casual observer. The Cardinal, however, was most enthusiastic on seeing them and discovered at once that the letters which were worked in larger type within the texts, must have a further meaning. (Annals, 1886)

The inscription on a white chasuble reads

... o aMor, et DoLor, o fILLI, o rara, o genltrIX Cara.

Cardinal Moran, a noted Latin scholar, reasoned that the upper case letters translated into Roman numbers and when the numbers were converted into Arabic numerals and added together, a date was revealed –

$$\begin{array}{c} \mathbf{M + D + L + I + L + I + I + X + C} \\ 1000 + 500 + 50 + 1 + 50 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 10 + 100 = \mathbf{1714} \end{array}$$

If the cardinal was correct with his interpretation, then this date probably could correspond to the year in which the sisters completed the work. An article published in *The Catholic Weekly* a few decades later, commented on the beauty and craftsmanship of the vestments, described the decoration on the white chasuble in great detail and repeated the story of the discovery of the hidden date on another of the textiles. The design on the white chasuble, executed in fine silk and metal threads, beads and pearls, includes floral motifs and religious motifs – angels, instruments and scenes of Christ's Passion and a pelican in its piety (Figure 72).



Figure 72: Detail of the central beaded motif of a pelican in her piety, on a chasuble dated 1714.

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

The article goes on to describe another of the historic textiles, a sermon veil, whose embroidered decoration included figures of Moses and the brazen serpent, King David, and the prophet Abraham. The text also contained a date coded into the inscription ("Convent Treasures," 1945).

This sermon veil could be a cloth of the type referred to by Dom Matthew Britt O.S.B in his book on Church linens (Britt, 1949, p. 25). A sermon veil, sometimes called a Eucharistic veil, has a specific function; it is not an altar cloth, nor a covering for a table. There is a rite within the Catholic Church called the Public Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament. During the exposition, the sacred host is placed in a glass carrier called a lunette and placed in a monstrance. The monstrance is then placed on the altar for public worship. If a sermon is preached during the exposition then, by tradition, a veil or cloth was suspended in front of the monstrance from a horizontal bar, much like a curtain is suspended from its rod, effectively hiding the sacred host from view for the duration of the sermon (Lercaro, 1959). A sermon veil was traditionally made from white silk and sometimes decorated with a representation of the Blessed Sacrament (Britt, 1949). The Ursuline sermon cloth measures 82cm by 75cm, which is large enough to conceal a tall monstrance typical of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The exquisitely embroidered design references stories of sacrifice from the Old Testament and includes images, such as a lamb, symbolic of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In the centre of the cloth is a depiction of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance (figure 73).



Figure 73: Central motif of a monstrance embroidered on a sermon veil dated 1714.

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

These images would remind the congregation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the salvation of his people. In addition to the images, there are two inscriptions incorporated into the embroidered design. The first is a verse from the *Lauda Sion*⁸⁸ written by St Thomas Aquinas in 1264 (Henry, 1910).

ECCE PANIS ANGELORUM FACTUS CIBUS VIATORUM

This short text translates as “Behold the bread of the angels / Made the food of wayfarers (pilgrims)” and is a reference to Christ as the saving *bread of life*. The second, longer text incorporates another coded text, which when deciphered, reveals the date of 1738. It reads

CorporIs eCCe saCrI pasChaLIIs et agnVs et IsaaC
qVo pLVIt et patrIbVs Manna fIgVra fVIt.

C I C C C I C L I V I C V L V I I V M I V V I
= 100 1 100 100 100 1 100 50 1 5 1 100 5 50 5 1 1 5 1000 1 5 5 1 = 1738.

The second inscription is complex and more challenging to translate. The letters V and U are interchangeable in early Latin texts (Sacks, 2004, p. 312). Replacing the letter V with the letter U and rewriting the text results in an inscription that appears to be in Latin but not obviously from a known liturgical work – CORPORA ECCE SACRI PASCHALIS ET AGNUS ET ISAAC QUO PLUIT ET PATRIBUS MANNA FIGURA FUIT.

Enquiries seeking a translation for this passage led to an interesting correspondence with Emeritus Professor Father Jack Mahoney at Campion Hall, University of Oxford. Fr Mahoney commented on the unusual structure of the sentences and offered two translations of the text –

... It could be rather awkwardly translated literally as “*Behold: both the lamb, and Isaac, and the manna rained down on the fathers, was a figure of the paschal sacred body*”. I suggest a more idiomatic version would be to understand the inscription as the monstrance veil itself referring to what it is covering, “*Here is the paschal Sacred Body*”

⁸⁸ The *Lauda Sion* is a sequence, one of the readings from the Mass of Corpus Christi celebrated on the feast of Corpus Christi (Body of Christ). This feast is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday to solemnly commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist (Mershman, 1908).

which was prefigured by the lamb, as well as by Isaac, and also by the manna poured down on our forefathers.”

Fr Mahoney also offered an analysis and interpretation of the iconography on the cloth, referencing relevant biblical passages in order to explain the meaning behind these images traditionally associated with Christ. The full text of Fr Mahoney’s analysis, with detailed images, is presented in Appendix II. The cloth is significant on several levels. Its religious significance lies in its liturgical function and the iconography which reinforces its spiritual message. The veil has significance to the convent community through its connections to the sisters who made and carried it across the world. The significance of the coded message perhaps lies more in how the code was unravelled rather than in what the message says. The code was used on two textiles made more than twenty years apart, so the practice of hiding a date in an inscription was not a unique occurrence. The sisters who made these textiles would have known exactly what the inscriptions meant liturgically and ‘numerically’. That original knowledge and understanding was somehow lost until some-one possessing the ‘same’ knowledge recognised the significance of the letters, made the connection and deciphered the hidden message. One last mystery inscription awaits a definitive solution. Included in the Ursuline textile collection is a most unusual cloth. Measuring about 95cm square, its surface is completely covered by a poly-chrome design (figure 74).



Figure 74: Large scarf featuring motifs related to Jerusalem.

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

The motifs are again from the Old Testament – a menorah, the Star of David, representations of the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem. The cloth bears an inscription, in Hebrew, around its edge. But the convent archives have no records of who made this cloth, when it was made, or how it came into the collection. Staff at the National Jewish Memorial Centre, Canberra, kindly examined photographic images of the cloth and offered an opinion on the iconography. The inscription appears to be the word Jerusalem repeated along all four edges. The translator mentioned that there were minor variations in the shapes and spacing of the letters in the ‘word’ in the inscription, and suggested that the designer might not have been completely familiar with the Jewish alphabet. His considered opinion was that the inscription was a repetition of the word *Jerusalem*. The symbols, a menorah, the Star of David and a representation of the mosque (identified as such from the crescent finial) on the Dome of the Rock, all relate to Jerusalem. After much discussion, the general consensus was that the cloth was not a specifically Jewish artefact and probably not a Christian cloth either. It was most probably a ‘tourist-trade’ souvenir, a scarf maybe, bought in Jerusalem, perhaps by some-one on a pilgrimage who later presented it to the convent. The convent archivist was intrigued by this interpretation as she had recently come to the conclusion that the cloth might well have been a gift to the convent, but sadly there is now no-one in the community that recalls when or by whom the cloth was presented. Any personal or community significance the cloth may once have held is most probably lost.

Religious Practice

The surveyed collections held many textiles associated with the religious practices of the Catholic Church. Cloths and veils used for liturgical purposes and ceremonial or devotional items such as banners and canopies are tangible manifestations of rites and practices that have continued, largely unchanged, across the centuries. For example, ecclesiastical paraments such as altar cloths and hangings delineate sacred spaces, while banners act as a focus for individual religious devotion. Custodians from diocesan archives, churches and cathedrals in particular noted the ongoing liturgical significance of many of their textiles. Respondents commented that textiles no longer in use because they were made obsolete by changes to rubrics or were considered ‘too decorated’ for modern times, are valued as records of a living heritage, recalling the distinctive structural forms and symbolic images associated with past rites and rituals and therefore worthy of preservation.

... Pontificals (e.g. buskins, shoes, gloves) dating back to probably the 1950s and associated with the Tridentine Rite. ... [are significant] because they relate to a by-gone era. (Diocesan Archivist D, questionnaire response)

... Because they were once everyday sights here and are now a rarity. (Religious Archivist S, questionnaire response)

... These items ... reflect the liturgical style of the Church in our diocese going back at least 80 years. (Diocesan Archivist J, questionnaire response)

... I understand some of what we have are pre-1960s, which means they are of quite different design to what is currently used. (Diocesan Archivist I, questionnaire response)

... They [ciboria covers] are also excellent examples of what was once considered correct and proper to adorn the ciborium in the tabernacle. (Diocesan Archivist G, questionnaire response)

... Sodality banners are a thing of the past and therefore part of Catholic Church history. (Diocesan Archivist J, questionnaire response)

One respondent noted the dynamic nature of the life of their textiles and recognised that values do change, particularly when the textiles are no longer fit for the purpose for which they were made.

... The parish does not view [historic textiles] as dead museum pieces but as works of art and craft that were made to be used. This is the reason for their existence and when they are no longer used much of their value is also lost. Then they become merely aesthetic objects rather than aids to the prayer and devotional life of the parish. (Parish Archivist P, questionnaire response)

As mentioned in chapter 2, not all ecclesiastical textiles play a liturgical role in their churches. Susan O'Brien (1992) contends that by the end of the nineteenth century a

Catholic space, be it church or home, school or convent, was recognizable to insiders and outsiders through the images and artefacts on display. The same could be said today – the liturgical reforms and subsequent simplification to liturgies and vesture following Vatican II may have relegated much of the Church's textile heritage to memory and storage, but images and artefacts remain on display. Wall hangings and curtains still delineate architectural spaces and banners continue to mark the liturgical seasons. Modern clerical and liturgical dress retains the hermeneutic system of iconography (colours, signs and symbols) that has been in use for centuries.

It was interesting to note that old or obsolete textiles are not always relegated to storage. The archives at St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar houses many particularly fine examples of embroidered communion cloths, ciborium covers, tabernacle veils and burses, but one communion cloth⁸⁹ features an interesting adaptation to accommodate the increasing use of technology. A small round hole has been cut in the centre of the cloth (figure 75).



Figure 755: Communion cloth adapted for use with a table microphone.
(Image by author, 2016)

The hole has been carefully stitched around to blend with the white-work embroidery and insertion lace that decorates the cloth. The hole was made so that the cloth fitted around a

⁸⁹ A communion cloth is a small altar cloth.

microphone cord from a socket that had been fitted to the altar when an amplification system was installed in the chapel.

The collection survey revealed several examples of ‘new’ textiles made from ‘old’ textiles. The Ballarat Diocesan Historic Commission, for example, has recently taken into its collection a banner fashioned from the back of a delicately embroidered mid-twentieth-century chasuble made in a Chinese mission (figure 76). St Augustine’s Church at Salisbury, South Australia, regularly displays a lectern frontal featuring brocade fabric and embroidered *Agnus Dei* panels salvaged from an early twentieth-century Roman chasuble.



Figure 76: Banner made from a Roman-style chasuble, c1975.

(Source: Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission, 2017, used with permission)

Old, worn or damaged ecclesiastical textiles and textile fragments that cannot be re-used for liturgical purposes do, however, provide a wealth of information about materials and techniques that were once commonplace but now rarely seen – a theme of significance discussed in Chapter 6.2.4. The re-use, re-cycling and adaptation of ecclesiastical textiles is discussed in more detail in chapter 7.

One intriguing item in the very small collection of ecclesiastical textiles housed at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) is a large reddish purple wall hanging (figure 77)



Figure 77: Woven wall hanging featuring instruments of the Passion (left) and detail (right).

(Image by author, 2016)

Images from the story of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ⁹⁰ –a sword and ear, a cock, a scourge, a crown of thorns, a hammer and nails, a sponge on a reed, a spear and a ladder – and other motifs which reference the Passion of Christ such as the passionflower and thistle are woven into the fabric. The cloth is obviously made from an older textile as it is constructed from two narrower lengths of fabric crudely stitched together along one long edge, then bordered with a gold metallic braid. It also bears traces of older surface decoration. In a response to an emailed request for information on the possible origins of the NGA wall hanging, one of the textile curators from the Museum Catharijneconvent (St Catherine's Convent Museum), a major museum of religious art at Utrecht in the Netherlands, wrote that the panel was most likely made from a drape used to shroud a large crucifix during the Season of Lent⁹¹. The panel has been catalogued at the NGA as c1690, origin unknown, but the Dutch curator contends that specifically Christian symbols such as the nails and sponge on a reed featured on the hanging only started to appear in the late nineteenth century, and that “... it is safe to say that this is a Western European creation”. Contradictory provenances such as these could impact on the significance of a textile to a particular

⁹⁰ All four gospels of the New Testament record the events. John 18.1 to 19.38 mentions all these items.

⁹¹ One practice still observed in some churches is the shrouding of statues and other images during the liturgical season of Lent. Violet cloths are draped or wrapped around statues, including the crucifix behind the altar, and over pictures that cannot be removed from the church (Merishman, 1911).

collection. The acceptance of the Dutch dating may alter this hanging's significance within the NGA textile research collection.

The surveyed collections also chronicle changing 'fashions' in liturgical dress and non-liturgical dress, a topic covered in Chapter 2. From a liturgical perspective, certain garments are reserved for particular ministers, and/or are worn for specified liturgies. For example, while the white alb is the approved garment worn by all ordained ministers (prelates, priests and deacons) and instituted members of the laity (acolytes, servers and lay ministers of the Eucharist) for the celebration of the Holy Mass, the presiding priest is the only minister who wears the chasuble. The chasuble itself is reserved for the celebration of the Holy Mass, and cannot be worn for other liturgies (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2007, articles 337-340). From an administrative perspective non-liturgical garments serve much the same function as military and civilian uniforms, with design and colour identifying rank and status within the hierarchy. Non-liturgical apparel includes choir dress worn on formal and ceremonial occasions (including secular and civic events) and the everyday dress of the clergy and religious. Portraits and photographs of pre-mid-twentieth-century bishops and popes provide a comprehensive archive of the extent and complexity of the 'vesture' rubrics that prevailed at particular times (Bettoja, 2010a; Bettoja, 2010b). As discussed in chapter 2, the rubrics that describe the types of garments approved for each echelon of the hierarchy and the rites, rituals or occasions when each garment could be worn have changed over the centuries. It is possible to date, with fair accuracy, many items in the surveyed collections through the colour, cut, pattern, and amount of decoration on each garment and therefore track changes to religious practices over time. For example the characteristic thirteenth-century Gothic-inspired motifs used by Pugin and his followers date important vestments in Hobart, Tasmania and Melbourne, Victoria to the mid nineteenth century. The Baroque floriated brocades of the Spanish Collection at New Norcia in Western Australia indicate an eighteenth-century date of manufacture. The embroidered motifs which adorn three burses from the Ursuline collection are very similar in style to those adorning an eighteenth-century burse made in northern Europe and pictured in Pauline Johnstone's definitive book on ecclesiastical fashions (Johnstone, 2002, p. 97). The dates 1702, 1707 and 1708, are incorporated in the embroidery on the burses – evidence that supports Johnstone's conclusion that this style of embroidery was popular in the early eighteenth century (figure 78).



Figure 78 Burse dated, 1707 (left) and detail of date (right).

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission)

The ubiquitous raised goldwork motifs of roses, wheat, grapes and pomegranates that appear on many chasubles, stoles, copes, and chalice veils date these particular items to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century (figure 79). The significance of the aesthetics of these and other items to heritage value is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter (section 6.2.4).



Figure 79: Goldwork on cope (left) and humeral veil (right).

(Source: Diocese of Sale Archives, 2013 (left), and C. Patullo, 2012 (right), used with permission)

The surveyed collections provided several examples of garments which exemplified the complexity of pre-Vatican II sumptuary regulations. Of particular interest are the 'trained' cassocks formerly worn by bishops and the exquisitely worked hand-made lace on numerous albs, rochets and surplices. As expected, trained cassocks, in violet and black, worn by local bishops are preserved in their diocesan archives. A small exhibition in the Chancery at the Diocesan Centre, Sale, Victoria, displays a selection of early twentieth-century vestments and

non-liturgical garments, including two violet trained cassocks, a *rochet* and *mantaletta*, associated with Bishop Patrick Phelan (figure 80).



Figure 80: Trained cassock, train lowered (left) and train raised (centre), and mantaletta (right), early twentieth century.

(Images by author, 2013)

A recent exhibition of heritage vesture at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, included the spectacular scarlet *cappa magna* (long cape), *galero* (flat hat with tassels) and buckled shoes belonging to Cardinal Norman Gilroy. The difficulty in acquiring these robes in time for Cardinal Gilroy's installation in Rome in February 1946 is recorded in a brief article in *Sydney Morning Herald* of January 3rd, 1946.

... it has been reported that the Church tailor in Rome has sufficient material for only twelve of the thirty-two robes for the newly appointed cardinals. Cardinal Gilroy has not been advised that his order cannot be fulfilled. ... The main items he will require "are a great flowing cape with a long train [the *cappa magna*], a soutane, a red cincture [the *fascia*] with gold tassel, a biretta, buckled shoes, and stockings. These must be of undulated silk in cardinal scarlet,-Mr W. J. Considine, one of the chief tailors in Sydney to Catholic clergy, said last night the robes could

not be made in Australia. Only one tailor in the world made them, Gammarelli of Rome. The silk alone cost about £10 a yard. ...

In response to a reader's question about the cost of the robes being £9000, *The Catholic Weekly* (18th April, 1946) replied that the Vatican had stated that £250 would cover the expense. The paper also reminded readers that "before a reasonable judgment can be formed, newspaper reports need checking, and all factors must be taken into account" – a timely reminder to this researcher that everything exists in its own cultural/socio/political context and differing opinions about artefacts may have been informed by the emic and/or etic knowledge of the 'reporter'. The creation of a cardinal, with its arcane rituals and elaborate vesture, is a rare event in the life of the Church in Australia so it was no surprise that it attracted the interest of the secular press. It is interesting to note that while almost all contemporary secular media reports, and many of the headlines, commented that the robes will be "costly" or "cost thousands", the cost or monetary value of ecclesiastical textiles was mentioned only once in the research questionnaire and survey responses. It could be implied therefore that elaborate ceremonial textiles in the surveyed collections are predominantly valued as reminders of cultural practices and past events and not for any potential economic worth. Today, the rubrics and regulations surrounding dress and ceremony are much simpler and it is unlikely that such a show of ceremonial splendour would occur again. It should be noted, however, that garments such as the *cappa magna* and *ferraiolo* have not been abolished and ecclesiastical textiles such as ciborium and monstrance covers and veils, altar frontals and canopies are still in use but, with the simplification of certain rites and rituals, the more highly decorated or visually spectacular examples are now seldom seen.

The ecclesiastical textiles surveyed are an important cultural legacy. It is interesting that, with perhaps the exception of the 'mystery cloth' held in the Ursuline archives mentioned in section 6.2.1, the liturgical functions and meanings of the symbols used on the textiles, even those now deemed obsolete, are well documented within the Catholic Church. This is not surprising given that this textile heritage is essentially living heritage. It is the individual community and personal significance that is in danger of being lost, especially if, or when, a textile moves into a new context.

6.2.3 Theme 3: Catholic identity and community involvement.

Textiles, particularly garments, have long acted as identifiers both inside and outside communities. Folk and regional costumes, military uniforms, civic regalia, banners and flags, fabric patches and decorative motifs all serve to identify and distinguish between whole communities and between individuals within communities. The situation within the Catholic Church is no different. On one level, colour and decorative motifs used on garments, devotional banners and decorative textiles symbolise aspects of faith and belief and track the cycle of religious rites and festivals. On another level, distinctive garments, badges or similar items identify specific positions and roles within the clerical hierarchy and lay organisations. Sally Dwyer-McNulty (2014), in her exploration of the origins and significance of Catholic clothing in America

... uncovered how Catholics came to rely on clothing to negotiate relations between religious authority and laity, men and women, and adults and youth, and how Catholic clothing continues to function as a battleground where Catholics work out issues of power, identity, and sacredness, in their everyday lives. (Dwyer-McNulty, 2014, p. 1)

Dwyer-McNulty identified three subgroups within the Church who wore clothing distinctive enough to identify them as ‘Catholic’ – priests, religious women and Catholic schoolgirls. Dwyer-McNulty’s investigation revealed a diversity of meanings attached to various garments and styles of dress, and that “meaning was not static and context is of fundamental significance”, a fundamental precept underpinning the concept of living heritage. For example, Dwyer-McNulty illustrates meaning changing over time by noting that a priest wearing a cassock outside church or walking in the community would be unusual in the 1850s, required in the 1930s and curious in the 1970s (Dwyer-McNulty, 2014, p8). The wearing of distinctive garments is not the only way that textiles can contribute to a person’s identification with the Church. Comments from several respondents to the survey acknowledged the role of women from local communities in the manufacture and maintenance of textiles for their local churches and charitable organisations.

Religious Habits

The initial questionnaire did not specifically address the significance of habits as these were not textiles found in diocesan and parish archives. It was only during the collection surveys

and interviews with members of religious communities that the topic arose. The subsequent discussion of the significance of religious habits revealed multiple levels of meaning and value far beyond those of their owner communities.

Religious habits feature prominently in the surveyed collections of convents and other religious communities. A recent exhibition at St John's Hall, Maitland, New South Wales, showcasing the history of the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese included a small display of historic and contemporary habits from local religious communities. Two habits from the collection at St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar and two from the Mercy Convent, Singleton neatly illustrated the changes wrought by the decrees of Vatican II (figure 81).



Figure 81: Post Vatican II habits of the Sisters of Mercy. The sisters are a nursing order; the white habit was worn 'on duty'.
(Image by author, 2016)

The 'new', post-Vatican II habits included shorter black or white dresses and veils (still recognisable as a 'habit') and a plain, tailored 'everyday' skirt and jacket in neutral light brown. According to the exhibition text panel the new habits were considered "more practical and comfortable for the sisters". A request for information about the significance of the monks' habits held in the textile collection at New Norcia Benedictine Community resulted in a lively conversation and a chance to discuss the implications of dress reforms of monks following Vatican II (see pp. 216-217).

For as long as religious orders have existed their members have been identified and defined by their habits.

... The evolution of the shapes, colours, and fabrication of the habit distinctly reflects growth and changes in both the Church and secular society over many eras. Its symbols spoke to each age in which it existed, whether in the corridors of an eleventh-century German abbey or a civil rights picket line in downtown Manhattan. (Kuhns, 2003, p6)

Religious' habits, like vestments, grew out of the everyday clothing of the times of the foundation of their communities. Hugh Feiss (2002), in a brief synopsis of the development of monastic dress, describes the garments of some of the early Christian monastic sects. Drawing on early Church writings, Feiss contends that early monastic dress is not much different to everyday dress – monks wore variants of the local tunics and mantles with caps. For example he quotes St Basil's pronouncement that the clothing of a monk be

... decent [modest], protective of the elements, inexpensive, easy to obtain, be indicative of the monk's position as the least among men and committed to living according to Christ's demands, durable, and the same at all times and places. A monk should have only one set of clothes. (Feiss, 2002, p. 246)

Referencing the *Institutes of the Monastic Life*⁹² by of St John Cassian, a fourth-century ascetic and Father of the Church who is credited with introducing Eastern monasticism into Western Europe, Feiss includes more details of actual garments from this time – a tunic, hood, mantle and cincture (belt). Cassian states that dress should be commonplace and modest and Western monks should adopt from Eastern monastic practice only what is suitable to their locale and customs⁹³ - a monk's clothing should not appear strange to people but manifest a decent simplicity (Feiss, 2001, p. 248). The Rule of St Benedict dates from the sixth century and covers all aspects of the Benedictine monks personal and monastic life. It is not surprising that it references much of Cassian's *Institutes* as St Benedict began his monastic life as a hermit monk in the Egyptian tradition. Realising that a solitary life of such austerity was not suitable for his times and circumstances in Western Europe, St Benedict set out a Rule that

⁹² The *Institutes of Monastic Life* set out the rules and regulations for monastic communities.

⁹³ For example, Europe is too cold for sandals and a simple tunic, and that wearing the Eastern-style hood would cause laughter, not edification

... consolidated the cenobitical⁹⁴ life, emphasized the family spirit, and discouraged all private venture in austerities. His Rule thus consists of a carefully considered combination of old and new ideas; rivalry in austerity was eliminated, and there was to be henceforth a sinking of the individual in the community. In adapting a system essentially Eastern, to Western conditions, St Benedict gave it coherence, stability, and organization, and the verdict of history is unanimous in applauding the results of such adaptation. (Alston, 1907)

Chapter 55 of the Rule regulates the clothing of the monks.

... It is to be sufficient in both quantity and quality and to be suited to the climate and locality, according to the discretion of the abbot, but at the same time it must be as plain and cheap as is consistent with due economy. Each monk is to have a change of garments, to allow for washing, and when traveling shall be supplied with clothes of rather better quality. The old habits are to be put aside for the poor. (Alston, 1907)

It is interesting to note that the phrase ‘old habits are to be put aside for the poor’ could imply that, at some time in the past monastic dress varied little from the everyday dress of the local peasantry. Until the 1950s, apart from minor reforms as new monastic orders were founded, monastic vesture had not changed significantly since the fifteenth century (Fiess, 2002, p. 260). It is thought that the earliest monks wore white habits (the colour of undyed wool). The majority of present day Benedictine congregations wear black, while other monastic orders wear various combinations of white, grey, brown and black. Historically the Dominicans were known as the Black Friars, from the black mantle worn over the white habit, the Franciscans as the Grey Friars and the Carmelites as the White Friars (Cleary, 1909).

The habits of women religious also grew out of secular clothing and, like the habits of monks, became increasingly distant from secular dress as fashions changed. That is not to say that

⁹⁴ *Cenobitical/cenobitic* (or *coenobitic*) monasticism is a monastic tradition that stresses community life. Often in the West the community belongs to a religious order, and the life of the *cenobitic* monk is regulated by a religious rule, a collection of precepts. In contrast *eremitic* monasticism refers to hermit monks who lived a solitary life. It was the predominant Eastern monastic tradition, particularly in Egypt, in early Christian times.

religious habits ceased evolving once an order was founded. Irene Duchenne (1972), in an essay on the development of the habit of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ), an order of teaching sisters founded in France and with several convents in Australia, describes the many alterations that have occurred in response to changes in the lives of the sisters. For example, the original habit designed by the foundress Madame Marie-Madelaine de Bonnault d'Houet, who was herself a widow, was based on contemporary "widow's weeds" and included a large shawl and a long, black crepe veil worn over a bonnet that featured an elaborate alpaca frill around the face and under the chin. The frill was fiddly to manipulate and proved a dust-trap difficult to clean (Duchenne, 1975). In 1924 the black alpaca frill was replaced with a plain white band, and the heavy shawl reduced in size. The shawl was later replaced by a long cloak or full length coat (figure 82).

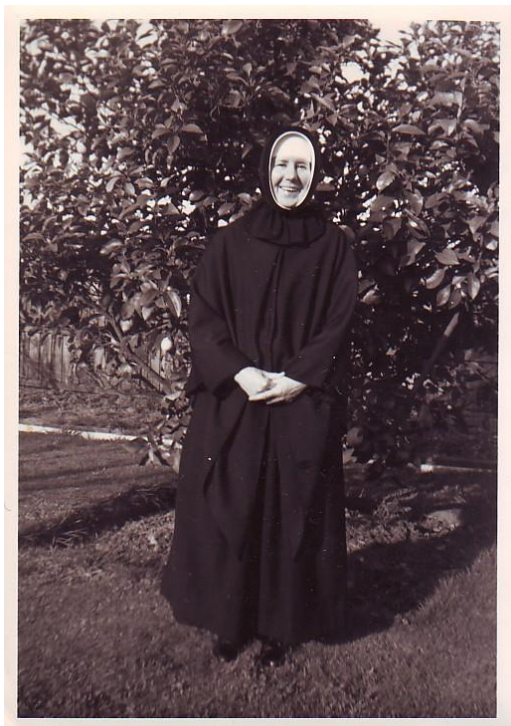


Figure 82: The habit of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ), c1950.

The FCJ sisters wore a black bonnet with a wide neck frill in place of a veil. Photograph is of Sr Kathleen Ride (born in 1920). Sr Kathleen was Sr Perpetua prior to the sisters reverting to their birth names after Vatican II.

(Source: Private Collection, c1950, used with permission).

The Lochinvar Convent Archives surveyed for this project hold a large collection of garments worn as part of the habit of the Sisters of St Joseph. The Archives' records include details of changes to materials and styles, along with anecdotes and recollections of the sisters who made and wore them. For example, the long black dress designed by the founder, St Mary of the Cross McKillop (Australia's first saint), was originally brown but was changed to black in 1893; the style then remained unchanged until the late 1960s.

The extensive changes to religious habits following the Second Vatican Council were informed by the 1965 proclamation of Pope Paul entitled *Perfectae Caritatis*; a decree on the renewal of religious life and the adaptation of ministries to the requirements of modern times and place. In addition to directives regarding religious vows, community life, contemplative, cloistered or apostolic service, and missionary spirit, the decree included a clause on the religious habit – habits were to be simple and modest, meet the requirements of health and be suited to the tasks of the ministry (Pope Paul VI, 1965, clause 17). The Council saw the reform of habits as a way of showing that monks and nuns, far from living a pious existence secluded from the fellow human beings, hated worldliness but loved the world and its needy (Duchenne, 1972, p86). The diverse interpretations of Clause 17 lead to a wide range of reformed habits. The surveyed collections from convents held examples of pre- and post-Vatican II habits that illustrate the various extents to which different orders changed their habits, for example the Sisters of St Joseph replaced their traditional. black gowns and veils for simpler secular clothing in neutral beige (figure 83).



Figure 83: Pre-Vatican II habit (left) and Post-Vatican II habit (right) of the Sisters of St Joseph .

(Images by author, 2016).

Convent communities, who saw the restrictive and archaic garments proscribed by their founders as barriers to working effectively in the modern secular world, opted for plain, mostly secular dress, with perhaps a crucifix or similar badge to identify the order. Other

communities, seeing their habits as creating fellowship and trust, retained, with only minor changes to cut and fabric, the traditional forms (Kuhns, 2003). The habits worn by the communities who participated in the research – the Sisters of St Joseph, the Dominicans (OP), the Sisters of Mercy, the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ), the Ursulines and the Benedictines (OSB) – represent the full range of changes to religious garb. The FCJ sisters, for example, made several major modifications to their habits in the years following Vatican II – initially the shawl made way for a short shoulder cape, the floor-length dress was gradually shortened and the bonnet replaced with a lighter veil on a white band. Today many of the FCJ sisters have opted for plain ‘everyday’ secular dress. A conversation with an FCJ sister in a Canadian convent revealed that she has specifically chosen to enter the Faithful Companions of Jesus because the order did not have a prescribed habit. The habits provided to an exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Bishop Murray, first resident bishop of the Diocese of Maitland, by the sisters at the Lochinvar and Singleton convents illustrate varying degrees of modernisation rather than the abandonment of habits. One convent archivist, who was in the interesting position of having experienced religious life in a convent and also monastic life with a closed order, commented that [the habit] was a volatile topic. Her thoughts on habits and the impact of change from a personal perspective and from many years of observation reveal that habits play a significant role in identity -

... Women Religious were robbed of their identity by the Second Vatican Council. ... I believe it was a mistake to give up the habits, ... Some of us wear the habit as a sign that we belong ... like a uniform it shows up front who we are. ... One of two nuns transferred to us from religious life because they didn't like the changes of the Vatican Council. ... The habit is still a draw card for many women, and one has to sift the genuine vocations from those who enter in order to wear a habit. One woman told me last year that she came because we wear a habit! She's gone now – the truth soon catches up with such a person.

My respondent also made the following intriguing comment, indicating that opinions, and hence significance or meaning, can change as life experiences build –

... No one could have been more radical than I was, I loved it when the habits went. However, as I approach 70 years of age, I regret that it happened. ...

The monks at the New Norcia Benedictine Community chose to continue wearing the traditional habit; albeit in ‘winter’ and ‘summer’ versions. The winter habit is made from traditional black wool serge, while the summer version is in a lighter-weight white cotton fabric. My correspondent at New Norcia outlined recent trials of a ‘reformed’ habit. In 2015 after much research and discussion the community was offered a choice – the traditional habit of gown, scapular and cowl or black trousers with a black over-shirt. It was interesting to note that my correspondent commented that of the three monks who elected to trial the ‘new’ habit only one continues to wear it – as recreational clothing. A report supporting the decision to retain the traditional habit identified a number of ways in which the habit is valued. These included –

- The traditional habit is a strong symbol of monastic life; it proclaims who the monk is to himself and to others.
- The traditional habit links New Norcia to other Benedictine congregations.
- The traditional habit is simple and elegant; it has sufficient gravitas for formal monastic liturgy and is simple enough for a range of informal activities, and the style fits people of a variety of shapes and sizes.
- The traditional habit is comfortable and practical; in winter extra layers of clothing can be worn underneath, in summer the habit is a cooler alternative to trousers.
- The traditional habit is part of New Norcia’s cultural capital (Power, 2005).

The last point concerning cultural capital is perhaps unique to New Norcia. The conclusion to the report included the following observations –

...New Norcia is one of the few built heritage sites of national significance in Australia. People visit and wish to support its preservation for its historic, social, scientific and aesthetic value as well as its religious value. The traditional habit is an important part of New Norcia’s intangible heritage – the monastic lifestyle – and as such is interwoven with New Norcia’s built, movable and documentary heritage to form a unique cultural landscape of rare

depth. For many people outside the monastic community the traditional habit is important and valuable as a part of the site's total culture. In particular, the traditional habit is of great interest to visiting students and serves a didactic purpose, providing a highly visible entry point to an explanation of monastic life ... (Power, 2015).

In addition to comments about the role religious habits have in forming identity, a few respondents mentioned the significant place that these very personal textiles have in the life of a religious community. One convent archivist recalled that one of the first tasks undertaken by a new sister was the sewing of her own habit, some more skilfully than others. Another archivist, showing me around a small exhibition maintained in one of the public rooms of the old convent, pointed out that the historic habit on display was in fact a modern copy as the original was now too fragile to handle and had been packed carefully away. She had found that visitors were always interested in the old habits and felt that this was a suitable way to acknowledge the significance of these distinctive reminders of the past life of her community. Many convent archives hold not only the long voluminous dresses and veils that were the visible parts of the sisters' habits but they also hold examples of the many layers of undergarments and intricately folded and pinned supporting head-dresses worn under the veils. For example, the Lochinvar Convent Archives textile catalogue records the ways in which clothing has changed over the years along with personal stories and recollections about particular garments. The following catalogue records are typical.

... *A2009.23.6.15* Nightdress, fine linen or lawn material. The linen nightdress was listed as part of the Postulants Prospectus but was only used if a Sister was in the Infirmary or Hospital. The postulants were given unbleached calico night dresses from day of entry. Linen ones purchased from Church Supplies Stores. One of these has "Mornay" brand.

... A 20009.23.6.10 records a bleached calico nightdress and adds further information – Chapter⁹⁵ in 1964 gave the sisters permission to replace nightdress with pyjamas if preferred (Mather Mary Pauline).

... A2009.23.5.21 Crème crepe or Dacron veils with white headpiece attached worn by Sisters with cream habit after 1963. Gradually phased out and became optional in 1983. (Only one sister still wearing a veil in 2011)

Irene Duchenne (1972) commented that the effects of religious dress reform following Vatican II were felt in the secular world. Duchenne noted that many lay-people grieved the loss of the familiar and distinctive headdresses, veils and habits of the nuns that worked in their local areas, quoting “all nuns look the same now” (p86). Religious habits intrigue people outside the convents and monasteries, even those who are of the Catholic faith. One nun I interviewed recalled that as a very young child she and her sister were fascinated by nuns –

... I remember asking my mother who they are. Like – what’s underneath all those clothes? Do they go to the toilet like we do? She gently explained everything to me and my sister.

The Regalia of Lay Organisations

Several surveyed collections held examples of a group of ecclesiastical textiles that seem to have disappeared from current practice. These textiles are associated specifically with lay organisations and devotional sodalities of the Catholic Church. Confraternities, societies and sodalities such as the Legion of Mary, Children of Mary, Sodality of the Holy Angels, Sacred Heart Sodality, Holy Name Society, Young Catholic Workers, St Vincent de Paul Conference, Knights of the Southern Cross, Catholic Women’s League, and the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS) played an important role in forging a Catholic identity, particularly in the later part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The banners and regalia of these groups are tangible reminders of the important place personal devotion played in the lives of the laity, particularly in the decades preceding Vatican II, and also of the involvement of the Catholic community in charitable

⁹⁵ In this context *Chapter* refers to the regular meetings of a religious community where decisions about community life are made.

works. Several survey respondents commented on textiles and regalia associated with the Catholic community at large:

... They are all part of the story of the culture and history of our worship practices. (Diocesan Archivist I, questionnaire response)

... Sodality banners are a thing of the past and therefore part of Catholic Church history. (Diocesan Archivist J, questionnaire response)

... the older items (such as a 1830s vestment set or the 1899 uniform of Mr Quinlan, a Knight of St Sylvester) are of particular interest and importance. (Diocesan Archivist C, questionnaire response)

While the majority of these lay organisations did not differentiate themselves from the general lay community by wearing special clothing, the blue capes of the Children of Mary and green collars and sashes of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS) were once common sights at religious celebrations and processions. The photographic collection at the National Library of Australia holds many images of Children of Mary in their cloaks and members of the HACBS in their collars marching behind sodality banners in ceremonial processions. The Children of Mary, a Marian devotional sodality, was founded in the 1830s for girls attending Catholic schools. On ceremonial occasions, for example the annual diocesan Marian Processions held to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ, or parish processions on the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Children of Mary wore blue cloaks and white veils and marched behind their sodality banners. Membership of the sodality also entitled the girls to wear the Miraculous Medal⁹⁶ suspended on a blue ribbon. The archives at the Mercy Convent at Singleton hold a particularly interesting example of a Child of Mary cloak (figure 84).

⁹⁶ The Miraculous Medal grew out of a series of visitations of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Sister (later Saint) Catherine Laboure, a novice in the mother-house of the Daughters of Charity in Paris, in 1830. (Ruffin, 1908). Those who wore the medal and prayed to Mary would receive many graces. According to tradition, the design of the *Miraculous Medal* was relayed to St Catherine by the Blessed Virgin herself (Glass, 1911). Many miracles have been claimed in the name of the Miraculous Medal, but it is named for the 'miraculous' way in which it was designed.



Figure 84: Blue cloak of the Children of Mary.
(Image by author, 2016)

The blue cloak is adult-sized and ankle-length, and was kept by the sisters for the use of brides on their wedding day. The convent archivist recalled that a former Child of Mary would wear the cloak over her wedding dress and be met at the door of the church by fellow members, who would then remove the cloak as she entered the church. The Legion of Mary was a similar sodality for Catholic women. Museums Victoria, like many secular museums, holds regalia from various Catholic ‘benefit’ or ‘friendly’ societies including The Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS). The HACBS was founded in Victoria in the late 1860s to assist Irish Catholics with funeral and sickness benefits; branches were subsequently established in other states. On ceremonial occasions the members wore green velvet collars ornamented with gold bullion embroidery (Sweeney, 2005). An HACBS sash on display at the 2016 exhibition in St John’s Hall, Maitland, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Bishop Murray, first resident bishop of the Maitland Diocese, was on loan from a local family (figure 85).



Figure 85: Green sash worn by members of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society.
(Image by author, 2016)

The Perth Archdiocesan Archives has recently received an unusual, and rare, textile into its care – the uniform and regalia of a Knight of the Equestrian Order of Pope St Sylvester. The uniform and regalia were presented to the Perth Archdiocese in 2013 by the family of its owner, former Speaker of the Western Australian Parliament and noted philanthropist, Mr Timothy Quinlan (Hiini, 2013). The Equestrian Order of Pope St Sylvester was established in 1841 by Pope Gregory XVI. It is bestowed on Catholic laymen who by their examples in business, the professions, the military, and society have lived exemplary lives (Noonan, 2012). In his funeral homily [in 1927], Archbishop Clune noted Timothy Quinlan’s “constant” and “edifying” devotion to the Sacred Heart. Mr Quinlan donated a statue of the Sacred Heart to St Mary’s Cathedral which attracted much devotion (Hinii, 2013). The Papal Knights uniform, and regalia of the many Church beneficent societies are an important recognition and tangible record of the charitable works undertaken by the Catholic laity.

Role of Lay Women

In addition to ecclesiastical textiles being community identifiers they also operate as indicators of the involvement of women in the community in the life of a Church.

... Processions were visual events which helped forge a Catholic identity. Women as needleworkers had a role to play in the dressing and grooming of participants, and production of banners and special uniforms for sodalities. (O'Brien, 1992, p. 452).

For much of the history of the Catholic Church women were specifically excluded from the ordained ministry, the Church hierarchy and active participation in liturgical rites. They could, however, contribute to the liturgical life of the Church through textiles. Women have endowed their local churches with liturgical and non-liturgical textiles for centuries. For example, in England prior to the Reformation vestments and altar cloths were regularly gifted to local churches (Middleton-Stewart, 2001) and convents have supplied textiles to churches since at least the Middle Ages (Carr et al., 2011). Susan O'Brien, in an article discussing the role of women in the decoration of English churches following the re-emergence of the Catholic Church in the early 1800s, noted that the revival of the Catholic Church in England coincided with the wholesale promotion of community and private devotional practices within the international Church.

... [The] Church was in the throes of rapid growth without resources, so any assistance was accepted. Women could become involved as benefactors and workers. This meant an emphasis on the material culture of Catholicism, the objects of collective and individual devotional practices. (O'Brien 1992, p. 463)

Jennifer Isaacs' research⁹⁷ investigating 200 years of domestic arts in Australia revealed that a similar situation existed in Australia where women were closely involved with the local manufacture of textiles for their churches (Isaacs, 1987). As previously discussed, religious sisters in many convents sewed vestments and associated liturgical textiles and parish sewing guilds kept their churches supplied with altar linen. Skilled embroiderers have long been involved with the repair and maintenance of ecclesiastical textiles (A stitch in time, 2013; Divall, 1996), and many communities are blessed with dedicated groups of parishioners who launder and generally maintain textile requisites used in the liturgies. Survey respondents specifically mentioned that domestically produced textiles in their collections record community memories. The respondents also noted the under-appreciation of the talents of women in the Church community.

⁹⁷ Isaacs' research was prompted by the upcoming bicentennial of the European settlement of Australia in 1988.

... The church's collection of lace albs and cottas testifies to the often-overlooked domestic crafts and recalls the contribution that women have made, both nuns and lay women, to the cultural legacy of the church and its worship. (Religious Archivist P, questionnaire response)

... so many, such as hand painted on silk items by country women demonstrate artistic skills of rural women in Victoria in the early twentieth century. (Diocesan Archivist A, questionnaire response)

... many of the pieces reflect the work of members of local families who have lived in the region since our arrival. (Religious Archivist E, questionnaire response)

The social and community significance of ecclesiastical embroidery is explored over several pages of Jennifer Isaacs' extensive investigation into the role of women in the production of 'domestic' art and craft in the 200 years of Australia's European settlement. She states that

... Religion had a strong influence on domestic life in Australia. One of the central ways in which a woman was judged by her peers and by society at large was through her piety and devotion, and she expressed this in many aspects of domestic life. ... making samplers with religious themes [and] Bible markers and covers employing medieval techniques of ecclesiastical embroidery ... (Isaacs, 1987, p. 144)

Women were justly proud of their needlecraft and large amounts of crochet work and embroidered small items were produced for fundraising events such as church bazaars and 'sales-of-work' stalls (Isaacs, 1987, p. 148). Newspaper reports of the times mention that ecclesiastical embroidery was regularly entered into the Exhibitions of Women's Work held during the early decades of the twentieth century. For example, at the Women's Work Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1907 a Miss Child was awarded a special prize for the ecclesiastical vestments she had made⁹⁸. Domestic ecclesiastical embroidery also included communal embroidery projects such as wall hangings and church kneelers, a tradition that continues to this day. An example, on periodic display in the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo is a modern *community* quilt constructed from fabric panels embroidered by parishioners from each of the diocesan parishes. The quilt celebrates the history of the

⁹⁸ The Daily Telegraph (Sydney) November 19, 1907 p5

diocese and the work of its parish families. The surveyed collections also house examples of work by amateur craftspeople and local parishioners. Tucked away in the vestment collection at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo, is a chasuble, possible dating from the 1970s, decorated with an *Agnus Dei* symbol (figure 86 left). When compared to the goldwork and needle-painting examples made by professional embroiderers or in convents (figure 86 (right)), the naive style, unusual choice of materials and the appliqued lamb motif fashioned from sheepskin, suggests that this work is by an amateur embroiderer. The design appears to combine elements from two depictions of the *Agnus Dei* (see Appendix I).



Figure 86: Comparison of two *Agnus Dei* symbols, one embroidered by an amateur embroiderer(left) and the other produced in a professional workshop (right).

(Images by author, 2016 (left) and 2013 (right))

Included in the inventory of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission's textile collection are several examples of vestments made by non-professional needlewomen for local churches. One striking example is an elaborately beaded and sequined chasuble featuring gold thread embroidery designed and stitched, according to information supplied to the archivist, by a local embroiderer for the 40th World Eucharistic Congress held in Melbourne in 1974 (figures 87 and 106).



Figure 87: beaded chasuble and stole, 1974).

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission.

The large collection of church banners in St Augustine's Church, Salisbury, South Australia is the work of a single parishioner. For over thirty years she has designed and made the sets of wall hangings and devotional banners that define the cycle of seasons and sacred feasts of the Church's liturgical calendar. Of particular interest is a recently made *Marian* banner hung on feast days associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary. Its construction is reminiscent of a late nineteenth-century *Sacred Heart* banner made by the sisters at Sion Convent at Sale, Victoria. Both feature folded fabric drapery over a flat figure. The face and hands of Christ on the Sion banner are made from printed card, while the face and hands of the Salisbury figure are hand-painted in exquisite detail (see figure 10). The banners are a significant reminder of an unbroken tradition of the involvement of women in the production of ecclesiastical textiles that stretches back centuries.

Vestments made for others can also embody deep personal and family significance for the makers. The archivist at the MDHC related the story of a chasuble from the collection being returned to the family of its owner. The priest's family wished him to be buried in his ordination vesture which had been designed and hand-painted by his father. On a similar

personal note, one priest interviewed recounted the story and personal significance behind his own ordination vestments (figure 88).

... Today I was vested in white for the feast of St John Bosco, so I wore the chasuble you see in the attached photo. My aunt was a talented seamstress who made vestments for her own parish. [She] made these vestments for my ordination on 16 August 1980. The fabric is some kind of nylon – a bit sweaty in summer, but the creases fall out easily, and it holds a good shape. There was a “fashion” reaction against the ornately embroidered “fiddle-back” vestments, and so this is in a very full cut (throat, ankles, wrists) with minimal decoration. It has served well for nearly 37 years, and I might ask to be buried in it.



Figure 88: Gothic-style chasuble, 1980.

(Source: Private collection, used with permission.)

The cultural significance of ecclesiastical textiles associated with the lay community of the Church is indeed wide-ranging. These textiles record a long and continuous involvement of the laity in the devotional, liturgical and community life of the Church in Australia. A more in-depth analysis of the role of Australian ecclesiastical textiles in the formation of identity

and as a signifier of community involvement in the Church is beyond the scope of this research. However, the very presence of textiles associated with identity and community involvement in collections, as well as the comments made by custodians about their values, is an indication of the cultural significance and values attributed to religious habits, lay organisation regalia and textiles produced by local women.

6.2.4 Theme 4: Aesthetic qualities and skills

Aesthetics

Beyond being valued as historical connectors to persons and events, cultural identifiers and custodians of community memory, ecclesiastical textiles have significant secular heritage research potential in the areas of art history, aesthetics and design, manufacturing technology and traditional arts and crafts. Almost without exception, survey respondents from religious communities and diocesan archives noted that aesthetic qualities in some way contributed to the importance and value of textiles in their collections. References to design and colour, level of workmanship, decorative techniques, and the quality of materials included:

... Many [are important] for their attractive decoration and others for their elaborate design. (Diocesan Archivist B, questionnaire response)

... Some also have a value in terms of the craft and effort put into their making. (Diocesan Archivist D, questionnaire response)

... display beautiful embroidery – needlework, tatting and crochet. (Religious Archivist E, questionnaire response)

... the quality of the workmanship is excellent in the precision of the crochet edging ... the work is of fine quality ... (Diocesan Archivist G, questionnaire response)

... Incredible detail, ... very decorative of its time. (Religious Archivist S, questionnaire response)

... They would have taken thought, talent and creativity as well as adhering to the strict rules of the Catholic Church. (Diocesan Archivist Z, questionnaire response)

Secular art gallery staff also recognised the skills and expertise embodied in ecclesiastical textiles in their collections and categorised the aesthetic value of ecclesiastical textiles in the context of art history, design aesthetics and manufacturing processes.

... the works have largely been collected for their historic design and exquisite workmanship, some of which are truly outstanding [the embroidered panel is a] great example of embroidery from the 17th century. (Secular Curator T, questionnaire response)

Of all the categories of value ascribed to ecclesiastical textiles it is perhaps aesthetic value which best bridges the gap between unofficial heritage and official heritage defined in chapter 3. It has been said that ... *beauty lies in the eye of the beholder* ... so criteria for aesthetic significance can be difficult to define. Elena Kovalevich (2013), in an interesting short article on the science and philosophy of this paraphrase of a quote from Plato asserts that

... The essence of appreciating beauty relies on the experience already stored in our mind. Our thoughts create our experiences ...

Kovalevich's statement closely parallels the role that an original community's ownership, experience and emic knowledge plays in the development of contemporary heritage management policy. The concept that the values and significance of heritage 'items' are different for different groups or individuals is now widely recognised by the heritage community. It is not unexpected, therefore, that what constitutes aesthetic significance varies with the personal, community or professional knowledge, beliefs and experience of the 'beholder'. For example, the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission holds two sets of elaborate goldwork vestments ordered by Bishop Michael O'Connor in the early 1880s from Tanfani, an Italian manufacturer who also supplied the Vatican (figure 89).



Figure 89: Two sets of vestments by Tanfani of Rome, c1883.
(Images by author, 2016)

Sadly, Bishop O'Connor died before the vestments arrived. His successor, James Moore, had simpler tastes and the elaborate new vestments were never worn.

Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth in the first edition of the heritage management document *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* explained the multi-faceted nature of aesthetic significance:

... An object may be aesthetically significant for its craftsmanship, style, technical excellence, beauty, demonstration of skill and quality of design and execution. It might include innovative or traditional objects from Indigenous or folk cultures or high art. Aesthetically significant objects may be unique or mass produced. (Russell & Winkworth, 2001, p. 28)

In the second edition of this document aesthetic significance is more concisely defined as

An item or collection with visual or sensory appeal, landmark design qualities, or displaying creative or technical excellence. (Russell & Winkworth, 2010, p. 61)

Why the definition was changed is not made clear but my analysis of survey responses and interviews from owner communities suggests that ecclesiastical textiles are considered *aesthetically* significant when they act as exemplars of prevailing ecclesiastical styles and

materials exemplars of traditional art and craft techniques, particularly embroidery and weaving, or reference or ‘type’ pieces for the determination of age and provenance. Textiles that embody aesthetic significance were found in all surveyed collections.

Exemplars of prevailing styles and materials

Textiles worked in the finest of materials in the latest techniques by expert artisans have long been a part of the material legacy of the Church.

... Vestments have played a leading part in liturgical life throughout the history of the Church, and have been regarded by Church and craftsmen alike as worthy vehicles for the highest expression of the arts of their time. (Johnstone, (2002), p. 1)

Ecclesiastical textiles are a visible record of prevailing fashion in textile decoration and provide a tangible, hands-on, timeline of lost or now rarely used textile craft techniques. Ecclesiastical textiles are, therefore, a valuable source of primary information about materials and manufacturing techniques that cannot be gleaned from sculpture, paintings, photographs and written descriptions. This is particularly so when few examples of secular embroidery have survived the ravages of time and fashion (Synge, 2001). Jennifer Isaacs, discussing nineteenth-century ecclesiastical embroidery, writes that

“...traditionally only the best materials were used for embroidery on vestments. The effect had to be rich and lush, in keeping with the image of the churches of the day...” (Isaacs, 1987, p. 145)

Evelin Wetter (2010) references the writings of Bishop William Durandus, the medieval authority on the allegorical nature of ecclesiastical textiles, with the comment “[the textiles were] the visual manifestation of the inner glory of the church (Wetter, Bangert, & Abegg-Stiftung, 2010) (p7). To this end

... only the best, the most precious and expensive could be converted into garments worn to serve God ... (Mayer-Thurman, 1975, p. 44)

‘Only the best’ was, and still is, not always the most practical choice for church textiles. Not all churches could afford the most expensive or the most fashionable materials. The designs and fabrics of the surveyed textiles reflect the influences of major architectural and

ecclesiastical styles of the last three hundred years. Some of the manufacturers of vestments for the Australian churches have been identified through labels and archive records but the identities of the manufacturers of the fabrics are largely unrecorded (Patullo, 2012). One exception is the English company of M. Perkins & Son. Perkins fabrics feature prominently in historical newspaper advertisements and catalogues and several of their fabrics were noted in the surveys. The company website of M. Perkins & Son⁹⁹ includes a history of the company and its role in the design and manufacture of ecclesiastical textiles. According to the company's records, M. Perkins & Son has been weaving ecclesiastical trimmings and fabrics since 1813. Perkins' fabrics were designed specifically for ecclesiastical use and are a useful indicator of the changing influence of major designers and architects on ecclesiastical style. M. Perkins & Son is still in business and corporate memory and the company archives proved a useful resource for dating several Australian vestments made from their fabrics – a topic discussed later in this chapter.

Exemplars of traditional skills

American embroiderer Mary Corbet has published a series of online articles on the theme of “Embroidery Archaeology” in which, through close examination and deconstruction of reference textiles, she discusses and identifies the traditional materials and techniques used in the manufacture of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century textiles. Her reference pieces include remnants salvaged from worn-out, damaged or obsolete vestments and ecclesiastical banners that would otherwise have been disposed of (Corbet, 2017). Embroiderers from the Goldwork Guild in England, in reply to a request for information on the styles of goldwork embroidery encountered on textiles in the surveyed collections, commented that repairing and conserving ecclesiastical textiles has enabled Guild members to revive and foster many traditional decorative techniques. Guild members also noted that ecclesiastical goldwork in its various forms is undergoing a revival in the secular world and, through outside recognition of their work with ecclesiastical textiles, they have received many enquiries from secular clothing manufacturers seeking goldwork embroiderers for their latest fashion ranges – an interesting reversal of the usual trend of ecclesiastical textile aesthetics following secular fashion trends.

Applying the methods of Corbet's “Embroidery Archaeology” to textiles in the surveyed collections reveals much about the materials and methods used in their manufacture.

⁹⁹ An article on history of the company can be accessed at <https://www.mperkins.co.uk/history/>

Goldwork, metal thread embroidery and fabrics woven with metal threads are a case in point. Such materials have been the mainstay of ecclesiastical textile decoration for centuries. In this age of electric light it is difficult to imagine the visual impact of candlelight reflecting from the polished metal threads and jewels that decorated vestments, frontals and wall hangings in the past (Bailey, 2013). Pauline Johnstone (2002) quotes May Morris, daughter of the great Arts and Crafts Movement designer William Morris, in her comments about the integral part played by textiles in the whole architectural experience of the celebration of a medieval Mass.

... The old workers, she said, “knew what they were about when they lavished mysterious splendour of gold and broken colour on their altar apparel and priests’ vestments: such a method lost little through distance of its power of impressing the spectator with a vague sense of beauty and richness entirely appropriate to the spirit of the building...” (Johnstone, 2002, p. 1)

The glow of metal threads and the sparkle of polished gems added a sense of mystery and otherworldliness to the dark interiors of medieval churches and cathedrals. Metal threads, be they embroidered, woven or applied to a surface appear in all surveyed collections, in textiles from all ages, and reveal much about the materials and stitching techniques used to produce such visual spectacles. A visual inspection of the raised goldwork from a late nineteenth-century chasuble identified several types of metal thread including passing thread, plate, torsade, bullions and purls¹⁰⁰. Spangles and sequins add textural interest and pressed metal shapes make for a more realistic portrayal of significant religious symbols, such as the *Agnus Dei* motifs, grapes and wheat ears. Skilfully applied, these elements give a multi-textured, three-dimensional finish to the embroidery (Marsh, 2006). One respondent from the Goldwork Guild noted that a red outline on goldwork embroidery indicated that it was most likely made in a professional workshop rather than in a convent or by a non-professional embroiderer. Goldwork in the surveyed collections includes outlined and non-outlined motifs, so at least some examples appear to have been produced in professional workshops (figure 90).

¹⁰⁰ Passing thread is made by wrapping a smooth or crimped metal strip around a cotton or linen core. Plate is simply a flat ribbon, sometimes applied to a paper or parchment backing, torsade is a cable-like cord, while the flexible bullions and purls resemble hollow coils of wire (Chamberlain, 2006; Saunders, 1998)



Figure 90: Goldwork embroidery (detail), early twentieth century.

The red outlines indicate that the vestments was most likely the product of a secular workshop.

(Images by author, 2013)

Even damaged or worn out textiles have unexpected research potential, particularly in heritage conservation where it is virtually impossible to access the hidden parts of an intact historic textile without some deconstruction. An examination of a fragment of goldwork salvaged from a worn out chasuble revealed much about the techniques used to produce these elaborate designs. Three types of padding, thick cardboard, woven tape and black felt, were used under the 3-D motifs stitched onto these ubiquitous chasubles. Bullion tubes are attached with white thread rather than yellow and a coarse linen thread couches the passing threads. Cloth-of-gold is a common ground fabric for goldwork. One type of cloth-of-gold found in several collections is woven with a thin yellow cotton warp thread and two thick weft threads – one plain cotton and the other partially wrapped with a thin metal ribbon (figure 91). A spokesman for M. Perkins & Son, which still weaves cloth-of-gold, commented on this unusual partial wrapping of the weft thread. He was not familiar with this variant as, in his experience, the weft thread was completely covered. It may have been a cost-saving measure used on cheaper vestments.



Figure 91: Cloth-of-gold woven with a double weft and single warp (detail).

(Image by author, 2011).

The notion that goldwork was produced in a lower and a higher quality is supported by advertisements in local newspapers and in suppliers catalogues. For example, in a 1938 newspaper advertisement¹⁰¹ the Louis Gille Company offered fine quality imitation cloth-of-gold vestments at £17/10/- and £21/-/- for “better quality”. These were very expensive vestments, the equivalent in 2017 of \$1550 and \$1860¹⁰². In the same advertisement a set of green moiré silk vestments with gold embroidery, gold emblem, gold bullion, and braid was ‘on special’ at £6/10/- (\$575 in 2017).

Paradoxically, the back of a piece of embroidery or the inside of a multi-layered textile can reveal more about manufacturing techniques than the visible parts. This is particularly so when distinguishing between ‘hand’ embroidery and machine embroidery. The Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn textile heritage collection holds two sets of vestments, including copes and dalmatics, featuring what at first sight appears to be a complex Celtic knot design stitched in chain stitch and reminiscent of Tambour work¹⁰³. One set is embroidered in

¹⁰¹ The Catholic Press (Sydney): 16 Jun 1938, Page 25

¹⁰² From the Reserve Bank of Australia inflation calculator at

<https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html> By way of comparison, in Victoria, in 1940, the average weekly wage for a male factory worker was £4/7/- <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/whatitcost/earnings>

¹⁰³ Chain stitch can be worked as a hand-embroidery stitch with a needle (the working thread is carried above fabric), or as Tambour work with a crochet hook (the working thread is carried below the fabric). Tambour work is a faster technique.

shades of violet and yellow on a black fabric, the other is a colourful spectrum on a white background (see figure 48). According to the manufacturer's label these vestments were made in Cork, Ireland. A purple chasuble in the same collection has bunches of grapes worked in the same stitch on a purple chasuble, as are the floral motifs on a set of red vestments in the Diocese of Sandhurst Archives (figure 92).



Figure 92: Cornely machine embroidery (detail).

Note that the grapes and leaves are embroidered directly onto the ground fabric (left), while the pink flowers and yellow scrolls are embroidered onto a yellow fabric, cut out and applied onto the ground fabric (right).

(Source: Images by author 2013 (left) and by C. Patullo, 2012 (right), used with permission)

Closer examination reveals that the chain stitch designs were in fact machine stitched on a Cornely embroidery machine. The Cornely embroidery machine invented in the mid-1800s is still in use today and uses a single thread chain stitch to replicate hand-worked Tambour embroidery. The Cornely machines revolutionised the embroidery industry as they were compact enough to be used by outworkers in their homes as well as in workshops. As the technology improved, Cornely machines were adapted to attach ribbons, braids, cords and sequins and to make chenille (loop pile) and cut pile embroidery (Holmes, 2003, pp. 37-38), and, with a net ground fabric, to make lace (Farrell, 2007). Further investigation of the lace used on albs and surplices in the survey collections may reveal examples of 'Cornely' lace, particularly on commercially made items. The surveyed collections store numerous examples

of machine embroidered textiles dating from the late nineteenth century onwards. The most common commercial embroidery machines were the Schiffli machine, developed in the 1870s in Switzerland. The Singer brand ‘Irish’ machine was designed in 1908, and the multi-head embroidery machine appeared in the early 1900s. The Schiffli machine employed a shuttle¹⁰⁴ and two threads for each needle and replicates long and short stitch, running stitch, and satin stitch. A large Schiffli machine had over a thousand needles stitching multiple copies of the pattern across several metres of fabric (M. C. Miller, 2014). The ‘Irish’ machine has no connection to Ireland but it reproduces the fine satin stitch used on hand-embroidered Irish linen of the time (Holmes, 2003, p. 86). The multi-head machine uses multiple needles to produce multi-coloured embroidery. Schiffli and the multi-head machines could be operated by punch-cards (similar to a Jacquard loom) and were the forerunners of modern computerised machines. The Schiffli machine, like the Cornely machine, could be adapted to make lace. Two serendipitous finds of a cross orphrey salvaged from a black satin chasuble from a small church in rural Victoria and the remnants of a pillar orphrey removed from a worn out white brocade chasuble from a suburban church in South Australia offered a rare opportunity to compare similar hand- and machine-embroidered motifs (figures 93 and 94).



Figure 93: Hand embroidery on pillar orphrey, right side (left) and wrong side (right).

The wrong side (back of the panel) shows the random stitch direction, numerous knots and single threads indicative of hand embroidery.

(Images by the author, 2011)

¹⁰⁴ *Schiffli* is the Swiss German word for *little boat* – it used boat-shaped shuttles. The largest Schiffli machines were 19m wide.



Figure 94: Machine embroidery on cross orphrey, right side (left) and wrong side (right).

Two threads form the satin stitch, in this case the top thread is grey or white and the bobbin thread is black. Clearly visible on the back are the loose bobbin threads that bridge sections of the motifs (right) characteristic of polychrome machine embroidery.

(Images by author, 2018)

Interestingly, a line of single thread chain stitching around the edges of the fabric cross which holds the lining fabric in place could have been stitched with a Cornely, or similar, machine.

Materiality and aesthetic significance of the Ursuline Collection

The Ursuline Collection is a useful starting point for an analysis of aesthetic significance through its materiality, historic materials, excellence of design, and exquisite workmanship. Despite the research potential of its textiles the Ursuline Collection has not been the subject of any “outside” research. In fact, when asked whether their collections have ever been the focus of any research almost all respondents simply replied “no”. One archivist, however, recognising the research value of the textiles in their collection and in other locations around Australia, saw this research as timely given the current state of support for their work with textiles. They commented –

... Knowing that there are some wonderful collections around the country I commend the research project as depending on the vagaries of authorities some of these textiles could be lost any day and such a project will at least preserve the story, the history and the art involved.

(Diocesan Archivist A, questionnaire response)

The Ursuline Collection offers Australian textile researchers a rare opportunity to study a collection of textile artefacts dating from well before the founding of the colony of New South Wales. The Ursuline heritage textiles are rare and remarkable survivors of early eighteenth-century embroidery and remarkable for their age and condition. The earliest pieces that are clearly dated include two burses embroidered with the dates 1702 and 1707 and a chasuble dated 1837. While the silk fabrics are now fragile and deteriorating as all silk naturally does, the colours remain rich and bright and the stitching is in good condition. The art/design significance and potential economic value of the embroideries have long been recognised. The convent Annals for 1886 record an incident that occurred in Greenwich just before the sisters moved to Australia:

... In the days of our exile in England, 1877 to 1882, friends there [Greenwich] offered to obtain a marvellous sum of money for us from the South Kensington Art Exhibition, were we willing to sell some of these articles, and, although money was sorely needed in those days of struggle, still we preferred to keep these treasures in our midst ...

A newspaper report of a visit by the local bishop to the convent in October 1945 included descriptions of the embroidery on several of the textiles and commented on their aesthetic significance:

... the Bishop of Armidale (Most Rev. J. A. Coleman, D.D.) celebrated Mass in the convent chapel, and used this precious and historic set of vestments, which for beauty and craftsmanship, are probably unique in Australia ... ("Convent Treasures," 1945)

The textiles are embroidered using a number of different techniques. The raised silver metal thread embroidery on a burse and pall is particularly fine and far 'outshines' the raised goldwork embroidery on many late nineteenth-century chasubles housed in other collections. The work is a testament to the skills and expertise of the sisters. The convent archivist related that, in the past, the sisters often spent their free time in the evenings at fine needlework and lace making. Sadly the sisters no longer make lace but their lace-making heritage lives on. In one of our many conversations the convent archivist told me that

... Also in the archives we have books with art designs for ecclesiastical embroidery. ... Recently we gave the lacemaking machine to a craft group in Epping, Sydney.

The lace-making machine used by the Ursuline sisters was in fact a lace-making pillow (figure 95).



Figure 95: Lace-making pillow (top) and lace patterns from a pattern book dated 1857 (bottom).

(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2018, used with permission)

The ‘lace machine’ was not a mechanical device but a support for the patterns, threads, pins, and bobbins used to produce hand-made bobbin or pillow lace. The convent archivist recounted the following anecdote reflecting the expertise of the sisters:

... one year for the local Armidale Show, one of the German sisters presented a piece of lace which she had made. It was rejected because the judges thought that such a perfect piece could not have been hand made. An insult to her skill!

Needle- or thread-painting is an embroidery technique which produces images that appear to be ‘painted’ on fabric. Examples of this technique also exist in the Ursuline textile collection; on a sermon veil and on a white silk chasuble which bears the encoded date inscription for 1738 (figure 96 and Appendix II).



Figure 96: Needle-painting embroidery from a chasuble dated 1714. Note the shaded skin tones.
(Source: Ursuline Convent Archives, 2017, used with permission)

The sermon veil is a veritable encyclopaedia of early eighteenth-century embroidery techniques. In addition to needle-painted figures it features bead embroidery, long-and-short stitch, satin stitch, couched and laid goldwork, 3D needle lace and raised goldwork. More images of the embroidery on the sermon veil can be seen in Appendix II. The Ursuline textiles are a particularly valuable reference collection and source of information on the historic techniques and materials used by ‘master’ embroiderers three centuries ago.

Indicators of age and provenance

As discussed in Chapter 2, the style and forms of ecclesiastical vesture and related textiles have undergone periodic changes throughout the two millennia of the Church's history. In summary, the earliest 'clerical' vesture was simply a good and clean set of secular garments reserved for the liturgies - Sunday was a special day marked by the clergy and worshippers wearing their best clothes. Pauline Johnstone (2002) contends that clerical vesture began to move away from secular dress following the recognition of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century. From this point on, she says, the

... priesthood tended to adopt the traditional forms of dress. These tended to remain unchanged in spite of changing secular fashions, and they gradually came to be considered as the only appropriate garments for church use ... (Johnstone, 2002, p5)

The styles of ecclesiastical dress were more or less fixed by the Middle Ages, and, with minor practical alterations due to changes in liturgies, remain so today. It is the fabrics and decorations that follow the fashions and values of the times and it is this feature of ecclesiastical textiles that make them valuable historical records. While Beryl Dean's detailed studies of ecclesiastical and ceremonial embroidery are primarily aimed at modern designers and textile artists, her findings also offer a useful chronology of embroidery and other decorative techniques seen on historic church textiles (Dean, 1958; Dean, 1981). The extensive notes of Christa Mayer-Thurman and Virginia Raguin that accompanied twentieth-century gallery exhibitions of ecclesiastical textiles provide further support to the concept of dating and identifying the origins of ecclesiastical textiles through their materiality and appearance (Mayer-Thurman, 1975; Raguin, 2006). Pauline Johnstone's seminal work *High Fashion in the Church* (2002) documenting ecclesiastical style across England and Europe from the ninth century to the early twentieth century is arguably the most comprehensive work to date on this much under-researched topic. *High Fashion in the Church* provides a useful starting point for dating and determining the source of textiles from an aesthetics perspective.

... as early as the ninth century the few surviving examples can be linked to current artistic styles, and from the thirteenth century onwards vestments of every period take their place amongst the arts. (Johnstone, 2002, p. 1)

Several of the surveyed textiles display goldwork embroidery techniques that have moved in and out of ecclesiastical fashion. The embroidery style is, therefore, a useful tool for dating ecclesiastical textiles (figure 97).



Figure 97: Two goldwork chasubles: ca 1860 (left) and 1897 (right).

The designs are similar but mid-nineteenth century embroidery tends to cover more of the ground fabric.

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission.)

Embroidery featuring precious gold and silver threads reached its pinnacle in the English *Opus Anglicanum* embroidery of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the European *or nué* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The quality of English ecclesiastical embroidery declined from the late medieval period as plague, political upheaval and war and finally the iconoclasms and austerity drives of the Protestant Reformation depleted the textile workforce and exiled its ecclesiastical patrons. In fact, it is through studying the textiles that went into exile with their religious communities that the expertise and techniques of medieval embroiderers are known today. It was not until the restoration of the Catholic Church in the early nineteenth century that goldwork embroidery returned to England. In Catholic Europe during these turbulent times the traditions of ecclesiastical embroidery, including goldwork, continued uninterrupted. The treasured threads that accompanied the Ursulines and Benedictines to Australia are an untapped source of this living heritage.

Weaving is an age old trade and the history and identification of fabric is well documented, so weaving patterns and thread/fibre composition can be useful aids in dating textiles. However, without a verifiable provenance assigning a definitive date or place of origin to a specific textile can be problematic. The ecclesiastical textiles in the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) textile research collection discussed in chapter 2 are a useful case in point. The three copes in the collection are catalogued as *bizarre silks*. The origin of bizarre silks has been the subject of some debate. In 1953 Vilhelm Slomann¹⁰⁵ claimed that bizarre silks were made in India, basing his argument on the similarity of the designs to contemporary printed cotton imported from India. Slomann's work was widely criticised for its flawed logic and lack of primary reference sources (Irwin, 1955). It is now generally accepted that bizarre silks were designed and woven in Europe, notably France, England and the Netherlands (Rothstein, 1990; Thornton, 1958). The woven patterns on the NGA textiles are indeed reminiscent of the bizarre silks manufactured in Europe for a short time during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (figure 98).



Figure 98: Eclectic motifs and strong diagonal pattern are typical of early eighteenth-century silks.
(Images by author, 2016)

¹⁰⁵ Vilhelm Slomann was a writer and museum professional, convincingly and successfully part of mainstream art history: director of the Copenhagen *Kunstindustrimuseet* (Danish Museum of Art and Design) from 1923 to 1949. His controversial and unconventional theory on the Indian origins of certain European furniture styles was also the subject of much debate (Kern and Pezzini, 2014).

The bizarre silks; characterised by bright colours, metallic threads and asymmetric patterns featuring an eclectic mix of exotic *Chinoiserie* motifs, flowers, architectural elements, and abstract geometric shapes repeated on a diagonal, were expensive and briefly fashionable. Although not specifically ecclesiastical fabrics, the rarity and high cost of bizarre silks made them an ideal choice for prelates' vesture of that time. The NGA copes are quite unlike the nearly contemporary swirling, floriated baroque and rococo copes and chasubles in the collections at the New Norcia Benedictine Community and the Ursuline Convent Archives. The origin of bizarre silks has been the subject of some debate. A textiles researcher at the University of Amsterdam suggested that, given its more naturalistic floral design, the fabric of the red cope from the NGA collection, with its polychrome flowers, pagodas and pavilions, could be an example of a *Dutch Indienne* silk rather than a bizarre silk. Dutch Indienne silks were woven in Amsterdam throughout the first quarter of the eighteenth century and feature less jarring designs in softer colours than those used in true bizarre silks and the width of weave is 78cm width compared to the standard 54cm for English and French silks (Colenbrander & Browne, 2007). Further examination of the NGA cope and comparison to similar validated examples should help confirm its origins. On a different level of significance, a closer inspection of one of the copes at the NGA indicated that the lining was not original and had been stitched on in such a way as to hide the remnants of the original cloth tabs of the morse with which it was closed – a sign that it no longer had any liturgical or functional significance (figure 99).

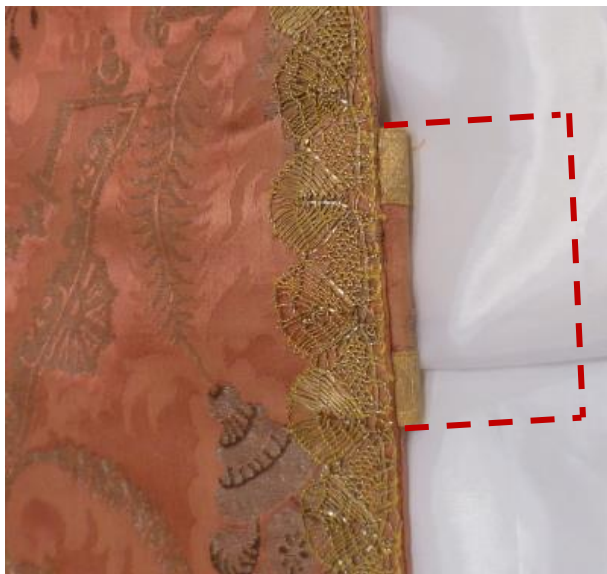


Figure 99: Evidence of original fabric morse. The morse has been tucked inside the lining.

There is some debate over the age of the gold lace, it may be a nineteenth century replacement.

(Image by author, 2016)

The early eighteenth-century chalice veil, chasuble and burses in the Ursuline Heritage Collection and the mid-seventeenth-century chalice veil and eighteenth-century cope in the New Norcia *Spanish Collection* are the earliest authentically dated textiles in the survey. At the time of their manufacture, metal threads were being incorporated into rich brocade fabrics, enhancing the characteristic swirling, floriated and foliated designs of the Baroque and Rococo periods.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, ecclesiastical textiles were hand-made and hand embroidered. The invention of the Jacquard loom in 1804 and the Cornely and Schiffli embroidery machines in the 1860s dramatically reduced the cost and manufacturing time of ecclesiastical textiles. Jacquard looms could weave complex and multi-coloured designs in fabrics, orphrey bands and braids relatively quickly. The wall-hanging in the collection of the NGA (figure 77) would have been woven on a jacquard loom. Embroidery machines began to take over from handwork. The Cornely machine produced a chain stitch reminiscent of traditional Tambour embroidery in a fraction of the time of a skilled embroiderer. The Schiffli machine with its combination of running stitch, satin stitch and zig-zag stitch could be adapted to produce many types of lace (figure 100).



Figure 100: Machine-made lace (detail), mid-twentieth century.

Note that the threads on the right side and wrong side of the lace are different colours indicating that two threads were used – a white bobbin thread and a gold top thread. Hand-made lace uses one thread.

(Image by author, 2016)

Therefore, an understanding of the differences between hand-made and machine-made lace is a useful tool in dating textiles (Farrell, 2007). Beginning in the late 1800s, a decline in the quality of materials and design paralleled the rise in industrialised mass-production. The silks and brocades of earlier times were replaced with cheaper rayons and other synthetics. The political turmoil of the early twentieth century had a devastating effect on the ecclesiastical textiles industry. Many specialist workshops in Europe closed during World War I and World War II never to re-open. Sadly, manufacturing records for many of these companies have been lost, but comparison with textiles of known provenance can help determine an approximate age and source. One weaver of ecclesiastical fabrics still in operation is the English firm, M. Perkins & Son. The company began in the early 1800s as a producer of braids, and branched out into the weaving of ecclesiastical fabrics in the mid nineteenth century. Some leading designers of the period as well as in-house designers, inspired by Medieval, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo and Gothic Revival art and architecture, created fabric designs for the company. A number of textiles held in the surveyed collections were identified and dated with the assistance of the current staff at the Perkins' company. One example, a humeral veil from the collection at St, Augustine's Church, Salisbury, South Australia, is made from Perkins' Winchester brocade. This fabric, still in production, is one of the earliest fabrics made by Perkins and is described on the company website as

... an elegant Gothic design incorporating the Ogee and Rose figures.

Taken from Domenico¹⁰⁶ Ghirlandaio's "Stories of St Fina" in the Collegiate Church at San Gimignano, near Florence. ... it was originally used by Kempe studios at St Michael and All Angels, Brighton, circa 1868. Kempe was a member of the William Morris circle who founded his own studio in 1862.

Another Renaissance inspired Perkins' design is the Wakefield brocatelle used in a chasuble belonging to the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn heritage collection. The current Wakefield brocatelle, which is still woven in a mixture of cotton, silk and metallic yarns, differs slightly from the original used for the Canberra/Goulburn chasuble. Another Perkins' fabric common to many surveyed collections is the *Cloister* damask. This fabric, made from a mixture of cotton and viscose, was first manufactured in 1900. The current version of the fabric is woven in a cotton-polyester blend. At least two versions of Cloister are represented

¹⁰⁶ Domenico Ghirlandaio (1448-1494) was a Florentine master painter and teacher to Michelangelo (Vasari, 1964).

in the surveyed collections. A white cope held at the Diocese of Bathurst Archives can be dated to the 1920s. A complete red set of vestments in a later version of the Cloister design is held at Sts Peter and Paul Cathedral, Goulburn. The subtle design changes and differences in weave between the three versions were confirmed from archival images of an even earlier version provided by the staff at M. Perkins & Son (figure 101).



Figure 101: Three versions of the *Cloister* damask, c1925 (left), c1950 (centre), and c1910 (right)

The most obvious difference is in the treatment of the dots around the roses and thistles and the leaves. (Images by the author, 2013 (left and centre) and M. Perkins & Son archives, 2016 (right), used with permission)

Perkins & Son staff also identified the fabric in a cope held in the archives at Xavier College, Melbourne as a design known as *Rosedale*. Rosedale, made in the 1930s, is a less expensive 100% acetate version of the company's silk/viscose *Tudor Rose* damask (figure 102).



Figure 102: Rosedale and Tudor Rose damasks. Rosedale (left) is a less expensive version of the Tudor Rose design (right).

(Images by the author, 2013 (left) and M. Perkins & Son archives, 2016 (right), used with permission)

Little of the textile heritage surveyed for this project carries manufacturers' labels. However, the study of stylistic trends, combined with archival records, contemporary church requisite catalogues, media reports, oral histories, and correspondence with current manufacturers has enabled custodians to date items in their collections. For example, vestments in several collections feature a particular style of 'raised' goldwork embroidery on a cloth-of-gold, moiré, or satin ground fabric (see figures 19, 39 and 80). These chasubles, stoles, dalmatics and copes are embellished with variations of a theme incorporating roses, wheat, grapes and pomegranates arranged around a central motif – usually an IHS monogram or *Agnus Dei*. This style of decoration features in church requisite mail-order catalogues from the 1880s to the 1920s. One archivist related that such vestments were relatively cheap and bishops bought sets for use in parish churches. Vesture rubrics allowed the substitution of gold for other colours, so fewer sets of vestments were required in each church. Occasionally vestments can be dated solely on style. The early post Vatican II period saw vestment designers and manufacturers embrace some distinctive and, to the relief of some commentators at least, short-lived decorative styles (Harrington, 2007; Deeter, 2009). In addition to an extensive collection of pre-Vatican II vesture the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission holds a number of these more recent items, including three that are typical of the 1970s and 1980s. Two examples, a chasu-alb and a chasuble and stole, are decorated in bold, dark brown and red designs that are not immediately recognisable as liturgical and therefore difficult to interpret (figure 103). The third, a yellow chasuble, features a design combining traditional symbols such as the lamp, lily, chalice and cross, carried out in the non-traditional, but popular at the time, techniques of batik and fabric printing (figure 104).



Figure 103: Chasu-alb front, c1975 (left) and chasuble back, c1980 (right) featuring unusual decorative themes.
(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)



Figure 104: Chasuble made from batik printed fabric, front (left) and back (right), c1990.
(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

Stylistic ‘dating’ of several items in the surveyed collections is supported by various forms of documentary evidence. One example of dating a garment using style and documentation involves the black chasuble featuring a striking modernistic design of the Archangel Michael

discussed in Chapter 3. The chasuble dates stylistically from the late 1950s or early 1960s. The manufacturer is no longer operating but the company's archives are preserved at the Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (Catholic Documentation Centre for the Netherlands or KDC). KDC staff identified the designer, the dates when he was active and supplied an image of his –

... design drawing for what is called in Dutch “vijfstel”, meaning a liturgical set of 5 textiles, meant for solemn masses with 5 priests: chasuble, 2 dalmatics, shoulder vestment [humeral veil] and cope. This drawing bears the signature of Wim van Woerkom, the artist who was the firm's permanent designer in the period 1936-1967. The chasuble in Australia is an example of his later style and can be dated around 1960. ... the black background means that it was specifically meant for Requiem Masses. (KDC archivist, via email)

As further evidence of provenance, the KDC supplied a copy of a photograph that appeared in an issue of the *Melbourne Age* newspaper in 1964. The photograph is of the daughter of the company's founder showing the Archangel Michael chasuble to the wife of the then governor of Victoria (Figure 105).



Figure 105: The Stadelmaier vestments arrive in Melbourne, 1964.

(Source: Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen, Netherlands, 1964, used with permission)

Further examples of the significance of supporting documentation and its use in dating textiles from the surveyed collections are discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3 The Vatican view

In the context of their primary landscape, that is the Catholic Church and its communities, ecclesiastical textiles are, in essence, highly visible manifestations of a deeply symbolic and hermeneutic system of cultural knowledge and practice spanning two millennia. They play significant roles in the liturgical, pastoral and community life of the Church. These values are consistent with Vatican views on the primary significance and role of its patrimony within the Church. This emphasis on value or significance of heritage to the ‘community’ rather than to ‘society’ in general begins at the top of the Church hierarchy. The Catholic Church also recognises the secular heritage value and cultural significance of its material heritage, but sees its patrimony from a different perspective.

...While the typology of the cultural goods is analogous to that defined by civil state legislation, the perspective through which they are seen by the Church is above all religious, as is attested by the life of faith of the Christian community, and so it is cultural. According to the definition of John Paul II, they are goods “placed at the service of the mission of the Church” (Discourse, 12 October 1995), that is, expressions of liturgical life, of piety and of charity... (Pontifical Council for Culture, 2016)

The Vatican has published widely on the cultural significance of its material culture and the importance of educating its people in that significance. Beginning in 1994, the Pontifical Council for Culture, then known as the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church (PCCHC), sent a series of Circular Letters to all archbishops and bishops explaining the Church’s policy on various heritage matters. Above all the letters emphasised the role material heritage plays in the mission of the Church, and its function as a record of, and witness to, the faith of the church community. In the letter entitled *The Cultural Heritage of the Church and Religious Families* (Marchisano & Chenis, 1994) the PCCHC addressed the cultural heritage of religious communities (i.e. abbeys, monasteries and convents) and emphasised that their material culture, in particular, played a significant role in the mission of the Church and recorded its ‘life-history’. The letter specifically states that:

... Cultural goods are the privileged witnesses to this catholic and spiritual work. They are to be considered, thus, not only elements of anthropological and social interest, but above all significant expressions of a faith which grows within the Church and finds ever more fitting expressions to manifest its interior vitality. One must "re-read" the cultural heritage of the Church in this perspective: from majestic cathedrals to smaller objects; from the marvellous works of art of the great masters to the smaller expressions of the poorer arts; from the most penetrating literary works to the apparently arid financial registers which follow step by step the life of the people of God ...

Three years later, in the letter *The Pastoral Formation of Church Archives* (Marchisano & Chenis, 1997), church archives were described as:

... places of memory of the Christian community and storehouses of culture for the new evangelization. Thus they themselves are a cultural good of primary importance whose special merit lies in recording the path followed by the Church through the centuries in the various contexts which constitute her very structure ...

In 1999 the PCCHC addressed the urgency of inventorying and cataloguing the material heritage of the Church. The Circular Letter entitled *Necessity and Urgency of Inventory and Cataloguing of the Cultural Heritage of the Church* (Marchisano & Chenis, 2000) reminded the bishops that the art-historical patrimony of the Church included works of architecture, painting, sculpture, as well as fittings, liturgical furnishings, vestments and musical instruments, etc. More importantly this letter defined the cultural significance and value of this patrimony as:

... the historic and creative side of the Christian community. Worship, catechesis, charity, culture have moulded the environment in which the community of believers learn and live out their faith. The translation of faith into images enriches the relationship between creation and the supernatural by recalling biblical narratives and representing different expressions of popular piety ...

In 2001 the PCCHC addressed the issues around material heritage of the Church's patrimony that is no longer in use. A Circular Letter entitled *The Pastoral Function of Ecclesiastical Museums* (Marchisano & Chenis, 2001) reminded the bishops of the importance of heritage conservation:

... Church museums have the function of the material preservation, juridical protection and integration into pastoral life of the important art-historical patrimony that is no longer in regular use ...

The multi-layered significance of the Church's material heritage beyond its primary liturgical value was recognised including aesthetic quality, traditional skills and connections to historic events –

... Christian communities ... have collected in archives, libraries, museums, a great quantity of artefacts, documents and texts produced throughout the centuries in order to respond to different pastoral and cultural needs ... [and] ... if libraries can be considered places of meditation, and archives places of memory, the art-historical patrimony of the Church is to be considered the concrete testimony of the artistic creativity and craftsmanship expressed by the Christian community in order to bestow the splendour of beauty upon the places of worship, piety, religious life, study and memory. One can thus say that monuments and objects of every type and style accompany the historical events of the Church. Through their interrelationship, they become suitable instruments to promote the evangelization of contemporary man. (Marchisano & Chenis, 2001)

While the focus of the PCCHC is primarily the recognition and conservation of the cultural value of historic heritage material of the Church in archives, libraries and museums, and its role in the ongoing mission of the church, it should be noted that this historic material is valued in other ways by other groups. The existence of multiple values can lead to different responses to particular textiles. For example, when Pope Benedict XVI (2005-2013) chose to wear elaborate Baroque-style vestments and items of papal apparel not seen since the 1970s, traditionalist factions within the Church reacted positively while reformers were concerned that Pope Benedict XVI was taking the Church back to the more authoritarian practices of the

pre-Vatican II era (Boorstein, 2008). These Vatican documents recognise and value the Church's patrimony and material cultural heritage in three ways. Firstly they are instruments placed at the service of the mission of the Church, to promote the evangelization of contemporary man. Secondly the textiles are expressions of liturgical life, of piety, of charity, and of faith that follow step by step the life of the people of God: symbols and signs which enhance Catholic worship and catechesis, and mould the environment in which the community of believers learn and live out their faith. Finally the textiles are manifestations of the historic and creative side of the Catholic community that enhance the splendour and beauty of places of worship, and celebrate the Glory of God.

To summarise, the Vatican sees the role of its material heritage, including textiles, as primarily evangelical or liturgical, but it also recognises that its patrimony exists within a wider, secular world where it may be assigned a range of different, and sometimes conflicting, meanings, values and significances.

6.4 Same textiles, different values – dissonance or conflict?

Responses to questionnaire and the interview revealed little evidence of any major conflicts of cultural significance or heritage value existing around the surveyed textile collections. This may simply be the result of the textile collections being largely unknown outside of their owner communities. The under representation of ecclesiastical textiles in secular collections has meant that the cultural significance of these textiles is largely unrecognised by the heritage community at large. Respondents understood significance and value in different ways, and this 'dissonance of understanding' rather than a 'dissonance of values' has the potential to impact on the ultimate fate of particular collections. Several custodians acknowledged that issues arising from differences in the perception of significance did impact on heritage management protocols and policies. For example, one convent archivist hoped that, if a proposed heritage preservation plan was accepted, at least some of the heritage textiles in the collection would remain in situ at the convent, and therefore in their original context, and not, as currently proposed, go into storage at the provincial archives. Archivists in the survey cited different perceptions of significance as a factor when allocating limited resources for conservation treatment and exhibition – one recalled being asked "... why spend money on restoration if the items will never be seen?" The management of the surveyed textiles and their heritage values is explored in more detail in chapter 7.

It was interesting to discover that the participants caring for textiles in a religious context were well aware that secular definitions of heritage and criteria for the assessment of cultural significance such as those outlined in the document Significance 2.0 differed from their own perceptions. One convent archivist recounted their experiences of applying for Community Heritage Grants and the challenge of addressing the ‘official’ significance assessment criteria that emphasised values quite different to those of the community. Concerns with identifying and articulating multiple significances were not confined to ‘religious’ heritage collections. An interview with Roslyn Russell, one of the authors of Significance 2.0 and a member of panels assessing applications for Community Heritage Grants, acknowledged that many secular and community-based heritage bodies faced similar challenges in addressing and articulating social/spiritual significance criteria in their grant applications. Cultural tourism is on the rise and is one area of the heritage industry where dissonance, caused by multiple values, could impact upon the conservation and preservation of treasured threads in at least one of the surveyed collections. New Norcia Benedictine Community’s *Spanish Collection* is arguably of international as well as local, community and personal significance. It is refreshing to note that the New Norcia textiles’ special significance to its owner community is not overshadowed by the demands of preserving its more secular values. As the heritage management plan for the textile collection states –

... The New Norcia [textile] collection needs to be viewed and managed as a part of a whole cultural experience of engagement in a contemplative life which provides refreshment and peace in an ever changing world. ... Part of the security of the collection is not just the physical aspects guarding against theft and damage but also the needs for preservation of the intangible elements of the collection. Assessment of the meaning and value of the New Norcia collections cannot be done without due regard of the sacred purpose to which these items were put. ... (MacLeod & Car, 2014, p. 5)

6.5 Overview

The material culture of the Catholic Church is maintained within a living tradition. As discussed in Chapter 3, in a living culture, the cultural significance and/or heritage value of artefacts and objects are not static or fixed. Cultural significance and heritage value respond

to, and are moulded by, the cultural landscapes or contexts in which they exist. The ecclesiastical textiles used by the Roman Catholic Church are cultural artefacts – they are made for a particular purpose, they have a function. The cultural significance and heritage value attributed to Catholic textiles have meant that items have been destroyed, remodelled, re-cycled, hidden away, forgotten, re-discovered, treasured, admired, discussed, criticised, studied and assessed in a wide range of social contexts according to a diversity of criteria; criteria reflective of the diversity of ‘assessors’ knowledge, motives, cultural background and experiences. Beyond their materiality, the forms and functions of ecclesiastical textiles continue as an embodiment of a rich, intangible hermeneutic tradition of signs and symbols that support the rites, rituals and beliefs of the Church.

Responses to survey and interview questions about the value and significance of the surveyed textiles varied greatly, with custodians expressing diverse views about the importance, significance and value of the textiles in their care. Analysis of their responses revealed several persistent themes of cultural significance or value. All participants in the surveys noted the fine workmanship and designs in the textiles in their care as an important reason for their preservation. However, custodians of secular and non-secular collections viewed the significance of textiles in their care from different perspectives. Custodians of collections held in a religious context viewed the textiles in their care as the cultural legacy of their communities. In addition, textiles linked to particular persons, organisations or events were seen as testaments to the faith and work of community members, and as important links to the story of the Catholic Church and its place in the history of Australia. In religious contexts there was a deeper engagement with the religious significance of the textiles themselves along with the signs and symbols used in the design and decoration. In secular institutions, opinions on importance and significance focused more often on the materiality, design, and workmanship of the textiles. Art gallery staff, in particular, identified the value of ecclesiastical textiles in the context of art history, design aesthetics, manufacturing processes, and technical skills or expertise.

Ecclesiastical textiles, in addition to their primary liturgical and spiritual functions, have played, and continue to play, diverse roles within both the Roman Catholic community and the secular world. This research showed that an individual textile can act as a community identifier, a mnemonic for or reminder of an individual or event, a signifier of status and power, a focus for devotion, a sign of faith, a means of community involvement in the life of the Church, an object of aesthetic beauty or an exemplar of traditional skills and expertise.

Chapter 7

A stitch in time: management

Every textile in the survey has a story to tell. However, textiles naturally disintegrate, and their stories disappear as ownership changes, records are lost, or perceptions of what is of significance change. Competing demands on custodial staff, storage space, and resources limit what can be conserved. Ecclesiastical textiles from the Catholic Church have a special place in their primary source communities. In form and function they are living heritage and hold contemporary meanings that embed and keep alive centuries-old traditions.

The Vatican recognises the significance of its movable heritage, including textiles, and actively supports and encourages the establishment and maintenance of libraries, archives and museums for the preservation of the Church's documentary and material heritage (Marchisano & Chenis, 1994, 1997, 2000; Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, 1971). This chapter discusses how perceptions of value and understandings of the role and purpose of textiles in archives and collections shape the way they are managed in the communities and institutions surveyed as part of this research.

7.1 A vulnerable heritage

For centuries, the Catholic Church has built and furnished places of worship. The soaring Gothic style of the Middle Ages, the classical Roman and Greek influences that categorised the Renaissance, the schisms and iconoclasms that accompanied the Reformation, the elaborate 'baroqueness' of seventeenth-century Europe, the Neo-Gothic revival of the nineteenth century and the stark modernism of the twentieth century have left their marks on the movable and immovable cultural heritage of the Catholic Church. Externally, the cathedrals and churches highlight prevailing architectural styles, while internally their fittings and furnishings reflect changes to cultural practices and community values (O'Brien, 1992). As discussed in an earlier chapter, liturgical reforms that changed rites and rituals were accompanied by changes to vesture and other ecclesiastical textiles (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012; A. G. C. Cicognani, 1969; Tribe, 2006a, 2006b). Each 'reform' meant that heritage

artefacts no longer deemed ‘appropriate’ were discarded, destroyed, disposed of, or put into storage. Through all these changes ecclesiastical textiles retained their primary liturgical roles and arbitrary disposal was rare. As a consequence, churches and religious communities have accumulated quantities of old, worn, obsolete or ‘unfashionable’ textiles that need to be managed. As a result of her work with Catholic churches in the Netherlands, textile conservator Rene Lugtigheid and her colleagues estimated that up to 40% of the Church’s movable heritage was textiles and, more importantly from a heritage perspective, much was in danger of being lost (Lugtigheid, 2005a, 2005b).

7.1.1 Threats in the past

While disposal of ecclesiastical artefacts might have been a relatively rare occurrence in the early centuries of the Church, political upheaval outside the church and changes in secular fashion from the sixteenth century onwards, occasionally saw a significant amount of textile heritage move into the secular world (Johnstone, 2002).

Unexpected survivors

The stories behind the heritage textiles cared for by the Ursuline sisters in Sydney and the Benedictine nuns at Jamberoo Abbey in rural New South Wales, told in chapter 6, are testament to the past destruction of Catholic heritage by anti-Catholic sentiment. No longer considered to be religious objects, artefacts removed from their ecclesiastical landscapes became secular commodities, recognised more for their historical, artistic or monetary value. The secular commodification of abandoned religious textiles was particularly evident in the nineteenth century in parts of Europe where the States were challenged by the power of the Church. For example, Rachel Boak (2013) in her definitive study of the vast textile collection amassed by the Rothschild banking family at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, England, tracks the provenance and acquisition of a large quantity of historic ecclesiastical textile that was subsequently used to furnish the house. She also notes the value of such religious artefacts to a secular collector.

... From the 18th century onwards, surviving objects [from churches] became increasingly attractive to collectors because of their beauty, adaptability and the richness of materials used. Continuing political upheavals in France in the 19th century and in governance in Germany,

Italy and Spain, also led to church artworks and furnishings appearing on the art market. (Boak, 2013, p. 9)

Boak, speculating on the reasons why a Jewish family would be interested in collecting Christian textiles, concluded that they were most likely following the lead of contemporary collectors and administrators of museums such as the South Kensington Museum (now known as the Victoria and Albert Museum) in London and the Whitworth Institute in Derbyshire in collecting objects of the finest aesthetic design and workmanship (Boak, 2013, p. 9). Joan Allgrove (1972) published a similar article about the provenance of the Robinson Collection of ecclesiastical textiles sold to the Withworth Institute in 1890. Sir John Charles Robinson was the first superintendent of the collections at the South Kensington Museum and travelled through Europe during the mid-nineteenth century purchasing for its collections. At the same time, Robinson added to his own textile collection, eventually amassing over 1000 pieces of ecclesiastical embroidery, including garments and orphreys, altar frontals and wall hangings, altar linens and fragments of lace, braids and ribbons.

... The sources of acquisition ... have been the sacristies and treasuries of Cathedrals and suppressed monasteries. [Robinson's] interest in textiles coincided with the brief appearance on the art market of church property: in Italy, where after unification in 1870 a number of establishments were suppressed, and in Spain, where a similar situation obtained during the Republican and Carlist disturbances following the deposition of Queen Isabella (1868). In 1888 Sir Charles Robinson said that supplies from these sources had by then been exhausted and that fine specimens were becoming as rare as before. (Allgrove, 1972, p. 77)

Paradoxically, such officially endorsed "looting" has kept many aesthetically and historically significant ecclesiastical textiles extant or intact in museum collections.

Remodelling and reuse

The papers presented at an international symposium on the preservation of religious textiles held at The Hague, Netherlands, in 2005 discussed several issues raised by the reuse and remodelling of historic church textiles (Kipp & Albers, 2006). For example, Marike van Roon discussed what to modern eyes might appear to be vandalism in her analysis of the

‘recycling’ of usable parts of old and worn vestments in the nineteenth century. Van Roon contends that while preserving the functionality of contemporary vestments triumphed over the conservation or restoration of their historical significance, the work of such groups as the *Paramentenverein*, in late nineteenth-century Germany, has preserved much of what would have been lost if old and damaged items were simply disposed of or destroyed (van Roon, 2006, pp. 119-123). The German *Paramentenverein* are groups of women who, to this day, repair and maintain old vestments and manufacture new textiles for their local churches. The Embroidery Guild and Broderers Guild carry out a similar service in English and Australian cathedrals and churches (Ashworth, 2016; A stitch in time, 2013).

7.1.2 Threats in the present

Over the past two decades or so there has been growing interest, not to say concern, within the wider Catholic community over the fate of its own movable heritage. In his opening address at a 1997 symposium on the threats facing the heritage of Christian churches in Ireland, the Most Reverend Archbishop Francesco Marchisano, then president of the *Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church*, summarised the importance of ecclesiastical heritage to the Church and to the wider world ...

... This indeed is a very special event since we are all here with one major purpose: to declare openly our concern and our love for cultural heritage which has so highly contributed to the very concept of national heritage as well as the heritage of mankind; that heritage which has been produced by Church and religious communities throughout the centuries. (Marchisano, 1997, p. 19)

Speakers at the symposium identified many threats to their church heritage, including the natural ageing and decay of buildings, damage due to vandalism, theft of artefacts and the sale of closed churches and convents and subsequent dispersal of their contents.

Dispersal

The problems outlined above are not confined to Ireland. In many parts of Europe, the USA and Australia, Christian churches and chapels are being sold as attendances fall and congregations shrink (Akehurst, 2013). Similarly, dwindling religious communities are closing their convents, monasteries and abbeys and moving into smaller houses. Fittings and

furnishings that cannot be re-located are being dispersed, often sold to private buyers, and the buildings converted to secular use or bulldozed to make way for re-development (Gilmartin, 1997; Oddie, 2012).

In 2013 Laurel Kendall and a group of Vietnamese researchers published the results of an investigation into the sale of antique Catholic religious statues on the secular antiquities, antiques and ‘fine arts’ markets (Kendall, et al., 2013). Concerns had been raised about the provenance of the statues and the way in which they had reached the markets. The statues suddenly appeared in large numbers in the 1990s in local shops that usually dealt in high end folk art and souvenirs and just as suddenly disappeared some years later. The investigation revealed that many of the statues were genuine religious works of art originally commissioned by local churches. In the 1990s a large number of Catholic churches were rebuilt and the old fittings and furnishings went into storage. It was these storerooms that furnished economically astute arts dealers with a ready source of saleable artefacts. Kendall and her team concluded that the dealers had not acted illegally but had exploited sellers’ naivety and different values system –

... The rural Catholics who shared their experiences with us had their own largely religious and generally well-intentioned motivations for agreeing to sell their statues. (Kendall, et al., 2013, p. 76)

Christian churches are not immune from a growing global market for looted and stolen religious artefacts. Small, portable and highly decorated objects, including textiles, statues and carvings, paintings and objects such as candlesticks and chalices of precious metals are particular targets (Armindo, 2010; Thornes, 1997). This takes place even in those countries where ‘state’ Christian churches are operating (Tsivolas, 2014).

7.1.3 Threats in the future

As guaranteed government support or resourcing of conservation programmes for unofficial and community heritage has decreased, churches and local communities have taken on the monumental task of managing and preserving what they can of centuries of accumulated heritage. The fate of ecclesiastical collections housed in archives is, however, less clear. In 2015 Francis Gabara published the findings of research into the management of religious archives in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He found that much of the region’s and nation’s

history and heritage is recorded in religious archives. Gabara's research revealed that individual archive records were often incomplete, that there were no common management protocols in place across a range of institutions, and that no central archive existed. He concluded that:

...This incompleteness threatens the corporate memory of these institutions. ... [There is an] urgent need for archivists within these establishments to adopt a proactive stance in order to ensure that records should not only be properly managed for business continuity but that a healthy and complete record should be transferred to the repository for the benefit of posterity. (Gabara, 2015, p. 1)

Gabara's findings mirror those of Kim Eberhard, an archivist who has worked with several Australian religious institutions. In a paper presented at the national conference of the Australian Society of Archivists in 2013, Eberhard succinctly outlined the important place that diocesan and religious community archives play in the documentation of the history of the churches in Australia and their significance more broadly for the history of the nation. She foreshadowed the potential loss of significant and largely unknown research resources, citing key issues impacting on the development of effective management policies. These issues included the lack of a centralised record of collections, little published information about the content and potential significance of collections, and the need for succession planning.

... It is highly likely that the custodians of these collections are aware of the significance of the material to their own orders; less is known about the potential significance of individual items, whole collections or the collections as a whole. ... In 10–20 years' time, it is unlikely that the current personnel and ministries (activities) will exist, meaning that the [religious] orders need to either accept that the activity will end or take steps to ensure that non-religious will take up the work. (Eberhard, 2013, p. 5)

While much of the published work cites overseas experiences, there are indications that ecclesiastical heritage in Australia faces similar challenges as congregations decline, churches and religious institutions amalgamate or close and movable heritage is shifted

around. For example, Christopher Akehurst in an article chronicling the decline of congregations and subsequent closure of many Anglican and other Protestant churches in Melbourne, mourned the loss of a significant presence in the life of their communities and the dispersal of once-valued heritage.

... When a church is demolished, a local landmark disappears. ... the suburban church with its choir and tennis club, its weddings and funerals, and its accumulation of local memories enshrined in honour rolls, memorial plaques and stained-glass windows. ... in most cases the church is stripped and emptied before sale. When possible the more valuable contents and fittings such as organs and glass are moved to other churches, though that can't go on forever. Already much is abandoned or bought by second-hand dealers. You can find lecterns, pews, candlesticks and vestments in antiques shops and "collectibles" markets in every part of the country. (Akehurst, 2013)

7.1.4 Inherent vice: threats from within

Textiles are materially vulnerable artefacts due to inherent vice in the materials used in their construction and manufacture. Inherent vice, or inherent fault, is the tendency for an object or material to deteriorate or self-destruct due to intrinsic internal characteristics. In the case of textiles this refers to the natural and spontaneous chemical reactions of fibres, and decorative materials such as dyes, metals and leather, to heat, light, humidity, and exposure to chemicals (for example air pollutants) (Michalski, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). Textiles incorporating natural fibres such as wool, cotton, linen and silk, are also targets for biological attack because the cellulose or protein-based structures of these fibres are food sources for various insects and moulds (Strang & Kigawa, 2013) (figure 106). Mixed media artefacts are particularly fragile as chemical reactions between the fibres and decorative elements, especially metals, can accelerate the rates of decay and decomposition (Jakes & Howard, 1986; Timar-Balazsy & Eastop, 1998).



Figure 106: Damage due to inherent vice.

Insect damage (left), colour run from water exposure (centre), and fading from exposure to light (right).

(Images by author, 2013)

Custodians of the collections in the survey are well aware of the inherent vice in textiles ...

... The main challenge is the deterioration of some of the textiles, especially silk and the cost of restoration. (Religious archivist F, questionnaire response)

... Textiles require particular storage conditions - moisture, dust, staining, insect infestations, other contaminants etc. are ongoing concerns. (Diocesan Archivist I, questionnaire response)

... Keeping the items in good order for future generations to share in the history of our establishment. (Diocesan Archivist M, questionnaire response)

The mixed media components of many historically significant ecclesiastical textiles, particularly the use of metallic threads and elements in the goldwork embroidery popular in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, offer conservation challenges which require the attention of skilled textiles conservators. This is a major economic consideration when allocating limited resources to preservation tasks. The conservation and preservation of the materiality of textiles in general has been the subject of research, mainly overseas, for many decades. Advances in analytical techniques and a deeper understanding of inherent vice in textiles have led to the development of less invasive and destructive assessment and treatment protocols: a regular topic at textile conservation conferences and seminars. It is

interesting to note that ecclesiastical textiles have often been the ‘guinea pigs’ for such research. For example, seventeenth-century ecclesiastical textiles from South America were the focus objects for a study into the composition, manufacture and deterioration of metal threads from colonial times in the Andes (Muros et al., 2007) and six case studies of materials analysis and restoration protocols involving ecclesiastical textiles were included in *The Conservation of Tapestries and Embroideries* published by the Getty Conservation Institute (Grimstad, 1989). Until the publication of three landmark papers focussing on the significance assessment and conservation of items from the *Spanish Collection* at the New Norcia Benedictine Community, Western Australia, research into the preservation and conservation of ecclesiastical textiles in Australia had been absent from heritage studies literature (MacLeod & Car, 2014a, 2014c, 2016). On a more practical level, as part of an on-going whole site heritage conservation programme, the New Norcia Benedictine Community has developed a purpose-built storage facility and exhibition centre to house their large textile collection (Eberle, 2013).

7.1.5 A paradox: living heritage as a threat

Perhaps a more surprising ‘threat’ to Catholic heritage has, at times, come from within the Church. Catholic heritage is living heritage, and by that very definition, is subject to change. Brian Andrews, in a presentation to a national conference on the heritage conservation of religious property at Parramatta in 1995, summarised the Catholic Church’s long history of internal threats to its movable heritage.

... The ongoing evolution of church interiors is a complex mixture of doctrinal, liturgical and ecclesiological imperatives overlaid by the fickleness of taste. Every generation believes that it has discovered the philosopher’s stone of liturgical correctness along with the accompanying nature and disposition of movable objects required for its expression. ... one generation’s justification for the sweeping away of objects and the re-arrangement of interiors to create the ultimate worship space will inevitably be seen by the succeeding generation as just another passing fashion. (Andrews, 2000, pp. 95-96)

Andrews detailed several instances in Australia where changing fashions and personal preferences led to the removal and/or destruction of significant historical ecclesiastical

artefacts. He emphasised that these acts were not always due to doctrinal, liturgical or theological reforms and were often the result of personal taste and prevailing fashion. For example the spread of Gothic Revival architecture in Australia in the nineteenth century was due in large part to the influence of English architect and designer Augustus Pugin, who in his own way was a 'threat' to centuries of living Catholic heritage.

... Pugin condemned [Renaissance and Baroque] churches and their furnishings, launching a revival of Gothic which mercilessly swept away the accumulated movable cultural heritage of centuries, insofar as it departed from the imagined medieval ideal. (Andrews, 2000, p. 94)

Pugin's crusade to return Christian art and architecture to what he believed to be its true ideal form, that is his interpretation of medieval Gothic, was taken up by pioneering bishops such as Robert Willson in Hobart and John Bede Polding in Sydney. While Gothic Revival was the predominant style of Catholic ecclesiastical architecture in nineteenth-century Australia, its influence did not continue on into the twentieth century. In a research paper published in 2016 John East discussed the influence of the Romanesque style on ecclesiastical and civic architecture, particularly from 1900 onwards, and concluded that once again it was 'fashion' and personal tastes that dictated what was built. The Romanesque style, like the Gothic Revival, had its roots in medieval times but referenced the semi-circular arches, round windows, flat gabled facades and square bell towers typical of English Norman churches, the medieval architecture of Northern Italy and elements of the Byzantine. East notes that the emergence of cheaper brick as the building material of choice at the end of the nineteenth century also played a part in the rise of the Romanesque and its variants. Round Romanesque arches were much easier to build in brick than pointed Gothic, and polychrome banded brickwork replaced elaborate stone carving as a decorative feature. Interestingly the architects who designed and built Australia's Romanesque churches did not extend their work, as Pugin did, to include interiors, furnishings and liturgical requisites.

... The Australian Romanesque is a style of façades. There is no such thing as an Australian Romanesque interior. The interiors of Romanesque buildings in Australia reflect the requirements and fashions of the time. The architects who adopted the Romanesque never attempted to recreate the gloomy and cavernous interiors of medieval Romanesque churches. (East, 2016, p. 8)

Just as the massive simplicity of the Romanesque challenged the soaring majesty of Gothic Revival on the architecture stage, Pugin's Gothic Revival vesture was under attack from the late nineteenth-century Liturgical Movement. The Liturgical Movement's emphasis on congregational involvement and the move away from ostentatious display was at odds with the elaborate decoration and grandeur of its Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque predecessors. Andrews contends that

... The twentieth-century Liturgical Movement had a profound impact on movable cultural heritage. And while it has resulted in many superb contemporary churches and interiors it has also been the vehicle for irreparable damage to significant objects. This is particularly evident in Australia. ... In 1958 Archbishop Guilford Young, a pioneer of the Liturgical Movement, re-ordered St Mary's Cathedral, in Hobart. All that remained of Henry Hunter's superb [Neo-Gothic] High Altar ... was the exposition throne canopy¹⁰⁷. (Andrews, 2000, p. 95)

Help is on the way

Concerns such as those raised by Andrews, Akehurst, Marchisano, Gabara and Eberhard are being addressed in a variety of ways around the world. For example, the recently developed *BeWeB* portal is a searchable on-line database of Italy's ecclesiastical heritage compiled from surveys of Catholic cultural institutes, churches, chapels, and archival holdings (Russo, 2014). The programme is being co-ordinated by the Italian Bishops' Conference National Office for Ecclesiastical Cultural Heritage. According to the *BeWeB* website, details of over 4,000,000 historic and artistic artefacts and 1,800,000 books have been added to the database to date (Historic and artistic heritage, 2018). It is hoped that the portal will bring the Church's heritage to broader, non-specialist audiences, at the same time maintaining links to researchers in more traditional fields such as theology and liturgical studies. To facilitate access to the database, *BeWeB* has been designed to interact with the information systems of major public authorities including the Registry of Italian Libraries, the Material Evidence of Incunabula database for fifteenth-century printed works coordinated by the Consortium of

¹⁰⁷ The throne of exposition is a small platform with a canopy (unless the altar has one), erected above the altar upon which the monstrance is placed, (Anson, 1948) p97. The monstrance was placed on the platform during the liturgical rite known as the *Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*. An article by Father Herbert Thurston SJ explaining the history and conditions of this rite can be found in The Catholic Encyclopedia (1912) at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05713a.htm>

European Research Libraries (CERL), and the Places of Culture database set up by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (MiBACT) (About BeWeB, 2018).

On a smaller scale the Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (DBK, Bishops' Conference of Germany) initiated an inventory programme in the 1990s (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, 1991).

Unfortunately, good intentions do not always make for a successful programme. Lacking vision and an overall plan, individual diocesan programmes were hampered by a lack of understanding of the process, an under-appreciation of the size and diversity of patrimony collections in churches, and a shortage of trained staff. Textile conservators, in particular, identified several issues with the inventorying of vestments. Areas of concern included the absence of a consistent vocabulary, poor documentation records, and the sheer size of collections – particularly of nineteenth and twentieth-century items (Vroon, 2005). A lack of published information on the history and significance of vestments made it difficult to decide what to keep and how to dispose of surplus or unwanted items, as did the potential costs of preservation, conservation and restoration. A group of conservators eventually published a checklist to assist parishes in inventorying their textile heritage (Vroon, 2005). The checklist was divided into sections addressing identification, materials, construction, provenance, and significance. An illustrated glossary based on collections in Cologne and Aachen was included in order to reduce confusion, aid identification and recording, and ultimately make the comparison of collections easier. Several countries have published 'national' guidelines to assist parishes dealing with the contents of closed churches, a particularly sensitive issue given the relationships that may have evolved with the local community. For example, in the United Kingdom the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) has issued a memorandum on the disposal of objects from churches in accordance with Vatican documents originally circulated in 1971, while the state supported Cartharijneconvent Museum in Utrecht, Netherlands, has published guidelines for dealing with religious objects, including textiles, removed from churches that are closing (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2016; de Beyer & Takke, 2012). Interestingly the Netherlands guidelines specifically deal with the *disposal* of religious artefacts, an issue that is rarely, if ever, addressed in similar documents from other countries.

In Australia, the development of conservation and management policies for the Catholic Church's built and movable heritage is the responsibility of the National Liturgical

Architecture and Art Board, established by the Australian Bishops Conference¹⁰⁸. Recently a paper outlining the case for a national policy for the management of ecclesiastical cultural patrimony was presented to the Board (Cross, 2015). While this proposal was being considered the Vatican's guidelines and regulations on the care of patrimony as outlined in Chapter 6 remained in force. The management of ecclesiastical textiles and other material heritage in Australian religious collections remained the responsibility of individual churches and communities while a national policy was developed. In early 2019 the Board published *Fit for Sacred Use: Stewardship and renewal of places of worship*, a set of guidelines

... [which] seek to ensure that damage is not done to the heritage value of our churches during any work undertaken to make them fit for sacred use. (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2019)

At the same time the Board launched *Cultura* – a digital catalogue of Church-owned items including buildings, sacred vessels, vestments, sacred books, pieces of furniture and altars.

Today, local church communities are more likely to voice their opposition to the secularisation and commodification of their religious heritage. The public auction of the contents of St Augustine's Abbey in Ramsgate, England, in 2012 stirred up an intense debate over the legal ownership and right of disposal of church requisites (Blake, 2012; Oddie, 2012). To counter such concerns, and offer an alternative to sales to secular bodies, religious authorities in some countries have instigated relocation programmes. Such programmes match surplus artefacts from closed churches with the needs of new churches, often in developing countries. For example, when the Allerton and Cleveland dioceses in the USA amalgamated parishes and closed several churches in the early 2000s, arrangements were put in place to disperse surplus religious and sacred artefacts to other churches: no private sales were permitted (Eidemiller, 2012). Similar programmes have been in operation for many years in cities such as Philadelphia and Chicago (Anna, 2006). A programme operating in the Netherlands organises the transfer and transport of items from closed Catholic and Protestant churches to new churches in other parts of the world (Heneghan, 2012).

¹⁰⁸ The Board serves the liturgical life the Catholic Church in Australia and its mission by providing advice about: (a) the architectural design of new and reordered churches. (b) the contribution of the sacred and liturgical arts to churches and the sacred liturgy, and (c) the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Church as pertains to churches and the sacred and liturgical arts. <https://www.catholic.org.au/advisory-bodies/national-liturgical-architecture-a-art-board>

Several survey respondents recounted personal stories of the impact of Vatican II reforms on the textile heritage of many local churches. One archivist recalled ‘obsolete’ vestments being given to local dressmakers, including his mother, to be unpicked and sent onto a local convent for the resident nuns to recycle. Another described the burning of worn out albs and commented that today the lace, at least, would be salvaged and possibly re-used. A third archivist noted that in the 1980s a group of concerned parishioners, following the closure of their church, had rescued several vestments destined for disposal. These were then donated to their diocesan archives. The same archivist noted that today it is more likely that a church closure automatically triggers an assessment and possible inclusion of its textile heritage into the diocesan heritage collection, a sentiment echoed in the following survey responses –

... Any vestments valued by Catholic communities and considered to have historical, heritage, association or design features of interest are added with relevant details ... (Diocesan Archivist A, questionnaire response)

... We accept items that have a meaning to our establishment and its history, these items may be passed down from within or from family members and friends. We don’t purchase or seek out items for our collection ...
(Diocesan Archivist M, questionnaire response)

... If an interesting textile or garment is discovered in closing of any convent, they are assessed for addition to the collection ... (Religious Archivist E, questionnaire response)

7.2 Management issues in the surveyed collections

The care, maintenance, repair and, ultimately, the conservation and preservation of heritage ecclesiastical textiles of the Catholic Church in Australia has been and remains the responsibility of each collection site. Custodians who responded to questions about the care of their textile collections understood the special place textiles hold as part of the Church’s movable heritage and recognised the importance of good management practice. It should be noted, however, that those responsible for the maintenance of historical collections, including those working with major collections at the New Norcia Benedictine Community and the Historical Commissions set up by the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Ballarat, do not work exclusively with textiles. In actual fact, in the surveyed collections dealing with

textiles was only a small part of the archivist's or custodian's work. Responses to the survey questionnaire and interview questions revealed that the conservation challenges facing custodians of ecclesiastical textile collections mirror those of secular collection managers. The tangible-intangible duality of heritage ecclesiastical textiles presents diverse management challenges to their custodians. Survey respondents and interviewees identified a range of heritage issues specific to the management of the textiles in their care. Issues identified included the assessment of significance, adding or removing textiles from collections, recording and cataloguing the textiles, storage, routine maintenance, repair and restoration and/or preservation, controlling access, and supporting education and community programmes. The fact that so much textile heritage remains in good condition is a testament to the dedication of custodial staff working within tight time, staffing, resourcing and budget constraints.

7.2.1 Building a collection

Large public museums operate under formal accessioning and deaccessioning policies and this would be the case with the ecclesiastical textiles housed in the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and the National Gallery of Australia (NGA). Information from the on-line catalogue of the NGV indicates that textiles with ecclesiastical connections are part of the gallery's International Fashion and Textiles Collection and were therefore most likely collected as examples of particular art historical styles and not for their religious or spiritual significance. Several pieces, including an eighteenth-century dalmatic and a seventeenth-century lace alb neck piece were purchased through the Felton Bequest, a trust fund set up under the will of Melbourne businessman and philanthropist Alfred Felton that has enabled the NGV to purchase many thousands of artistic works since 1904 (Poyner, 1972). The survey respondent from the NGV commented that [the NGV] continues to "... collect textiles by contemporary as well as historical artists and makers" (via email). The ecclesiastical textiles in the NGA are in the gallery's Textile Reference Collection, again most likely purchased for their representative features and educational potential. Four items that are recognisably ecclesiastical were purchased from a dealer as examples of eighteenth-century fabrics and not for their ecclesiastical function or religious/spiritual significance. It is interesting to note that much of the medieval and Renaissance art housed in secular art galleries is religious in origin, even though it has not been collected for its spiritual or religious significance. For example, the on-line catalogue of the National Gallery of

Australia lists several European works dating from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries including paintings, statues, altar pieces and illuminated manuscript pages originally housed in churches and other religious buildings. While some of the catalogue descriptions include information about the provenance and function of the objects, there is also much about the techniques employed by the artists and the place of the objects in the history of art. It is apparent that the original sacred significance of these objects has not survived their change of context and they are now valued differently by their current owners.

Textiles housed in diocesan and religious community collections are, however, chosen primarily for their religious or spiritual significance and for their connections with individuals or groups important to their religious communities. This is a key point of difference between ecclesiastical textile collections in state funded museums and those housed and managed within religious communities. The surveyed diocesan archives and religious communities, with perhaps the exception of the Goold Catholic Museum, do not operate as museums and do not have formalised accession policies because they are seen as repositories for the cultural legacies and memories of their members. The Goold Catholic Museum

... is managed by the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, whose brief is to collect, house and provide public access to material relating to the history of the [Catholic] Church in Victoria. The Collection comprises liturgical objects, vestments, artefacts, furniture, documents, artworks, statues and personal memorabilia. (Goold Catholic Museum, n.d.)

Several respondents commented on the challenges of dealing with textiles and other artefacts in the context of an archives rather than a museum, particularly when the administrative hierarchy did not necessarily value the Church's textile heritage in the same way. Some administrators appeared to view the management of such items as not a part of archivists' duties.

... depending on the vagaries of authorities some of these textiles could be lost any day ... (Diocesan Archivist A, questionnaire response)

... my superiors often remind me that this is an archives not a museum but I am not about to dispose of any of these items ... (Diocesan Archivist J, questionnaire response)

... The main issue is to have someone responsible for this collection. Although as archivist, I keep an eye on it, it is not my responsibility ... (Diocesan Archivist R, questionnaire response)

It should be noted that many diocesan archives may not store much of the textile heritage associated with their bishops. Such textiles, particularly vestments, are often stored in cathedral vestries and cared for by a sacristan rather than an archivist.

Diocesan archive collections are open collections and continue to accept textiles. Respondents reported that the majority of new acquisitions came into collections when a church closed or via deceased clergy's estates. A few were gifts or donations from local families or parishioners. The following responses to questions about acquisitions are typical

... mainly garments and other textiles are being accessioned from churches closing. (Diocesan Archivist B, questionnaire response)

... Clergy vestments of particular importance and significance are added on a regular basis. (Diocesan Archivist C, questionnaire response)

... we continue the ethos of collecting as much as possible. ... Modern clergy clothing often left to us when priest dies (Diocesan Archivist H, questionnaire response)

This last response echoed the experience of a diocesan archivist who apologised for the delay in replying to the survey as he had been very busy dealing with the donation of two deceased clergy estates that totalled twenty boxes. The same archivist is in regular contact with local parishes and advises on the safe storage and care of many significant textiles. Gifted textiles identified in the survey included a stole hand-painted by Mary Glowrey and cared for by the Ballarat Diocesan Archives, and the uniform of a papal knight recently donated to the Perth Archdiocesan Archives (see chapters 6 and 5 respectively). A set of ornately beaded and sequinned vestments, believed to have been ordered for the use of Pope Paul VI during the

40th Eucharistic Congress held in Melbourne in 1973, was donated to the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission in 2000 (see figure 88). The beaded chasuble's claimed connection to the Congress is supported by the similarity of its central design motif to the official congress logo (figure 107).



Figure 107: Official logo of the 40th Eucharistic Congress. Melbourne, 1973.

Motif embroidered onto chasuble (left) and Vatican postage stamp commemorating the 40th Eucharistic Congress (right).

(Sources: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016 (left) and Private Collection, 2018 (right), used with permission)

Responses from convent archivists indicate that the majority of convent collections are closed to new acquisitions and only accept items with close connections to the community.

... There is no historical reason to add to our collection. Modern vestments can be found easily in parish churches. (Religious archivist F, questionnaire response)

... Ecclesiastical textiles were bought and donated to the Sisters for liturgical purposes in their chapel. Since Vatican II elaborate vestments are no longer used but have been preserved in the archives as a record of the past liturgical practices and for their artistic significance. (Religious archivist O, questionnaire response)

The heritage and historical textiles at St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar, New South Wales, is an interesting example of a collection held by a religious community as the textiles are housed partly in the private archives of the convent and partly in a public gallery. While the

majority of textiles are carefully stored in the convent proper, a small number of items of particular significance to the community are displayed in an exhibition space attached to the Tenison-Woods Education Centre¹⁰⁹. The display includes items made by the sisters for community use and historic artefacts associated with the foundation of the convent . Included in the gallery exhibition is a much worn cassock (soutane) belonging to Fr Julian Tenison-Woods co-founder, with Saint Mary of the Cross McKillop, of the Sisters of St Joseph (figure 108).



Figure 108: Portrait of Fr Julian Tenison Woods.

Fr Woods was photographed wearing a fascia (fringed waist sash), a cloak over his caped cassock, and a biretta on his head. The crucifix around his neck and the rosary suspended from the fascia indicate that he belongs to a monastic order.

(Source: Sisters of St Joseph Convent, Lochinvar, NSW, 2016, used with permission)

The story behind the donation of this historically significant cassock is recorded in the archives' catalogue of the Tenison-Woods Collection.

¹⁰⁹ Fr Julian Tenison-Woods (1832-1889), was an esteemed preacher and missionary; he was a dedicated priest, an outstanding though stubborn and individualistic religious leader and an advanced educator. Tenison-Woods was recognised in the secular world for his scholarly writings on Australian geology, palaeontology and zoology. He was a member of several prestigious societies including the Royal Asiatic Society, the Geological Society of London, the Linnaean Society of London, the Royal Societies of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania and the Adelaide Philosophical (Royal) Society. (Borchardt, 1976)

... Item 20009.22.71 *Soutane worn by Father Woods* – This soutane was worn by Father Woods till his death in 1889 on 7th October. He was clothed in a Passionist habit [the Order is formally known as the Congregation of the Passion] for his burial so Sr Mary John Dowling¹¹⁰ sent the soutane to Sr Mary Ambrose Joseph at Lochinvar along with other memorabilia from Father Woods' life.

The convent archivist also noted that albs and surplices made by the sisters for family members were often gifted back to the archives. Such donations are catalogued in the archives and offer intriguing glimpses into the daily life of the sisters. The catalogue entries below are typical.

... A 2000.23.1.12 *Surplice made by Sister Mary Ambrose Joseph Dirkin*. [Made for] her nephew Monsignor Leonard (Sydney diocesan priest) ordained in 1929 who later worked in Summer Hill where Lochinvar Sisters of St Joseph had a convent and school. Given back by Mgr. Leonard to the sisters in centenary year 1983 after one of the celebrations (he took it off and handed it to the sacristan). Laundry mark "Rev. J.F. Leonard". White linen with tie at neck; crochet (handmade) hem, square neck. . When Sister Mary Ambrose Joseph made this surplice she was with the Sisters of St Joseph in Tasmania having transferred there from Lochinvar in 1895.

... A 2009.23.7.12 *Surplice*. White linen garment with homemade sleeve attachment of Irish crochet and hem with larger attachment of same. Crocheted by Sr Denis Ayres RSJ for Fr Leo Driscoll, Maitland Diocese priest for his ordination 30/7/1955 at Hamilton, Newcastle. Given to Archives by Sr Mary de Porres Driscoll RSJ, sister of Fr Leo in 2013. Fr Leo Driscoll died in 1987.

All respondents admitted that finding sufficient and suitable storage space for textiles was a challenge, but few mentioned the option of downsizing the collections. The disposal of items

¹¹⁰ Sr Mary John Dowling, (born Juliana Dowling) was one of a group of pious women who cared for Fr Tenison-Woods during his last years as an invalid at Surrey in Sydney. Sr Mary John entered the Sisters of St Joseph Convent at Perthville near Bathurst in 1880 and died at Lochinvar Convent in 1922. Information from the Sisters of St Joseph website: <http://www.ssjl.org.au/news-events/anniversaries/sr-m-john-dowling/>

seems to occur only when a collection is being moved due to the closure of a church or convent or the re-location of an archives. Custodians understand the cultural significance of their items and surplus textiles are re-used or re-cycled as much as possible – a course of action referenced in the following comments:

... The collection is being downsized [due to a convent closure]. The copes have been given to certain priests and bishops to use. The other good liturgical cloths have been given to religious women who will use them to make new liturgical garments. (Religious archivist U, questionnaire response)

... In the past the fabrics of some chasubles has been replaced, while keeping the decorative orphreys etc. so that the vestments still have a role in the liturgical life of the parish. (Religious archivist P, questionnaire response)

... I try to encourage parishes to keep a full set of old style Roman vestments if they have them. There is limited space in the Archives for these items. (Diocesan Archivist J, questionnaire response)

7.2.2 Recording and cataloguing

Respondents recognised the importance of knowing what was in collections and recording the stories and significance of items. Questionnaire responses revealed a range of solutions to the challenges of recording the stories behind the surveyed textiles. Custodians acknowledged the invaluable work of the dedicated volunteers who assist with the ongoing and time consuming process of recording and cataloguing of collections.

... We are in the process of photographing and cataloguing all material objects of the diocese. (Diocesan Archivist H, questionnaire response)

... All items were inventoried very generally as they came into the collection. The problem has been that they came in in bulk and usually with general descriptions like Northwest or Derby or Subiaco. (Religious Archivist U, questionnaire response)

Several convent collections have been photographed and their particulars entered into databases. The substantial inventory of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission is recorded in photographs, and cross-referenced catalogues. As previously mentioned, many archive catalogue entries, particularly those of convent collections, include personal stories and community connections. For example, the catalogue entries of the St Joseph's Convent, Lochinvar archives include a description and location for each textile as well as details about the maker of item, where it was purchased, who wore it, what it was used for and personal anecdotes. Even the humblest, everyday items such as tablecloths, and personal items of clothing may have their stories recorded. The following entries are typical of the historical and touchingly personal community information provided in this catalogue.

... A 2000.23.1.14 *Alb crocheted by Sister Mary Denis Ayers*. White linen alb with linen top and Irish crochet deep hem; long sleeves with Irish crochet inserts over black material. Sister Mary Denis who entered the convent in 1940 and died in 2003, was an expert at doing Irish crochet. She would see a crochet doyley in a pattern she liked and then return to the convent and make the item herself. White linen top 66cm' Irish Crochet 66cm; sleeve length 40cm; crochet on sleeve cuff 14cm.

A 2009.23.7.10 *Bedspread marked for Miss Sullivan's use*. White floral shamrock leaves and white embroidery stitching. Laundry mark in black ink "Miss Sullivan 1929". Miss Sullivan's room was in the western verandah outside St Anne's Dormitory. She came from Melbourne to teach in the Secondary School. During a trip to Victoria on one of the school holidays Miss Sullivan was drowned.

A 2009.23.3.33 *Two doileys made by the Sisters*. Used around the Convent under vases of flowers. Some doileys made by the Srs were given to benefactors or sold at fetes. Srs crocheted and tatted doileys as handwork at recreation and some spiritual reading sessions.

Custodians also strive to document provenance, so it is not surprising that many archives also hold a diverse, though not necessarily easily accessible, range of supporting documentary evidence of the acquisition and use of textiles in their care. Personal letters, media reports,

church requisite catalogues, accounts and receipts, labels, photographs and personal recollections contribute to the stories behind the surveyed textile collections. Respondents identified sources of documentation through comments such as -

... Newspaper article found in the *Catholic Weekly* (Sydney NSW: Thursday 18 October, 1945, page 9. This article mentions the precious vestments. (Religious Archivist F, questionnaire response)

... Advertisements and purchase orders seeking permission from the Bishop to order vestments. (Diocesan Archivist Q, questionnaire response)

... Letters regarding the design of vestments written by Monsignor Hawes. (Diocesan Archivist D, questionnaire response)

... Correspondence, newspaper articles and photographs. These bring out the history, help date the objects and/or events that they were used or worn. (Diocesan Archivist M, questionnaire response)

... Occasional mention in correspondence/school magazines, particularly if items were gifted. (Religious Archivist O, questionnaire response)

The search for information about the *Archangel Michael* vestments mentioned in Chapter 6 revealed a diverse range of documentation scattered across the world that highlighted the intriguing web of threads that exist between different collections. Firstly, the manufacturer's label inside the chasuble identified it as a product of the Stadelmaier Company, makers of fine vestments in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, which operated from 1930 until 2010. Secondly, when the company closed its doors for the last time and a large collection of the company's textile heritage was sent to the Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, the company archives were fortuitously lodged with the *Katholiek Documentatie Centrum [KDC]* (Catholic Documentation Centre for the Netherlands). The KDC archivist was able to locate and provide a copy of the original designs for the chasuble and additional documentation that identified the designer. Thirdly, the KDC archivist sent a copy of an Australian newspaper article from 1964 that mentioned the *St Michael* vestments along with information about orders made by other Australian churches for Stadelmaier vestments. Fifthly, during the

course of ongoing correspondence with the Museum Catharijneconvent and the KDC I was unexpectedly contacted by Bernard (Ben) Stadelmaier who had been contacted by the Museum curator. Mr Stadelmaier, now in his eighties and sadly not in good health, graciously shared further information and personal recollections of the family business. He also provided several trade catalogues and a number of magazine articles mentioning the company and its significant place in the history of post-Vatican II vesture. Sixthly, three survey respondents later confirmed the Stadelmaier vestments mentioned in the KDC correspondence were still in use. Interestingly, these included a set of 1970s vestments held by the Marist Fathers in New South Wales: the community that cares for Cardinal Fesch's vestments held at St Patrick's, Church Hill, Sydney (see Chapter 6). Two more sets are held in the Hobart Diocesan Archives and a fourth chasuble, in black and featuring a rising phoenix, was accessioned into the collection of the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission from the Sacred Heart Chapel at Corpus Christi Seminary, Carlton, in 1997.

While manufacturers' labels provide important clues to the source of ecclesiastical textiles, it is the 'extra' labels and annotations which add to their stories. Two textiles, a cope held in the Diocesan Archives, Sale and a remarkable set of vestments belonging to Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne include embroidered details of their connections to historical events. The cope in the Diocese of Sale Archives is of white damask woven in a unique design featuring the arms of Pope Paul VI. The embroidered label reads:

THIS COPE WAS WORN BY BISHOP LYONS
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE
2ND VATICAN COUNCIL (1965)
THE VATICAN GIFTED EVERY BISHOP
WHO ATTENDED WITH MATCHING COPE
FOR THE SESSION.

It is likely that as Bishop Lyons was not the only Australian bishop present at the above event, other diocesan archives hold further examples of this cope. Embroidered inscriptions also tell the story of an elaborate set of vestments presented to Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne by the Maynooth Union¹¹¹ on the occasion of his Episcopal Golden Jubilee in 1962. Archbishop Mannix was a graduate of St Patrick's College, Maynooth, the National Catholic Seminary, in Ireland. The design of inter-twined shamrocks includes the arms of

¹¹¹ ...“The Maynooth Union was founded on the 27th of June, 1895, at a meeting held during the Centenary Celebration of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. The object of the Union is to foster a spirit of mutual sympathy between the College and its past students and friends.” <http://seminary.maynoothcollege.ie/maynooth-union-3/> The presentation took place just over a year before Archbishop Mannix died, four months short of his 100th birthday, in November 1963.

Austria, Bavaria and Lorraine. Embroidered inscriptions on the lining of the chasuble record the donor and provenance of the vestments (figure 109).



Figure 109: The Golden Jubilee chasuble of Archbishop Daniel Mannix (left) and the inscription inside (right). (Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The original vestments were presented to the chapel at Maynooth College by the Empress Elisabeth of Austria as a thank you gift following an accidental visit to the college in 1879¹¹². The fact that Mannix was presented with a replica of these significant and historic vestments is testament to the high esteem in which he was held. Archbishop Mannix wore the vestments for the celebration of his final Mass on October 6th, 1962, the same day as the opening Mass of the Second Vatican Council in Rome (Griffin, 1986). The documentary evidence accompanying the Lochinvar Convent collection, the Stadelmaier vestments, Bishop Lyons' cope and Archbishop Mannix's *Maynooth* vestments demonstrate the important role that the interlinked local, national and international Catholic community and their records play in piecing together the cultural significance and heritage values embodied in the Church's Australian ecclesiastical textile collections.

The *Maynooth* chasuble, however, is not the only textile in the MDHC collection bearing armorials that hint at the historical significance of an item. The chasuble belonging to a set of

¹¹² In 1879 the Empress was on a private visit to hunt in Meath and Kildare. On this particular day the hunt was pursuing a stag which fled into the college grounds, closely followed by the empress and the rest of the hunt. ...When she dismounted the Vice-President (Dr William Walsh) paid his respects and invited her to take refreshment. He proffered his cloak [riding has left her soaking wet], which she accepted. After she returned to Austria she sent a set of cloth-of-gold vestments decorated with shamrocks in green silk and bearing the arms of Austria, Bavaria and Lorraine under the cross on the front of the chasuble. On the lining are embroidered in green and gold the name Elisabeth and the date 1880 ... (Connolly, 1998)

Baroque style, goldwork vestments presented by Pope Leo XIII to the Archdiocese of Melbourne on the occasion of the consecration of St Patrick's Cathedral in 1897 features the papal arms (figure 110). The catalogue entry describes the decoration –

... Ivory silk woven with gilt thread, embroidery of gilt metal threads, lace and braid. The decoration arranged in vertical fields with foliate rinceau¹¹³ scrolls incorporating vine motifs. Low on centre back panel, the Arms of Pope Leo XIII embroidered in polychrome threads on deep blue silk ground, below the Papal Tiara. Ivory silk lining. (Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission: 1997 catalogue, item 85, ID No: 10/00326).



Figure 110: Chasuble featuring papal arms of Pope Leo XIII, c1897 (left) and detail of the papal arms (right).

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The episcopal arms of James Alipius Goold, first Archbishop of Melbourne, are the only decorative motif on a cope belonging to a set of ten rare mid-nineteenth-century rose cloth-of-gold vestments also held by the MDHC. The arms are embroidered on the lower part of the orphreys on the front opening of the otherwise plain cope. Episcopal heraldic arms are a useful tool in dating artefacts as they are unique to each bishop, cardinal or pope (figure 111).

¹¹³ *Rinceau* (plural *rinceaux*): is an architectural term referring to a particular style of motif namely "... a decorative border or strip, featuring stylized vines with leaves and often with fruit or flowers. During the seventeenth century the *rinceau* [were in] the simpler Classic style, and in the eighteenth century it was treated far more freely, with less rigid repetition of identical forms..." <https://www.britannica.com/technology/rinceau>



Figure 111: Cope featuring the episcopal arms of Archbishop James Alipius Goold, c1860 (left) and detail of the episcopal arms (right).

(Source: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, used with permission)

The following excerpt from a pamphlet produced by the Lochinvar Convent for a heritage conservation conference hosted by the sisters in 2006 summarises the importance of recording the stories of textile treasures:

... Textiles are a focus for remembering often hidden aspects of family and community history. They can help us recall people and places, and tap into forgotten parts of everyday life, particularly women's history, life and experience. But this history often hangs by a thread, in the memories of those who own or have inherited the item. Once those who know the story of a textile item die, then the history is lost forever and the meaning of the item is diminished. It is almost impossible to research the history and associations of textiles once those who used them or know about them die. Writing down the story and associations is one of the most important ways of conserving their meaning and significance for the next generation. (Sisters of St, Joseph, 2006)

In essence, even the tiniest detail adds to the rich cultural legacy that is the textile heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia. As historian Brian Andrews discovered during his surveys of Augustus Pugin's legacy in Tasmanian churches, textile treasures are lying, under-

appreciated, in full view, or at least, in cupboards or boxes in local churches: their stories and community connections at risk of being lost and their cultural significance unrecognised – victims of fading community memory as congregations decline and textile styles and fashion changes.

7.2.3 Maintenance, repair and restoration/preservation

Diocesan archives and the larger religious community archives are largely managed by archivists traditionally trained in the care of paper-based artefacts and who have sometimes acquired additional knowledge and conservation skills through working with textiles. The textile collection of the New Norcia Benedictine Community is however, unique among heritage textile collections, as it forms an integral part of a much larger heritage site and is cared for by a trained collections manager and staff. Convent archivists and custodians reported that they have benefitted from professionally run courses in heritage matters and that they are actively involved in educating their fellows in the complex management needs of their textile collections. For example, a seminar and workshop in textile management hosted by Lochinvar Convent produced a series of ‘help’ sheets and resources specifically focused on ecclesiastical textiles. Archivists, collection managers and community leaders commented that decisions about what items to keep, where to keep them and the extent of conservation treatment carried out, can be a challenge when faced with limited resources and a large quantity of ecclesiastical textiles which might be considered for everyday use and hence not historically, aesthetically or socially significant.

Storage

All respondents, secular and non-secular, cited suitable storage as a priority for good management programmes. It was evident from questionnaire answers and interview responses that custodians were well acquainted with the conservation grade storage requirements of the textiles in their care and consequently identified several issues surrounding current storage options. Three major issues pertaining to storage emerged from the research findings - the amount of space available, the environmental conditions in storage areas and the availability of suitable storage materials. Typical responses included

... Storage is the biggest issue. Our archival repository is environmentally controlled but there is little space for large textile boxes necessary ... (Religious Archivist O, questionnaire response)

... Financial resources are very tight so I am unable at the present time to purchase suitable archival boxes etc. to store some of these items.

(Diocesan Archivist J, questionnaire response)

... the diocese's archives collection is currently stored in a fairly varied range of places. (Diocesan Archivist I, email)

... Textiles require particular storage conditions – moisture, dust, staining, insect infestations, other contaminants etc. are ongoing concerns. (Diocesan Archivist I, questionnaire response)

... Making sure there are no silverfish. (Religious Archivist N, questionnaire response)

This last comment highlights a problem inherent to storage. Custodians dealt with pest related problems in a variety of ways. For example, the integrated pest management scheme for one large diocesan archives includes arrangements for the regular inspection of the textile collection and a dedicated rehousing programme is in place. Another archives' management plan includes regular pest inspections and appropriate pre-emptive treatments. The archivist has experience in the care and treatment of textiles and has a simple method for reducing silverfish attack on old linen and cotton albs and cloths which were universally starched when in use. If it is safe to do so, these items are carefully washed before they are stored. Washing removes starch residues, a common food source that attracts silverfish and other carbohydrate-eating pests (Boersma, Brokerhof, van den Berg, & Tegelaers, 2007). At the time of the survey, only a few archives and religious institutions had access to climate controlled storage facilities for their textile collections.

A surprising amount of textile heritage remains in churches and, paradoxically, working churches can be ideal storage places if they meet certain criteria. The vestries, particularly in older churches, are fitted with textile presses and high wardrobes. The shallow, wide drawers of a press allow the stiffened, highly decorated Roman style chasubles to lay flat. These presses can also be used to store large altar cloths with a minimum of folding (figure 112).



Figure 112: Archive storage boxes and a vestry press.

(Images by author, 2016 (left) and 2013 (right))

High hanging rails in wardrobes ensure that long albs and Gothic-style chasubles, on padded appropriately sized clothes hangers, hang straight. In working vestries, textile condition can be regularly checked. Conversely, the amalgamation of parishes means that more churches are being used less often, perhaps only once or twice a year in some rural areas, so cleaning may be less regular and stored heritage textiles could be at higher risk of unnoticed damage and deterioration.

Archival and religious collections in the survey were stored in a variety ways. Almost all collections had at least some textiles folded and stored, in boxes. This was particularly evident in small collections such as those belonging to parish churches and schools. Long garments such as copes, albs, the trained cassocks worn pre-1957 by bishops, and Gothic style chasubles were frequently hung in wardrobes or on rails. Roman style chasubles were stored in drawers, large textile boxes and, where garment presses were not available, hanging on rails. It was interesting to see that bishop's mitres were invariably stored in their original custom-made flat cases. These cases were usually stamped with the name of the owner – an additional aid to attributing provenance to the contents. Custodians were experts at innovation and invention – suit bags provided protection for garments hanging on open rails, while small items such as maniples, burses and cinctures were packed into a variety of boxes and cases. Metal map cabinets with long, wide drawers for the storage of large documents

such as maps and plans served equally well for vestments. As one interviewee noted, tissue paper was relatively cheap and provided good protection against dust and contact damage. While conservation-grade textile boxes big enough to hold copes and other large items are commercially available, archivists noted that they are expensive, difficult to handle and take up a lot of space. In one interview the archivist confided that, when preparing for my visit, it had taken two extra people to move the larger boxes into the interview room. A second archivist, knowing that garment storage boxes were not designed for frequent handling and moving, had arranged for a volunteer to attend the interview to assist with opening and closing the boxes and displaying the contents. A third archivist had put a large portion of their collection out on display, explaining that the interview had provided the ideal opportunity to unpack, assess, hang, air, and re-pack the textile collection as it was being re-located to a new building. Even with satisfactory containers and sufficient space, custodians still had to deal with fluctuating or less-than-ideal environmental conditions. Mould was a potential problem in humid climates and dust was an issue in some dry areas. Collections in long term storage were at risk of insect infestation as frequent inspections were not always possible. One convent collection was stored in the original, currently unused kitchen wing of the convent – a not altogether surprising solution as the rooms were clean, dark, well ventilated, insulated, fitted with shelving, had room for the large map cases used to store vestments and other textiles, and the ambient conditions were consistently cool and dry. One diocesan archivist was able to store the more valued items from the collection in the large vault used for important documents. The space was well insulated, cool, dry and secure. While a dedicated, climate-controlled storage facility is the ideal solution to fluctuating environmental conditions; few small institutions could afford this without outside financial support, nor could larger archives without an increased allocation of funds from their parent administrators.

Repair, re-model, re-use, re-cycle, restore

The useful life of ecclesiastical textiles within the Catholic Church is determined by the condition of the textiles and current Church rubrics. Rubrics dictate the types of liturgical and non-liturgical garments worn by the clergy and condition determines their suitability to perform their function. As previously noted, the dress reforms of the 1950s and Vatican II changed the rubrics for liturgical vestments and other garments. While the wearing of pre-Vatican II vestments remains an option in certain circumstances (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012), vesture reforms consigned much of the early textile heritage in many Australian Catholic

churches to history. Much was disposed of, much went into storage but some was salvaged for local reuse. There is a long tradition, in the Catholic Church, of repairing and re-modelling vestments and reusing decorative elements to embellish new vestments. In fact this tradition has meant that ecclesiastical textiles often incorporate a variety of materials, styles and elements from different eras. Several items from the surveyed collections showed evidence of remodelling and repair. Brian Andrews recorded several examples in the historic Pugin Collection held at the Archdiocesan Archives, Hobart. He notes that at some point in the mid-twentieth-century a red Pugin-designed Neo-Gothic chasuble was ‘clipped’ into the square Roman style and new braid attached around the edge (Andrews, 2002, pp. 69-70). While the alteration may have preserved the chasuble’s liturgical significance and prolonged its useful life, Andrews argued that, through clipping, the chasuble’s original aesthetic and historical value was lost (p62). The practice of clipping, discussed in chapter 2 and mentioned again in chapter 6, began in the thirteenth century as a way of reducing the bulk of the medieval conical chasuble. The result was the stiff, flat ‘sandwich-board’ Roman chasuble. Pugin hated the practice (Pugin, 1844, p. 62-63). His wider cut Gothic Revival style chasubles were not stiffened but draped over the shoulders in graceful folds. A second red Pugin chasuble from the Hobart collection retains its original shape, braid and embroidered motifs but the worn orphrey crosses were replaced in the late twentieth century. The liturgical significance of the chasuble has been preserved, but if one follows Pugin’s arguments, at the expense of some aesthetic value. As living heritage, and not as a museum piece, the chasuble’s useful life continues. Pugin’s Neo-Gothic style, unlike the clipped Roman shape of the previous example, conforms relatively well to current vesture rubrics. The Ballarat Diocesan Historic Commission holds a banner made from the back of a purple silk chasuble which stylistically resembles the work of Chinese mission embroiderers of the early twentieth century. This type of extreme alteration is not uncommon, as the liturgical seasonal motifs and square backs of Roman chasubles are ideal for conversion into small wall hangings. The Chinese mission chasubles are particularly prone to use-wear as they are made from lightweight, finely woven silk which is quite unlike the heavier faille, brocade and damask produced in Europe. One unusual textile incorporating ‘recycled’ motifs was a cover for a large ceramic crock used to store blessed holy water¹¹⁴ (figure 113).

¹¹⁴ It is customary for churches to have a store of blessed (holy) water available for the private devotional use of community members. The water is often stored in a suitable vessel in the church porch.



Figure 113: Cover for a Holy Water storage vessel incorporating a decorative element from an old chasuble.
(Image by author, 2013)

The crock was wrapped in a wide band of white fabric embellished with a large IHS medallion salvaged from a worn out chasuble. It is difficult to understand why obviously damaged and worn pieces were kept, particularly as these fragments have few, if any, connections to eminent people or important events. It may be that someone recognised a different ‘value’. Perhaps they appreciated the aesthetics and skilled work and could not throw them away, or maybe they were simply being frugal. Whatever the reason, the reuse and recycling of textiles reinforce the ‘living’ aspect of Catholic heritage.

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked “... To the best of your knowledge, what is the general condition of the textiles...” (Questionnaire, question 4.3). Custodians often noted their wish to be able to do more about conservation and preservation. Responses from archivists reflected the challenges raised by the constraints of time, resources and expertise –

... The main challenge is the deterioration of some of the textiles, especially silk and the cost of restoration ... At present they are just kept in boxes, hidden from view, and some of the fabrics are deteriorating in quality. (Religious Archivist F, questionnaire response)

... to my knowledge there has not been any professionally trained person to look after any of the collection or archives. (Diocesan Archivist Q, questionnaire response)

... We want our vestments to be used. However it would be good to have some parts of the collection conserved by a textile conservator.

(Religious Archivist P, questionnaire response)

... Gaining the knowledge and expertise to care for them appropriately.

(Diocesan Archivist G, questionnaire response)

This last comment highlighted a desire for expert knowledge in dealing with heritage textiles. Several of the surveyed collections had been partially assessed by textile conservators and some conservation work had been carried out on especially significant items. It was noted that professional conservators were often aware that ecclesiastical textiles were not always seen as museum artefacts by their communities. This evidence of this comes from a comment made in the conservation report on a hand-painted chasuble decorated in an unusual technique known as Poonah stencilling (figure 114). Poonah stencilling, also known as Poona painting, formula painting and theorem painting, was a popular method for decorating textiles in the nineteenth century. A series of stencils (known as forms or theorems) and stiff, short-bristled brushes, one of each for each colour, were used to build up the design (Poonah painting, 1888; Hodges, 1989).



Figure 114: Chasuble painted in the Poonah painting style, back (left) and detail of central motif (right). (Images by author, 2013).

The conservator provided advice on storage and handling in order to maintain the chasuble in its current condition and assured the owners that the treated chasuble "...is stable enough for

careful wearing on special occasions...” (Condition and treatment report housed in the storage box, n.d.).

Despite the inherent fragility of textiles in general, and the whims of fashion and personal taste which consigned numerous items to storage, many pieces in the surveyed collections were valued enough to be repaired so that they could continue to be used. Use-wear is inevitable and, in the case of chasubles, predictable. Chasubles invariably wear out across the front, where friction with the edge of the altar abrades the fabric, and around the neck and shoulder edges where the fabric is handled while adjusting the drape (figure 115).



Figure 115: Use-wear.

The centre front of the green chasuble shows typical abrasion wear from contact with the altar (left), the braid on the neck and shoulder of the black chasuble has worn and become detached through hand contact while adjusting the drape.

(Sources: Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, 2016, (left), used with permission. and image by author (right)).

Observed repairs ranged from simple machine darning to expert patching. One remarkable example of a repaired chasuble is in the collection of the Australian Museum of Costume and Textiles, Maitland, New South Wales. The chasuble appears to be made from two chasubles:

the back and most of the front from a machine embroidered chasuble made in a red ribbed fabric and the centre front pillar and shoulder panels of red *Cloister*¹¹⁵ damask salvaged from another. This chasuble also illustrates the damage that can be caused by water – the red dye has run and the lining is extensively stained from mould (figure 116).



Figure 116: Water damage and repairs to a red chasuble.

The shoulder area is the same faille fabric as the back of the chasuble but the front has been repaired, or possibly replaced, with M. Perkins & Son *Cloister* damask. The red dye has run and stained the original braid and embroidery. This chasuble was salvaged from a flood.

(Sources: Image by author (left) and the Australian Dress Register, ID 452, date unknown, used with permission (right)).

Conservation strategies

To conserve or not conserve is a question faced by many custodians. Collection specific issues, rather than general issues, were raised by some respondents. One archivist expressed interest in finding out more about the identification of the materials used in the textiles in their collection, while another was unsure of how to deal with tarnished metal thread embroidery. Both felt that knowledge of these issues would better inform their conservation choices. Invariably, specialised conservation work, repairs and stabilisation procedures are outsourced to trained textile conservators, as archivists are aware that this area of heritage management requires time, specialist skills and resources not generally available in archives.

¹¹⁵ *Cloister* damask is made by M. Perkins & Son, an English weaving firm still operating in Hampshire. *Cloister* is the name of the pattern.

For example, the conservation treatment of an historically significant, nineteenth-century chasuble of Spanish manufacture in the collection of the Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia, required 200 hours of work spread over two years (Hiini, 2013). At St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, a team of volunteers, trained or experienced in textile arts and crafts, repairs and maintains the Cathedral's textile collections, and are closely involved with the manufacture of new vestments (A stitch in time, 2013). Much conservation work for the diocesan historical textile collections in Victoria has been, and continues to be, carried out by experienced broderers from the Embroiderers Guild, Victoria (ECV) (Divall, 1996). The choice of conservation treatment often comes down to cost. For example, one custodian was grappling with the decision to allocate or not allocate their limited funds to conserve a fragile, historic textile that might never be seen outside of its community. Professional conservation work is expensive and often only feasible when outside funding is available. An example of this, the conservation/restoration of a seventeenth-century chasuble and mitre of international significance from the collection held at the New Norcia Benedictine Community, Western Australia, was only possible through a grant from the Copland Foundation of Melbourne (MacLeod & Car, 2016; NNBC, 2013).

7.3 Exhibition as management

New Norcia Benedictine Community's approach to the preservation of the cultural significance of its textile heritage, in particular through a well-defined link to its material culture heritage and thence to cultural tourism, is perhaps unique but several religious institutions do maintain heritage museums and sites that are open to visitors. Historical ecclesiastical textiles are at their most visible and also their most vulnerable whilst on exhibition. Their age and cultural significance means that they are no longer worn or used in their original religious context. Displaying religious artefacts outside their cultural context raises ethical issues for contemporary museum professionals. Some cultural meanings may be 'lost in translation' and audiences may not fully appreciate the many levels of significance that an artefact may possess within their original cultural context (Mason, 2006; Paine, 2000). To some extent these issues have been addressed by situating Australian religious museums on sites contextually relevant to the collections. For example, in 1995 the Mary MacKillop Place Museum, was opened at Mary McKillop Place, Sydney, adjoining the shrine of Australia's first Catholic saint, St Mary of the Cross McKillop. The museum was established

in consultation with the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the order founded by Mary Mackillop, who took the religious name Sister Mary of the Cross. A recent upgrade utilises the latest technology to guide visitors through a series of rooms and buildings as the story of Mary Mackillop's life and work is told (Mary Mackillop Place, 2018). While the collection is not an ecclesiastical collection in the same sense that a diocesan archive, it does contain significant textiles, such as historic nuns' habits, which require care and conservation. On a much larger scale, the Goold Catholic Museum, Melbourne, Victoria, is managed by the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission (MDHC), a department within the Archdiocese of Melbourne Archives. Its brief is to collect, house and provide public access to the history of the Catholic Church in Victoria (Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, n.d.) Items from this large collection of vestments, church furnishings, documents, photographs and personal mementos are on permanent display, but due to time and staff constraints, the museum is open by appointment only. The Benedictine Community of New Norcia in Western Australia is Australia's only monastic town and is custodian to an internationally significant collection of European ecclesiastical artefacts, several of which have been restored and are on exhibition in the New Norcia Gallery and Museum. Unlike diocesan archives collections, the New Norcia textile collection, remains *in situ* and in context with its original cultural landscape. Only time will tell if, and how, an increasing awareness of religious heritage in Australia, Europe and other parts of the world will impact on the conservation of these fragile religious textiles and their cultural significance.

Five respondents have been involved with preparing exhibitions or have loaned textiles for exhibitions. Textile conservation or restoration is an exacting and time-consuming task, all the more so when multiple artefacts are being considered for exhibition. The ceremonial group of the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria worked for three years with the MDHC to prepare textiles for the *Flower Festival and Ceremonial Embroidery Exhibition* held in 1997 at St Patricks Cathedral, Melbourne, Victoria (Rogan, 1998). While on exhibition, ecclesiastical textiles face similar risks to those in secular museums. Cathedrals and churches are not climate controlled museum spaces and so the effects of light, temperature and humidity on textiles must be considered when exhibitions are planned. Short exhibition times are an option. For example, an exhibition of forty sacred liturgical vestments, including a chasuble reputedly worked by Queen Isabella II of Spain, that was held in St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, only ran for three days, opening on 26 January and closing on 28 January, 2011 (Australia Day at St Mary's, 2011).

7.4 Into the future

Responses to a question about the respondents' wishes and plans for the future custodians expressed universal support for keeping as much of their textile legacy as possible, in as good a condition as practicable and for as long as possible. There was also an overwhelming wish that the textiles and their stories be shared with their communities and the wider world. It is not uncommon for items to be loaned to groups outside the community and to secular museums for exhibition.

... We had a number of items that were lent to the NMA [National Museum of Australia] exhibition *Not Just Ned: A true history of the Irish in Australia* in 2011. (Diocesan Archivist M, questionnaire response)

... We have lent textiles to six exhibitions over several years ...[including] a vestment display at the Celtic Festival, Birregurra, an exhibition of nineteenth-century textiles at the Ararat Art Gallery, and a display of historical vestments at St Peters Anglican Church St Kilda (a fundraiser for Anglican African Missions). (Diocesan Archivist A, questionnaire response)

... The parish banner was used in the local museum for a display about the Catholic Church in Bundaberg. (Diocesan Archivist G, questionnaire response)

Such loans indicate that ecclesiastical textiles *are* valued outside their owner communities for a number of reasons including connections to local communities, aesthetics and artistic expertise. Archivists and custodians hoped that this could continue, as displays and exhibitions were a way of educating their communities and keeping the history of the Church and its evolving traditions alive.

... [We wish our textiles to be used] for exhibition purposes to a wider audience than Catholic churchgoers. They represent a distinct era of church history which vanished along with lace-making and embroidery work of a high standard. (Diocesan Archivist B, questionnaire response)

... It would be ideal to regularly display the vestments to the general public ... to promote the history and the heritage of the Catholic Church and the Catholic community of the area. (Diocesan Archivist C, questionnaire response)

... I would be very pleased if the vestments could be used in short term exhibitions and displays (where this can suitably be done). They are often very visual items and very exhibitable – so should be made available, where appropriate, for others to enjoy. It is often by mounting items in displays that draws attention to their presence in a collection. I expect this will then bring further items to daylight that will be offered as additions to the collection. Diocesan Archivist I, questionnaire response)

... We value the History that is encased in these garments and textiles and we know for a fact that when our displays have been held there is much interest and enthusiasm about our collection. (Religious Archivist E, questionnaire response)

... Because there is no point keeping items if they are not seen, displayed or used or have value to the immediate community and/or wider community. (Religious Archivist S, questionnaire response)

The last comment supports the old adage “out of sight, out of mind” and that being able to see and experience these collections is just as important to their preservation as safe storage. The Goold Catholic Museum and the purpose built textile storage and exhibition centre at New Norcia Benedictine Community are well-established exhibitions of Catholic textile heritage and will soon, if plans are realised, be joined by a new museum in Bendigo, Victoria. The place of textiles from the Sandhurst Diocesan Archives, Bendigo, in the story and plans of the Aspire Foundation’s *Religion on the Goldfields* exhibition centre is discussed in Chapter 4.

7.5 Concluding thoughts

The management of Catholic ecclesiastical textiles in Australia mirrors that of Europe, in that the majority of historic ecclesiastical textiles are stored in diocesan archives, or remain in the care of religious communities and local churches. It must be remembered that diocesan archives and religious communities are not museums and that museums dedicated to religious collections are rare. The majority of collections in the survey are in the custody and care of trained archivists or members of religious communities who have extensive personal experience in dealing with their heritage collections. These custodians may not be textile conservation experts. Many noted that the main focus of their work is paper documents and records rather than textiles. However, they are very aware of the historical and spiritual significance of textiles in the collections to their own communities, and, in the case of particular items, to wider national and international audiences. With the exception of perhaps the New Norcia Benedictine Community's new textile storage facility and exhibition space, custodians have limited access to storage space and resources, and operational priorities may be subject to change. Despite differences in procedures, protocols and priorities, all custodians in the survey faced preservation challenges that would be familiar to heritage professionals working with textiles in secular museums. Perhaps this is not surprising, given that historical ecclesiastical textiles are contemporary with and made from similar materials to many historical secular textiles found in national, state and local museums and heritage collections. Ecclesiastical textiles undergo the same natural ageing processes and respond in the same way to local environmental conditions as secular textiles. Those charged with the care and conservation of Australian ecclesiastical textile collections share many of the same concerns as overseas curators and conservators of similar secular collections. In particular, the inventory, conservation or preservation treatment, storage and exhibition of ecclesiastical textile collections require time, expertise and resources, commodities often constrained by economic and practical factors outside the control of collection custodians.

Chapter 8

Tying the threads together

8.1 Finding the threads

Collections of ecclesiastical textiles cared for by the Catholic Church in Australia may be scattered across the country but they are connected by networks of threads spun from ‘insider’ knowledge and shared cultural values – threads represented by the network of custodians who shared their knowledge of their own collections and suggested other collections worthy of study. Further connections were made as more collections were uncovered and the stories behind their textiles revealed. For example, the Archdiocese of Sydney archivist provided information about the textiles in the archives and then suggested contacting the sacristan at St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney for information about textiles housed at the cathedral. St Mary’s Cathedral crypt has an exhibition space and staff organise regular displays of historic artefacts, including vestments, from the cathedral’s own collection. This new thread revealed the earliest locally made vestments in Australia – the convict vestments described in chapter 6. St Mary’s also has an active volunteer group that manufactures, maintains and repairs vestments and paraments. In a similar way, a conversation with the archivist at the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Commission led to a member of the Victorian Embroiderers Guild skilled in goldwork embroidery, who shared her experiences with the repair and restoration work carried out on the vestment collection held by the Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, which itself holds a fascinating variety of items of historic, personal, aesthetic or technological significance. The embroiderer’s knowledge opened up the world of ecclesiastical embroidery and spun a thread to the Goldwork Guild of the UK and insights on historic goldwork embroidery techniques and the aesthetic value of ecclesiastical textiles. A second ‘network of knowledge about textiles’ exists outside that of custodians. Personal contact with local parishioners and members of religious communities set in motion a cascade of contacts with other parishes and communities, an indication that people are interested in and value the textile heritage of their churches and communities. It was suggestions from personal contacts that lead to the important collections at New Norcia,

the heritage collection at the Diocese of Sale Archives and the hidden gem, Genazzano College. Several respondents knew of the significance of Augustus Pugin's ecclesiastical legacy in Tasmania, something that is still largely unknown outside of the Australian Catholic community. It was interesting to discover that the secular world also has a knowledge network, albeit rather informal and somewhat serendipitous. One of the more intriguing finds – the cryptic inscriptions embroidered on eighteenth-century textiles in the collection at the Ursuline Convent Archives, Sydney – came to light through the discovery of an 1880s newspaper article. The article led to a long and interesting correspondence with the convent archivist and an enlightening correspondence with academics at Oxford University. A 1920s photograph from the collection in the National Archives of Australia revealed that vestments belonging to Napoleon Bonaparte's uncle, Cardinal Joseph Fesch, were housed in a parish church in Sydney. The mystery behind the *Chinese* vestments that were mentioned in passing by one contact was ultimately unravelled by piecing together the stories of vestments from five collections and three religious communities. While physical connections informed the selection of collections to survey, the focus of my research was the intangible threads of cultural significance and the values embodied within the textiles in Australia. These threads of significance and value were revealed through interviews and personal communication with the custodians of the surveyed collections. Reconnection and follow-up interviews with European and British manufacturers, museum curators, textile conservators, and embroiderers revealed some interesting connections between Australian collections and the world.

8.2 Context and method

As discussed in Chapter 3, ecclesiastical textiles have been widely researched outside of the context of Catholic religious practice. Researchers have explored the place of ecclesiastical textiles in fields as diverse as archaeology, anthropology and ethnography, history, art and design, sociology and psychology, gender studies and politics, popular culture, and heritage conservation. Despite such widespread external interest in Catholic ecclesiastical textiles, it appears that, until now, surprisingly little research has centred on the cultural significance and heritage values of these textiles in their original cultural landscapes. As research focus objects, ecclesiastical textiles have only recently appeared in the field of critical heritage studies. It is interesting to note that much of 'Western' research into the concepts of heritage values and cultural significance has focussed primarily on the richly varied and deeply

symbolic artefacts and cultural practices of indigenous and non-European communities and culture groups. However this means that the ‘unofficial’ heritage values of Catholic heritage have been often ignored. My research has revealed that Catholic communities throughout Australia care for collections of textiles that embody a rich tangible and intangible cultural legacy that is particularly valued on a personal and community level.

One focus of recent cultural heritage studies research is the relationships that develop between communities, artefacts, cultural practices and cultural landscapes. These relationships are manifested in the significance and value of artefacts and cultural practices to their owner communities and to society at large. Informed by the concept of entanglement put forward by Hodder and drawing on case study methodologies employed in ethnographic studies and the non-invasive analytical techniques from the fields of archaeology and material culture studies, my research investigated custodians’ views of the cultural significance and values of ecclesiastical textiles held in their primary cultural contexts, that is religious communities and institutions, and in the secondary context of secular galleries and museums. As discussed in Chapter 4, the large number of potential sites holding ecclesiastical textiles, the constraints imposed by the geographic spread of collections and the timeframe for data collection meant that it was impractical to survey all ecclesiastical textile collections in Australia. To this end, descriptive data, personal recollections and stories, and views on the importance and significance of a range of ecclesiastical textiles were collected from a selection of churches, cathedrals, religious institutions, diocesan archives and secular museums and galleries. Information gleaned from primary sources was supported and supplemented by secondary documentary evidence extracted from archival documents, media reports and other published materials and the personal anecdotes and recollections of participants. This mixed methods approach also provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the cultural values and significance attributed to ecclesiastical textiles by members of original or primary owner communities and subsequent or secondary owners. The consensus across all custodians was that their textiles possess deep cultural significance. The textiles were, however, significant and valued in multiple ways both inside and outside of their owner communities.

8.3 Tangled threads

Custodians of collections surveyed for this research were generous with their time and happy to share stories and thoughts on the significance of textiles in their care. The location, content, origins and provenance of the surveyed collections were summarised in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 focused on participants' perceptions, views and opinions about the importance, significance and cultural values of textiles in their care. This research has found that historic and heritage ecclesiastical textiles in the form of liturgical and non-liturgical garments and ceremonial items, furnishings and other decorative items play diverse roles in the cultural landscape that is the living heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia. From the perspective of the Church, ecclesiastical textiles are tangible artefacts that act as community identifiers, indicators of role and status, and delineate and adorn the sacred and working spaces of the Church. As repositories of cultural knowledge, these same textiles embody hermeneutic systems of signs and symbols that play important roles in cultural practices that have existed for centuries. In addition, these textiles act as material mnemonics to remember the lives of community members and recall and commemorate important events in the lives of local churches and the history of the Catholic Church in Australia. Diocesan archives and cathedrals particularly noted the ongoing liturgical significance of their textiles. These textiles are valued as records of a living heritage, documenting the distinctive structural forms and symbolic images associated with rites and rituals practiced for over two millennia. Custodians of collections housed in religious communities overwhelmingly expressed the view that their textiles were not museum artefacts but that they were living heritage, repositories of community memory and mnemonics for recalling the lives of past members. They wished that their collections remain useful and not be stored away as quaint or archaic 'things' from times past. Interestingly, some communities maintain a more active relationship with their heritage textiles through regular and careful use. For many custodians, a textile's connections to persons, organisations and events were seen as testaments to the faith and work of its community members, and important reminders of story and place of the Catholic Church in Australia and the history of the nation. The contributions of women, who remain excluded from the upper echelons of the Church's hierarchy and administration, to the cultural legacy of the Church are recognised and valued through the ecclesiastical textiles they have made and maintained. While many heritage textiles no longer served a liturgical purpose in churches they were still seen as important contributors to the ongoing life of their communities and valuable 'tools' in educating community members about the history and

heritage of the Church. All participants in the surveys valued the fine workmanship and designs of the textiles in their care. In religious contexts however, there was a deeper recognition and understanding of the intangible religious significance of the symbolism and materials used in the designs.

In secular institutions, opinions on importance and significance focus more on the materiality and workmanship of the textiles. In a secular context ‘provenanced’ and dated ecclesiastical textiles are much valued for their aesthetics and materials. Art gallery staff, in particular, identified the value of provenanced ecclesiastical textiles in the context of art and design history, manufacturing processes, and technical skills or expertise. Custodians in public museums and galleries also emphasised the historical and technological significance of ecclesiastical textiles and the research potential of items that had entered the secular world.

8.4 Finding new threads

This research has uncovered a rich and diverse textile legacy which has significant cultural, historical and technological value for its Australian custodians, with threads connecting items to national and international persons and events. In addition, these textiles, under-explored by secular research, are significant local reservoirs of textile-related technological and artistic knowledge. While custodians expressed a range of opinions on the cultural significance and heritage value of the textiles in their care, there was universal recognition of the importance and urgency of preserving this fragile textile heritage into the future. There is, however, little evidence of a co-ordinated, cross-institutional approach to managing this important component of the living heritage of a widely dispersed cultural group: an historic textile legacy recognised but perhaps not well understood by heritage and museum practitioners working in non-religious institutions in Australia. The closure or amalgamation of convents, schools and churches means that the Church’s textile heritage is being moved into new locations. Custodians are acutely aware that such migration brings an increased chance that the textiles’ cultural significance and community stories could be lost.

It was interesting to note that while respondents expressed a variety of views on the research topic, there was consensus that it was an important exercise. The following comment, for example, expressed the hope that

... one day the Church will make use of your studies for the care and valorisation of its cultural heritage, especially in regard to textile conservation. ... I hope that [your research] leads to people like me and those involved in the care of ecclesiastical textile heritage to work harder to identify this heritage and conserve it for future generations and as a means of evangelization which should always be the underlying motivation of ecclesiastical efforts to conserve and valorise Church heritage. (Diocesan Archivist D, via email)

A comment such as this reinforces the notion that, for the Catholic Church, the primary function of ecclesiastical textiles is liturgical and evangelical – these treasured threads are not simply museum pieces but remain active agents in the life of the Church. More than one archivist commented that agreeing to participate in the research had prompted them to re-visit and re-assess the textiles in their archives, and, in the process, rediscover many of the special items in their care. As one respondent noted

... I found some wonderful vestments together with their history ... made by family members of priests. One such is a set of dalmatics and cope for Eucharistic processions [and] canopy made by a priest's sister of stunning Belgian brocade at the end of World War 2, sadly the chasuble has been lost although being more utilitarian I suspect it was worn until it fell apart. (Diocesan Archivist A, via email)

One archivist felt that the research project could help to explain the significance of their textiles, and perhaps spark the interest of a wider audience,

... I am excited about this research project as it is difficult to bring to the attention of the general person the nature of our collection.
(Religious Archivist N, questionnaire response)

The surveyed textile collections were a small sample of the vast number of historical and heritage ecclesiastical textiles stored away, or still in use, in Catholic institutions throughout Australia. With perhaps the notable exception of the collections at Jamberoo Abbey, New Norcia Benedictine Community and the Ursuline Convent in Sydney, the textile collections surveyed are relatively young and not all are well-documented. This is particularly so when collections have been moved to new sites or 'community memory' has failed. As mentioned

in Chapter 5, perhaps less than five collections have been the focus of research in any field, with the high profile New Norcia collections being the most studied. Brian Andrew's survey of Tasmania's Pugin heritage revealed textile treasures in the most humble of locations, and there is no reason to think that surveys of other diocesan regions would not reveal items of similar heritage value. Anecdotal evidence from archivists suggests that further treasured threads, of equal if not greater significance, remain in the care of local communities and other Catholic institutions. For example, one archivist is aware that a set of eighteenth-century silk vestments brought from France by an early priest remains in a rural parish church. The current custodians of the vestments know its story and are acutely aware of its significance to the local community. How many stories, connections, and personal recollections are in danger of being lost as communities age or disperse and experienced archive staff retire? Further research into the significance of Australia's ecclesiastical textiles could provide a more formalised national overview of what is currently considered 'unofficial' heritage, but in reality, is the living heritage of a significant sector of the Australian population.

8.5 A final thought

In chapter 6 I reported that one archivist felt

... that we in this country [Australia] have so little appreciation of the significance of these vestments symbolically, culturally or didactically. We tend to evaluate them purely as perceived status symbols ... (Diocesan Archivist A, email response)

My research showed that ecclesiastical textiles are not perceived as status symbols, in fact there was no mention of status in any responses. These treasured threads are valued on many levels by Church institutions and religious communities, individuals and secular interests. 'Personal' significance was particularly evident in recollections and anecdotes tied to 'gifted' textiles and to textiles associated with personal life events. The thoughts of the parish priest who expressed a wish to be buried in his ordination vestments made by an aunt, or the cassock worn by the co-founder of the Sisters of St Joseph, Fr Julian Tenison Woods and gifted to the Lochinvar Convent are emblematic of the differences between the informal, person/thing relationships and values typical of unofficial heritage and the formal, rigid, criteria based heritage of officially recognised spaces, the built environment and cultural

icons. The cultural value of the textiles in the surveyed collections is encapsulated in two responses quoted in earlier chapters. Interestingly both invoke the significance of intangible and ephemeral memory. In chapter 6 I quoted from the Jamberoo Abbey newsletter, *Pax*,

... Why do we keep all this [heritage textiles] and more? We keep it all so that we don't forget the story which has made us who we are today.

In chapter 7 the sisters at Lochinvar Convent noted the cultural value and fragility of the significance and cultural value of the textiles in their care –

... Textiles are a focus for remembering often hidden aspects of family and community history. They can help us recall people and places, and tap into forgotten parts of everyday life, particularly women's history, life and experience. But this history often hangs by a thread, in the memories of those who own or have inherited the item. Once those who know the story of a textile item die, then the history is lost forever and the meaning of the item is diminished.

The intriguing, unexpected and poignant stories woven into the fabric of ecclesiastical textiles encountered in this research offer a rare insight into the significance of an Australian cultural legacy rarely encountered outside its primary landscape. This research has shown that the treasured threads that form the textile heritage of the Catholic Church in Australia embody a significance and value far beyond the formal criteria prescribed by official heritage bodies. Visiting collections and speaking with custodians has uncovered a diverse and unexpected web of community and personal values that bind people and communities together and connect this living textile heritage to a broader cultural web of local, national and international history and ongoing cultural life.

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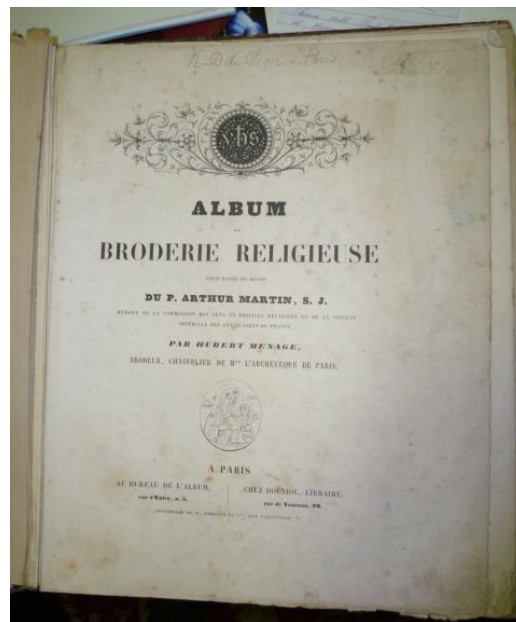


Figure 117: Two antique reference books revealed by the survey.

(Sources: Image by author, 2013 (Itop) and Ursuline Convent Archives, 2018, (bottom) used with permission)

Glossary

Alb – a white ankle-length gown, generally plain but can be decorated with embroidered bands, called apparels, on the cuffs and hem. It is worn under a chasuble. Pre-Vatican II albs were edged with deep lace and worn over a cassock. The name derives from *alba*, Latin for white.

Amice – a white linen square tied around the shoulders. It is worn under the alb. One of the sacerdotal vestments, it represents the helmet of salvation.

Biretta – a square-crowned hat topped with three flat peaks. The black priest's biretta and purple bishop's biretta are sometimes topped with a tuft or pompom. Cardinals wear a red biretta. The Pope wears the camauro, not a biretta.

Broderer – one who embroiders, an embroiderer. The Worshipful Company of Broderers (UK) has been in existence from at least the twelfth century. Interestingly their motto is *Omnia desuper* which translates as *All things come from above*, and their coat of arms is surmounted by a dove, a widely recognised Christian symbol of the Holy Spirit and, by extension, God. <http://www.broderers.co.uk/>

Burse – a flat square case for carrying the folded corporal to and from the altar. It matches the liturgical colour of the vestments of the day. Part of a set of vestments.

Buskins – a boot-like fabric overshoe, part of a set of pontificals, made in the same liturgical colour as the chasuble. They were originally designed to keep the wearer's feet and legs warm in cold European cathedrals.

Camauro – the papal hat equivalent to the biretta. It is a close fitting red cap edged with white fur.

Cassock – An ankle length button-through non liturgical clerical garment resembling a coat. It is worn by all levels of clergy; rank determines the colour and decoration. A short cape, the *pellegrina*, can be attached to the cassock. Also known as a **soutane**.

Chalice veil – a square cloth that covers the chalice. It matches the colour and decoration of the vestments of the day. Part of a set of vestments

Chasuble - the outermost of the *vestes sacrae*. It is always worn over an alb. Colour is determined by the liturgical season. It represents the yoke of Christ and signifies charity. The name derives from the Latin *casula*, little house, a reference to the original chasuble covering the whole body.

Chalice – the cup used to hold the wine during the celebration of the Mass

Cincture – a rope like cord tied around the waist and over an alb. It is knotted or tasselled on the ends and matches the colour of the chasuble. It secures the long ends of the stole. It represents the girdle of purity and symbolises chastity.

Cope – a semi-circular floor length cape or mantle with a vestigial hood. It is closed in the front by a single large clasp. It has remained largely unchanged since the seventh century AD. The cope is worn by all ranks of the clergy in procession or while assisting at functions. The hoods are often highly decorated. Variations include the papal *mantum* and the *cappa magna*, a mantle with a long train formerly worn by cardinals.

Corporal – a large square white linen cloth placed on the altar placed beneath the chalice and host during the celebration of the Holy Mass. When not in use the corporal is folded and stored in the burse.

Dalmatic – the outer garment worn by a deacon. It matches the colour and design of the vestments worn by the priest. Unlike a chasuble it has sleeves. It may be open or closed along the side seams. A bishop also wears a dalmatic as part of his pontificals.

Falda – a very long skirt-like garment worn over the alb and extending below the chasuble. It is a papal vestment no longer in use. Attendants held it out of the way when the Pope walked.

Fanon – a short, double-layer, circular cape of white silk, striped with gold. A papal vestment, rarely worn since Vatican II.

Fascia – wide cloth sash, fringed on the ends and worn over a cassock. A white fascia is worn by the pope, red by cardinals, purple by a bishop, and black by a priest.

Frontal (antependium) – one of the paraments. A decorated cloth or banner suspended in front of an altar or a lectern in a church.

Gauntlets/liturgical gloves – gloves with a cuff, part of a set of pontificals. The cuffs and back of the hand are embroidered to match other vestments in the set.

Host (liturgical bread) – the thin wafers of bread consecrated during the Mass.

Humeral veil – a long rectangular shawl-like cloth worn around the shoulders and covering the hands. It is usually fringed on the short ends. It is worn by the celebrant when he holds or carries the sacred Host during certain rituals such as Benediction.

Liturgical slippers (episcopal sandals) – low, soft cloth shoes worn by a bishop. They are in the liturgical colour of the day and are worn with silk liturgical stockings (knee length socks).

Liturgical year – the liturgies for one calendar year of services and celebrations. The liturgical year is divided into liturgical seasons, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary time. The Catholic Church also uses a 3 year cycle of scriptural readings and the liturgical year is designated as Year A, B or C according to its position in the scriptural cycle.

Maniple – a short narrow cloth, similar to a stole, worn over the wrist or lower arm. It was rendered obsolete by the reforms of Vatican II. It represented the bonds that bound the hands of Christ and symbolises the cares and sorrows of earthly life.

Mantelletta – a knee-length garment having slits in the side seams instead of sleeves and open down the front. Now rarely seen, it is worn over a rochet by bishops and cardinals.

Mantellone – similar to the mantelletta but floor length and with wing-like sleeves. It was not worn over a rochet. It was abolished in 1969 by Pope Paul VI.

Mantum – a papal cope, longer than floor-length.

Mitre – a bishop's flat, pointed hat. A *pretiosa* mitre is elaborately decorated, a *simplex* mitre is plain.

Monstrance – an upright support for the Eucharist during the rite of Exposition. It consists of a transparent flat circular box surrounded by rays and mounted vertically,

Mozetta – an elbow-length cape, buttoned down the front. It is worn over a surplice or rochet by bishops, cardinals, canons and the Pope. Colour and decoration indicates rank.

Ordinaries – in ecclesiastical terms, a person who has ordinary, as distinct from delegated or temporary, jurisdiction over a place or group. Ordinaries within the Catholic Church include bishops and the Pope, and leaders of monastic orders.

Orphrey/Orphrey bands – strips of fabric, braid or embroidery which decorate a chasuble, often forming a Y-shaped cross or vertical pillar. Originally orphrey bands were made from plain tape and used to strengthen seams.

Pall (funeral) – a cloth which drapes a coffin during a funeral service.

Pall (liturgical) – a square of stiffened linen placed over the chalice during the Holy Mass. It is designed to keep dust and insects from falling into the chalice.

Pallium – an ecclesiastical garment worn around the neck by the pope and some bishops. The modern pallium is made from three narrow strips of white wool fabric in the form of a closed circle with two dependent strips, one hanging in front and one down the back. It is decorated with six red or black crosses. The ancient pallium resembled a long scarf with the tails crossed over the left shoulder and held in place with gold pins.

Paraments – ecclesiastical furnishings, including frontals, funeral palls and banners.

Paten – a flat plate that supports the bread (host) during the celebration of the Mass.

Pontificals/pontifical vestments – vestments worn by a bishop for the celebration of a Pontifical Mass. Cardinals and the Pope are bishops so also wear pontificals.

Pyx – a small, usually round, box used to carry the consecrated host to the sick.

Rochet – a knee length garment similar to a surplice but with close-fitting sleeves. It is worn by bishops and prelates over a cassock.

Sermon veil – a large cloth suspended in front of the monstrance if a sermon was preached during the Rite of Exposition.

Stole – a long, scarf-like strip of cloth draped around the neck, worn over the alb and under the chasuble. It is held in place by the cincture. It matches the chasuble in colour and decoration. It represents the yoke of Christ and symbolises priestly duty.

Surplice – similar to an alb but shorter and with fuller sleeves. It is worn over a cassock not an alb. Also known as a **cotta**.

Tiara – the papal triple crown. The last pope to be crowned with the tiara was Pope Paul VI in 1963.

Tunicle – the tunic-like outer garment worn by a subdeacon and equivalent to a deacon's dalmatic and a priest's chasuble. It may be decorated with a single horizontal strip across the front rather than the double strip on a dalmatic. The tunicle was rendered obsolete when the subdeaconate was abolished by Pope Pius XII. A bishop also wore a tunicle as part of his pontificals.

Vestes sacrae (sacred vestments) – the liturgical vestments worn for liturgical services and rites. The most sacred of the *vestes sacrae* are the vestments worn by the priest for the celebration of the Holy Mass.

Zucchetto – a skull cap worn by all levels of the clergy. The papal zucchetto is white, cardinals wear red, bishops wear purple and priests wear black. Interestingly the name is derived from the Italian word *zucchetto*, meaning little gourd/pumpkin, possibly a reference to the similarity of its shape to the stem end of a zucchini. An alternative derivation is from *zucca*: Italian for pumpkin but also slang for head.



Figure: 118: Vesture

Top row; rochet; mitre; altar server's cassock and surplice. Middle row: burse and folded corporal; zucchetto. Bottom row: Bishop Phelan of Sale in non-liturgical dress (trained cassock, rochet, mantaletta, tufted biretta, and holding a mitre; Bishop Lyons of Sale in his pontificals.

(Sources: Images by author, 2013 and 2016, and C. Patullo, 2012 (burse), used with permission).

Appendix I

Symbols identified during the collections survey

Anchor – the hope of salvation and of eternal life. A pre-Christian symbol of safety and hope.

Angel – messengers or instruments of God. There are three Orders of angels divided into nine Choirs. The first order, the Counsellors, comprise the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. The second order, the Governors, include the Dominions, Powers and Virtues. The third order, the Messengers, is the Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) – the lamb is associated with Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd and as the sacrificial lamb. The lamb also appears in the last book of the Bible, The Revelation to John, as opening the Book of Judgement, hence it symbolises Christ as judge, separating the sheep (the saved) from the goats (the damned) at the Last Judgement. There are two variants – the Paschal lamb ‘triumphant’ standing on a grassy knoll supporting a banner, and the lamb of Revelations lying on a book with seven seals.

Colours (liturgical)

- Red – the colour of fire and of blood. It represents sacrifice and burning charity. Red is worn on Good Friday, at celebrations of the martyrs and at Pentecost.
- Green – the colour of life, and the triumph of life over death, and hence life eternal. Green is worn during ordinary time.
- Purple – the colour of humility, penance, preparation. Purple is worn during the liturgical seasons of Lent and Advent.
- White – the colour of light, innocence, purity, joy and glory. Gold is an alternative. White-Gold is worn during the liturgical seasons of Easter and Christmas, and on the feast days of Christ, Mary and saints who are not martyrs. Also worn for Nuptial Masses (marriages) and Masses for the Dead (funerals).
- Black – death and mourning. Worn pre-Vatican II at funerals and services on Good Friday. Superseded by white.
- Rose – optional for two Sundays of the liturgical year, Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent)
- Blue – the colour of the sky and heavenly love. It is associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, but is rarely seen outside Spain or Spanish-speaking countries.

Cross – depending on the context and design crosses can represent sacrifice and death, or love and hope. An empty cross (no figure) represents triumph over death and the power of God. A **crucifix** is a cross with a figure of Christ. The cross depicting the crucifixion of Christ dates from the thirteenth century.

Dove – a the symbol of God the Holy Spirit. It can also represent sacrifice and the human soul.

The Four evangelists –

- Winged lion – St Mark. His gospel emphasised the kingship of Christ.
- Winged man – St Matthew. His gospel emphasised the humanity of Christ.
- Winged ox – St Luke. His gospel emphasised the sacrifice of Christ.
- Eagle – St John. His gospel is the most soaring and revelatory.

Grapes and vines – represent wine and symbolise the Blood of Christ. Wine is converted into the Blood of Christ at the Consecration of the Eucharist (the Catholic miracle of transubstantiation at the Last Supper).

Lamp – wisdom and the Word of God to light the path to Heaven.

Loaves and fishes – from the parable of the loaves and fishes feeding the 5000 (Matthew 14:15-21). The fish was the earliest Christian symbol and represents Christ. The Greek Word ΙΧΘΥΣ (Ichthys) is an acronym for "Ιησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ", (Iēsous Christos, Theou Yios, Sōtēr), which translates into English as "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior". Bread is associated with the Bread of Life, and the Body of Christ.

Monograms, Christograms and acronyms -

- IHS (Christogram) – a fifteenth-century Latin translation of the Greek word IHCOYC, Jesus. IHC, IHS, and JHS are variants of this Christogram. IHC appeared as early as the third century.
- Chi-Rho (XP) (Christogram) – from the Greek word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Christ, the first two letters of which are chi (X) rho (P)
- Tau-Rho (TP) (the Staurogram) - monogram of the cross, from the Greek: ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ, cross. Tau (T) is the original form of the cross. The Latin cross with a short upright above the horizontal bar gained favour in the Middle Ages.
- Alpha-Omega (ΑΩ) (monogram) - the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, hence the beginning and the end. An appellation for Christ and God derived from “I am the beginning and the end” (Revelation 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13)
- INRI (acronym) – represents the Latin inscription Iesvs Nazarenvs Rex Ivdæorvm which translates to "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews". The inscription was nailed to the top of the cross on which Christ was crucified. (John 19:19-20 states that this was written in three languages: Hebrew (Aramaic in some translations), Latin and Greek).

Passionflower – represents the Passion of Jesus Christ. Spanish missionary monks discovered the plant in Mexico, and used its various parts to illustrate story of the Passion of Christ, the events leading up to Christ’s crucifixion on Good Friday.
http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/resources/m_garden/PM_PassionFlower.html

Pelican/Pelican in her piety – represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In medieval times it was believed that a pelican would peck at its breast in order to feed its young with its own blood.

Pillar – a representation of the pillar that Christ was, by tradition, tied to during the scourging prior to his crucifixion (John 19:1).

Pomegranate – new life and resurrection, also a symbol of the Church as one fruit with many seeds (the Faithful). In Classical Greek mythology the pomegranate is associated with the legend of Persephone.

Rays of light – the glory of God. A *glory* is a rayed aureole surrounding a figure. The IHS monogram is often depicted surrounded by a rayed halo and some representations of Marian apparitions, for example Our Lady of Guadalupe, are also depicted surrounded by a glory.

Rose (plant) – a white rose signifies the purity and the Virgin Mary, also heavenly joy; a red rose is a symbol of martyrdom.

Sacred Heart – the heart is a common symbol of bravery and love. The Sacred Heart, generally depicted as a heart surrounded by a glory, pierced by a lance and bleeding, encircled by the crown of thorns, and surmounted by a cross and flames, focuses attention on Christ's inner spirit rather than his words or deeds.

Triangle – the Holy Trinity, the three persons in one god, God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit.

Thistle/Thorns –earthly hardship and sin, from the parable of the sower, (Luke 8:4-8, 11-15)

Wheat – represents bread and symbolises the Body of Christ. Bread is converted into the body of Christ at the Consecration of the Eucharist (the Catholic miracle of transubstantiation at the Last Supper). Jesus said "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48-51)

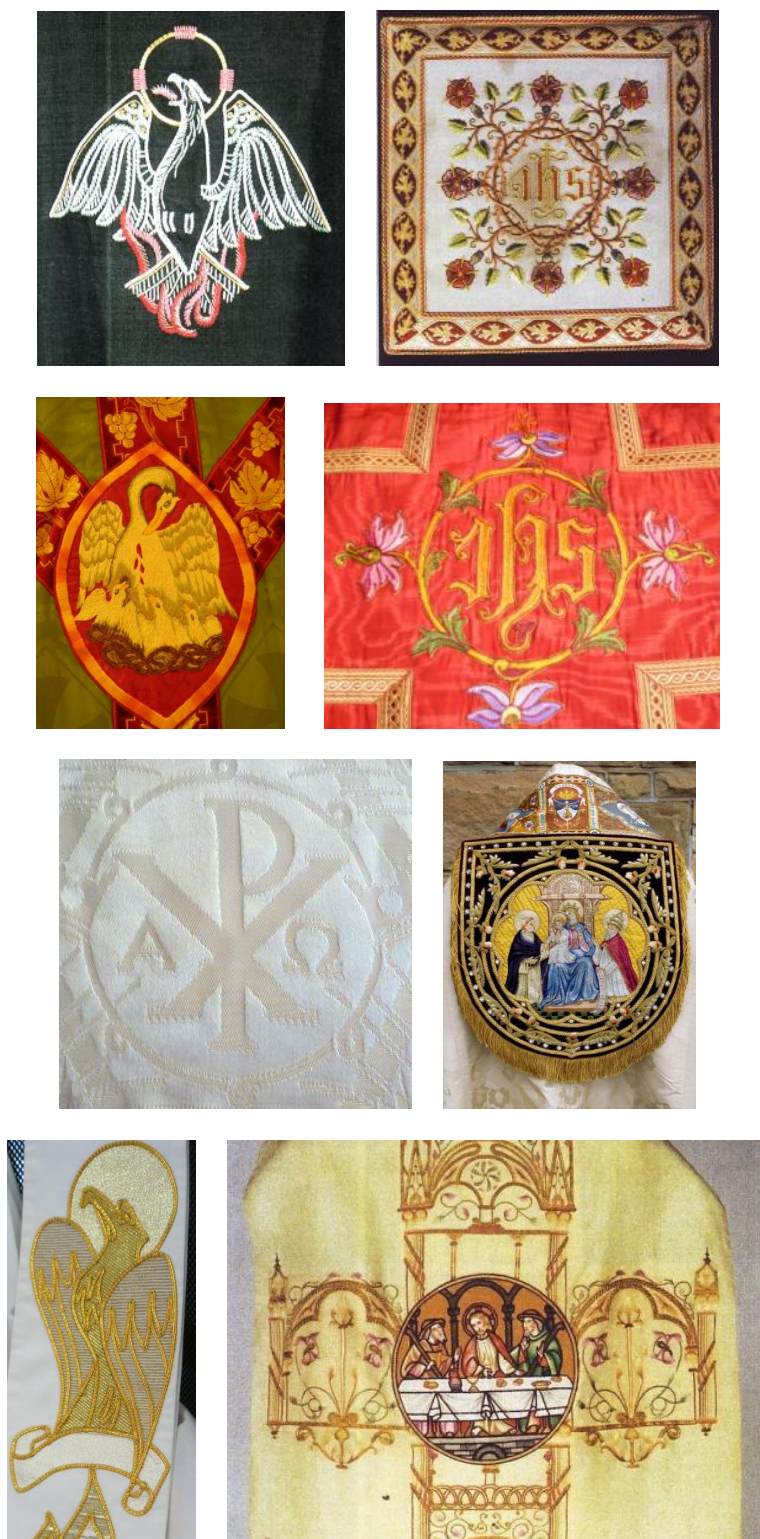


Figure 119: A selection of symbols.

Clockwise from top left: the phoenix; the IHS christogram with roses and thorns; the IHS Christogram with passionflowers; Madonna and Child with St Dominic and Pope Honorius III; Christ and the pilgrims at Emmaus; the eagle of St John; the Chi-Rho Christogram with the Alpha-Omega monogram; the pelican in her piety. .

(Sources: MDHC, 2016; MDHC, 2016; author, 2016; author; New Liturgical Movement, 2012; MDHC, 2016; author, 2013; author 2016;

Appendix II

An interpretation of the iconography of three Ursuline textiles

The following information was received from Reverend Emeritus Professor Jack Mahoney SJ, Campion College, Oxford. Fr Mahoney provided information of the form and function of the sermon veil (figure 120), the white chasuble (figures 126 and 127) and the red burse (figure 131) from the Ursuline Collection, translated the Latin inscriptions and explained the religious significance of the iconography.

Images courtesy of the Ursuline Convent Archives, 2016, used with permission.

The large sermon veil



Figure 120: The sermon veil from the Ursuline Collection

Of the three pieces of embroidered material the first, the large cloth with two inscriptions and biblical figures, is referred to by you and your sources as possibly a ‘*sermon cloth*’, i.e., a cloth reverently suspended on a stand in front of the monstrance during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament when a sermon is being preached. This could happen during what was once a popular devotion called Forty Hours, which originated in Italy as *Quarant’ Ore*, a continuous solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, sometimes extending over three evenings, which included one or more sermons.

However, I have two other possible explanations of this cloth, the first being that it looks to me more like what is commonly called a *monstrance veil*, which is draped over a monstrance to cover and protect it from dust, etc., when it is not being used in a ceremony and does not hold the sacred host placed in the centre for veneration. This is a much more general protective use of the cloth than its being used respectfully on special occasions as a ‘*sermon cloth*’. Another possibility is that the cloth is a *chalice veil*, which is draped over the chalice and paten to make them easier to carry by the celebrant to and from the altar for Mass, with the burse on top. However, the fact that your cloth has a monstrance prominently displayed in its centre seems to point to its being a monstrance rather than a chalice veil.

This identification as a monstrance veil seems to me confirmed by the inscription at the top of the cloth (figure 120) which you have rightly identified as from Thomas Aquinas’s long hymn to the Blessed Sacrament, *Lauda Sion*. This is regularly sung during the occasional processions (as on the feast of Corpus Christi) of the Blessed Sacrament contained in a monstrance, and identified here as the ‘bread of angels’, i.e., the manna sent by God from heaven to feed the Israelites in the desert, ending with the famous two Benediction verses beginning *Tantum ergo Sacramentum*.



Figure 121: Detail of the upper inscription on the sermon veil.

At the bottom of the cloth the embroidered text and illustrations are a good deal more complicated, but they can all be associated with the Blessed Sacrament as what the inscription calls a ‘figure’, or a prophecy (figure 121).



Figure 122: Detail of the lower inscription on the sermon veil.

I’m not up to the mathematical symbolism of some of the letters you mention, but I largely agree with your reading of the text, and I suggest the following complete version: *Corporis ecce sacri paschalis et agnus et Isaac quo pluit et patribus manna figura fuit*. It could be rather awkwardly translated literally as “Behold: both the lamb, and Isaac, and the manna rained down on the fathers, was a figure of the paschal sacred body”. I suggest a more idiomatic version would be to understand the inscription as the monstrance veil itself referring to what it is covering.

“Here is the paschal Sacred Body which was prefigured by the lamb, as well as by Isaac, and also by the manna poured down on our forefathers.”

The events and objects along the bottom of the veil illustrate and confirm this reading of the text by prefiguring Christ and the Eucharist in several ways. In the centre is, of course, the paschal sacrificial lamb signifying Jesus as the Lamb of God (figure 122) and his redemptive death.



Figure 123: Detail of the lamb motif on the sermon veil.



Figure 124: Detail of the figures to the left of the monstrance on the sermon veil – Moses and Elijah.



Figure 125: Detail of the figures to the right of the monstrance on the sermon veil – King David and Abraham

Flanking the lamb on our right is King David (figure 124) wearing his crown and playing a harp, since he is credited with composing and singing the psalms. With his knobbly naked knee up in the air (!) he is clearly ‘dancing before the Lord with all his might’ on finding and leading the Ark of the Covenant in procession, and ‘girded with a linen ephod’, all as described in 2 Sam 6:14.

On our left of the lamb seems to be Isaiah (figure 123), the great prophet, holding a jug and some loaves as signs of bodily nourishment, which alludes to his scene with the widow of Zarephath who fed him and was miraculously fed by him (1 Kings 17:10-16). The outer scene to our right shows us Abraham about to kill his son Isaac (figure 123) at God’s command, with the child kneeling in prayer on a bed of twigs for the fire but the angel holding Abraham’s sword back from striking the fatal blow, all as described in Gen 22.

That leaves the figure on our extreme left, Moses (figure 122). Here he has the traditional horns on his forehead (Ex 34: 29, a mistranslation of the Hebrew, which actually describes his face as radiant after talking with God). He is holding the rod with which he struck the rock at God’s command to produce water in the desert for the Israelites (Ex 17:5-6). And behind him is the bronze snake draped over a pole which Moses put up when the Israelites were bitten by a snake as a punishment for disobedience, so that they had only to look at it to be cured, as described in Numbers 1:9 and recalled by Jesus in John 3:14. To Moses’s left at his feet is what looks like a basket holding the manna which at Moses’s prayer God ‘rained’ down from heaven (Exodus 16:4) to feed the Israelites daily in the desert, and of which they had to collect an extra portion on the day before the Sabbath and store some to keep in remembrance forever (Exodus 16:5 and 13:33).

The white chasuble

It is clear from the full photograph that you first sent me that this is the front of an old-style ‘fiddle-back’ Mass chasuble, now very much out of fashion (the front looks like the back of a violin) (figures 126 and 127).



Figure 126: The white chasuble, back view



Figure 127: The white chasuble, front view

The inscription in the square in the centre (figure 127), of which you sent me a clearer photo, is now fairly easy to read, but it raises some puzzles, because it has no verb and doesn't seem to make a sentence. As you suggest, it reads 'o amor o dolor o fili o rara o genetrix cara'. If it is contrived to add up to the date, as you mention, that might explain the choice of some of the words and the awkward style. It looks as if it might be a rhyme, with the first line ending with 'rara' and the second with 'cara'. The frequent repetition of 'o' makes it seem like a list of admiring vocative phrases, as 'O love, o grief, o Son, o rare (woman), o dear mother'. ('Fili' is the vocative case of *filius*, 'son' and gives us the clue that all the others are vocative too. 'Genetrix' is quite commonly used of Mary's motherhood rather than 'mater', to stress her physical begetting of Jesus and therefore his full humanity). Maybe the whole text is a list of exclamations of praise including a parallelism between Mary and her Son?



Figure 128: Detail of the inscription in the centre front of the white chasuble.

Turning back to the larger chasuble photo that you first sent me, which includes this inscription, there is at the top of the chasuble a sunburst containing what might be two twinned hearts (figure 128), which could be those of Jesus and Mary.



Figure 129: Detail of the heart motif on the front of the white chasuble

These and the parallel exclamations in the box text below might indicate that this chasuble is designed to be worn on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a devotion which developed in the mid-17th century, with its feast established in 1805. This was a copy of, and parallel to, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and its feast, and the Marian devotion is based on Lk 2:35 and the prophecy there of Mary's suffering. The two hearts may therefore link the love of Jesus and the suffering of Mary, and might even illustrate the inscription below, 'O love, O grief, o unique Son, O dear Mother.'

I think you are right in reading the date at the bottom as 1893, (figure 129) and the word on the left is 'renovatum', or 'restored'. I suspect the word on the right is a place name, like Amsterdam¹¹⁶?



Figure 130: Detail of the inscription at the bottom of the front of chasuble

¹¹⁶ On closer inspection, the word that Fr Mahoney identified as possibly Amsterdam is in fact finished; the phrase is Renovation finished 1893.

The small red burse



Figure 131: The red burse from the Ursuline Collection.

This has obviously, like the others, to do with liturgical ceremonies. (Have you noticed on it the all-seeing eye under the dome among the seven pillars of divine wisdom? (figure 131)). You have correctly identified the verse from Proverbs 9:1 (Latin version), although I suggest it would be more idiomatically translated as ‘Wisdom has built herself a house, with seven pillars’.

As for its purpose, it’s too small to be a chalice cover. Possibly, depending on what the material is, it might be an embroidered finger towel used by the celebrant after washing his hands at the offertory of the Mass; but this is unlikely. I’m much more inclined to think that what we are looking at might be the front cover of a ‘burse’, which is a square purse of about that size with a stiff cardboard lining. The burse holds the ‘corporal’ which is used in Mass, a sort of white linen handkerchief, folded neatly and slipped into the burse when not in use, and

which is spread out on the altar at the offertory of the Mass when the bread and chalice of wine are placed on it. In this case, it could be the slightly larger burse which goes with a monstrance, holding a similar white folded cloth which is placed on the altar under the monstrance during Exposition.

Looking at the photograph you sent me of this cloth, especially along the bottom and the bottom right hand corner, I have the impression that we could be looking at the front of something folded behind it, shaped like a large textile envelope. If examination of the original confirms this, then what we have is a decorated burse, made to hold the corporal to be placed under the monstrance as I have described it. It would be natural to embroider it, although I can think of no reason why the theme of wisdom should be chosen, unless Wisdom alludes to the Holy Spirit as the giver of wisdom, and it is through the power of the Spirit that the bread is converted into the Body of Christ.

Appendix III

Questionnaire

As explained in Chapter 4, the questionnaire was designed to gather descriptive data on the size, scope and location of textile collections and information on management protocols, to reveal a general sense of the significance of the textiles to their custodians and to act as a starting point for discussions with interviewees in Phase II of the data collection process.

SECTION 1: Contextual and administrative information

(1.1) Name of the institution, community or organisation that cares for the collection:

(1.2) Name and title of contact person(s):

(1.3) What is your role in regards to the textile collection?

(1.4) Are you happy to be contacted for further information ☐ YES ☐ NO

(1.5) Would you like to be informed about progress of my research? ☐ YES ☐ NO

SECTION 2: Questions about the size and scope of the textile collection.

(2.1) What types of textiles are in your collection. Choose as many as applicable.

Garments:

- ☐ CHASUBLE ☐ STOLE ☐ COPE ☐ MANTLES and/or CAPES
- ☐ ALB ☐ PONTIFICALS for example slippers, gloves please specify
- ☐ MITRE ☐ HAT for example biretta, galero please specify ...
- ☐ OTHER please specify ...

Other textiles and linen:

- ☐ ALTAR CLOTH ☐ ALTAR FRONTAL ☐ CHALICE VEIL
- ☐ BURSE ☐ PALL ☐ ALTAR LACE ☐ OTHER please specify ...

Banners and Hangings:

☐ DEVOTIONAL BANNER ☐ LITURGICAL BANNER

☐ LECTERN FRONTAL ☐ WALL HANGING ☐ OTHER please specify ...

(2.2) To the best of your knowledge, how large would you say the overall collection is?

☐ less than 10 items ☐ 10-25 ☐ 26-50 ☐ 51-100 ☐ more than 100

Which two or three types of textiles make up the largest part of the collection?

Which two or three types of textiles make up the smallest part of the collection?

(2.3) In your opinion, which two or three textiles or groups of textiles are the most interesting? Why?

(2.4) In your opinion, which two or three textiles or groups of textiles are the most important? Why?

(2.5) To the best of your knowledge, is there any documentation relating to particular textiles in your collection? For example – letters, magazine or newspaper articles, catalogues or inventories, books, photographs, explanatory labels, reports.

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

If YES, please give up to three examples of documentation that is, in your opinion, interesting or important.

SECTION 3: Questions about the history of the textiles in the collection.

(3.1) To the best of your knowledge, which approximate time spans does the textile collection cover? Choose as many as applicable.

☐ before 1800 ☐ 1800-1850 ☐ 1850-1900 ☐ 1900-1930
☐ 1930-1960 ☐ after 1960 ☐ UNSURE

(3.2) To the best of your knowledge, why were/are the textiles included in the collection?

(3.3) Are any of the textiles in your collection still in use?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ NOT SURE

If YES, which textiles are still being used?

How often and/or when are they used?

Why are they used?

(3.4) To the best of your knowledge, have any of your textiles been on display, or in an exhibition?

☐ YES

☐ NO

☐ NOT SURE

If YES, which textiles have been on display?

What was the aim or purpose of the display or exhibition?

(3.5) To the best of your knowledge, has the collection been used or studied by others?

☐ YES

☐ NO

☐ NOT SURE

If YES, why or by whom was the collection used? Choose as many as applicable.

☐ CHURCH HISTORY

☐ LITURGICAL HISTORY or STUDIES

☐ FAMILY HISTORY

☐ HISTORY of the COMMUNITY

☐ COSTUME HISTORY

☐ ART or DESIGN HISTORY

☐ HERITAGE MATTERS, for example conservation work or survey/inventory

☐ OTHER please specify ...

(3.6) To the best of your knowledge, are textiles still being added to the collection?

☐ YES

☐ NO

☐ NOT SURE

If YES, what is being added and why? If NO, why not?

SECTION 4. Questions about the care of the collection

(4.1) What do you see as the main challenges or issues with caring for the textiles in your collection?

(4.2) To the best of your knowledge, how are the textiles stored? Choose as many as applicable.

☐ HANGING

☐ FOLDED

☐ PACKED IN BOXES

☐ ON RACKS

☐ IN WARDROBES/CUPBOARDS

☐ IN DRAWERS

☐ ON SHELVES

☐ NOT SURE

☐ OTHER please specify ...

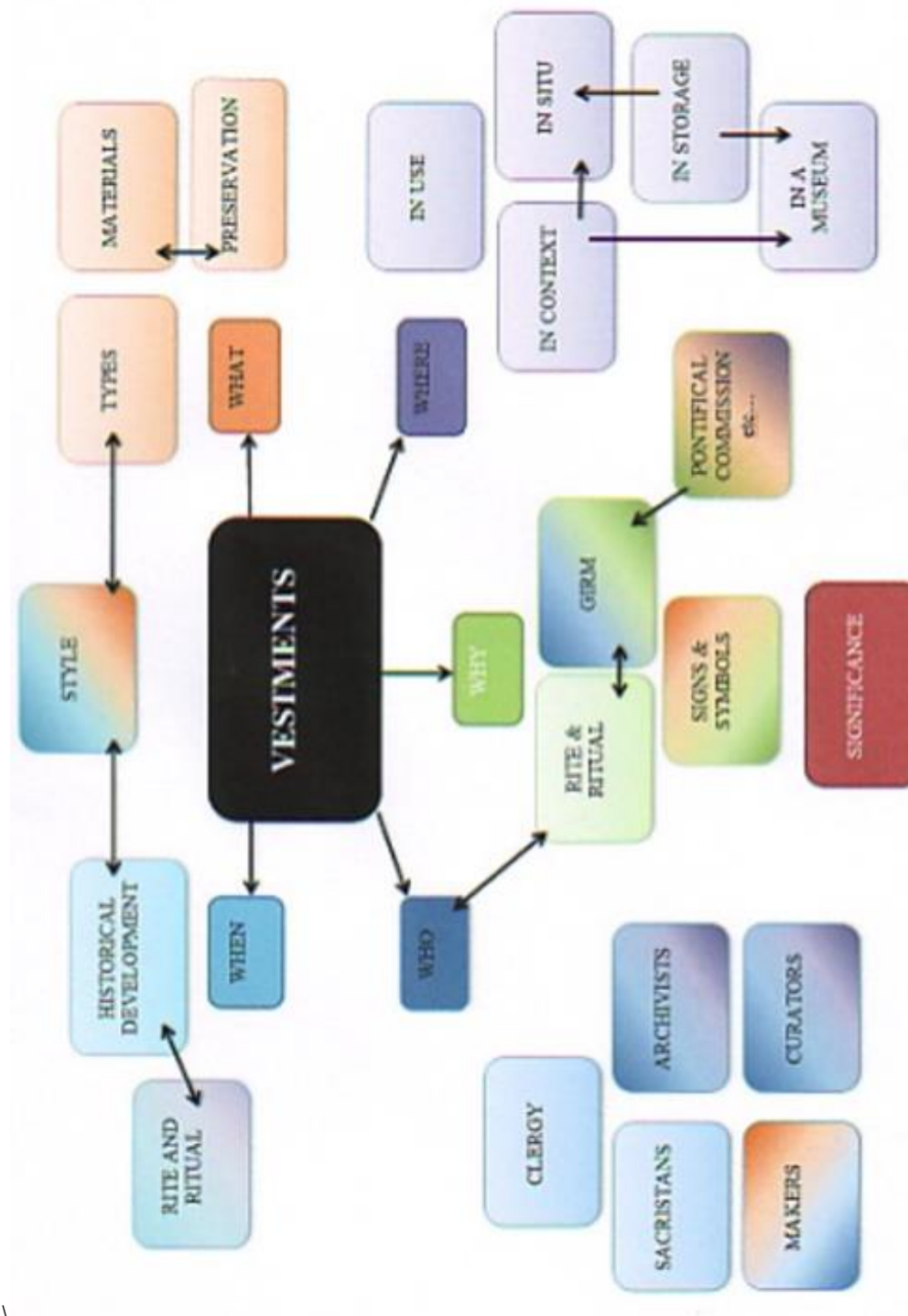
(4.3) To the best of your knowledge, what is the general condition of the textiles?

(4.4) If resources were available, how would you like the collection to be used?

Please feel free to make any additional comments about the textiles in your collection. You may also comment on the research project.

Appendix IV

Mind map





What treasures lie within?

(Images by author, 2016 (top), 2013 (bottom))

