

## PLANNING VESTMENTS

*“Fitness is the keynote of design, ornament, which does not assist in emphasizing the purpose or meaning of the Church service is wrong in its very essence. Whatever the pattern may denote -- and symbolism is rarely absent and should not be absent -- the complete harmony of idea, purpose, and execution must be secured. Excellence of technique, the importance of which is unquestionable, is largely a matter of training and it is a pitiable waste of ability when applied to inappropriate ornament.”*

*Antrobus, p.134*

## LITURGICAL COLORS for the NOVUS ORDO RITE

Color	When Used
White	Masses and offices of Easter and Christmas seasons, on feasts of Our Lord (except on the feasts of the Passion), on feasts of the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and all the saints who are not martyrs and the feasts of All Saints- Nov.1, St John the Baptist- June 24, St John the Evangelist-Dec.27 the Chair of St Peter-Feb. 22, and the Conversion of St. Paul-Jan. 25
Red	On Palm Sunday and Good Friday, Pentecost Sunday, celebrations of the Lord's passion, birthday feasts of the apostles and evangelists, and feasts of martyrs.
Green	Offices and Masses of Ordinary Time.
Violet	During Advent or Lent. However, Rose may be substituted on the on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday). Viol may also be worn in offices and Masses for the Dead.
Black	May be used in Masses for the dead.
Rose	On the 3rd Sunday of Advent and the 4th Sunday of Lent.
Gold/ Silver	Gold or Silver may take the place of White, Red or Green but never Purple or Black.
Blue	By a special indult, blue may be use for vestments in Spain and in Spanish counties on certain feasts of Our Lady. It may be used for frontals on Mary's altar in other countries

## LITURGICAL COLORS for the TRIDENTINE RITE

Color	When Used
White	On feasts of Our Lord (except on the feast of the Precious Blood) on feasts of the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and all the saints who are not martyrs.
Red	On feasts of martyrs, feasts of the precious Blood, Pentecost Sunday, and through the octave.
Green	On Sundays and Ferial Days from the end of the octave of the Epiphany to Septuagesima, and on Sundays and Ferial Days in the season of Pentecost.
Violet	On Sundays and Ferial Days during Advent or Lent. However, Rose may be substituted on the on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday). During the last days of Holy Week, on certain Vigils, on Ember days except those in White Sunday Week, at certain votive Masses and at many Blessings.
Black	In some churches black is used on Good Friday, on All Souls Day, at Masses of Dead, and at Requiem funeral.
Rose	On the 3rd Sunday of Advent and the 4th Sunday of Lent.
Gold Silver	Gold or Silver may take the place of White, Red or Green but never Purple or Black.
Blue	By a special indult, blue may be used for vestments in Spain and in Spanish countries on certain feasts of Our Lady. It may be used for frontals on Mary's altar in other countries.

## **RULE ONE --FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS**

The first rule of vestment making is: **Consult with the priest for whom the vestments are intended.** Find out the priest' s/church' needs, the priest' taste in vestments, check, if possible, the church building in which they will be worn or get a picture and **have the designs approved.** This avoids many problems. Vestments that are inappropriate for the circumstances or that a priests dislikes will not be worn.

## **PAYING FOR VESTMENTS**

Vestments can be an expensive investment. They may be paid for in several ways: memorials, fund raisers, special collections, donations or from parish funds.

In some churches it is a custom to make a memorial donation for a set of vestments when a loved one dies. I' ve also heard of families donating a white set to be worn for their daughters' wedding ceremony.

Organizations such as the Altar Society/ Guild, Knights of Columbus, Holy Name Society, etc. can hold fund raisers to pay for vestments.

One priest that I' ve worked with has his own approach to paying for vestments. He goes ahead and has the vestments made but will not wear them until they' re paid for .

When the vestments are completed he puts them on display along with a donation box and a sign stating the amount of money needed to cover their cost. After enough money is contributed and the vestments are paid for, the priest schedules a special ceremony for blessing the vestments before Mass. With great pomp and circumstance he inaugurates the use of the new vestments.

His method seems to work, he usually collects not only enough to pay for the vestments on display but often gets donations to buy additional vestments. Other priests have tried his method and found the same results.

## CONSIDERATION IN DESIGNING VESTMENTS

Although I don't agree with Roulin's assessment of Roman style vestments and some to his other opinions in the book "Vestments and Vesture," he does offer very good advice on vestments in relationship to the background in which they are worn. I will therefore quote directly from his book in this section.

*"Any piece of work will have more interest if designed for the place and occasion for which it is required."*

*"In designing vestments and church furnishings style, color, fabric and trims should be considered, if possible, in relationship to the architectural style, the size and lighting the church where they will be used and the background against which they will be seen. The vestments and furnishings should harmonize with its surroundings."*

*"The size of the church is definitely a consideration when planning vestments and furnishings. Not all possible shades of any color are suitable for all church interiors; if stain glass windows are very clear and the church full of light, soft subdued shades will be best adapted to the circumstance. On the other hand, if the church is dark, the greens, red, and purples should be brighter, and carrying this principle to its logical conclusion the same should apply to orpherys of the vestments."*

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*"There are several sorts of white which are subtly and yet really distinct. Ivory white and silver white are less bright than snow white and white lightly tinged with golden-yellow has a characteristically warm effect. White fabrics can be bought in these different tints. If the softer hues are decorated with ornament which is subdued in tone, then the vestments will harmonize with a well-lighted interior. On the other hand, a vivid white with a rather bold ornamentation will produce a satisfying and harmonious effect in a dark church, that is the time for white satin and rich fabrics."*

*"In the case of a white painted altar and reredos (altar backdrops) special consideration must be given to vestments. The white in the altar and the frontal and vestments must be compatible. One must be careful so that the vested priest and frontal don't fade into the*

*woodwork. Therefore, the vestment style, fabric pattern and trim are very important. A vestment with a galloon edge trim would also be a good choice in this case."*

*‘It is also good to give black vestments a touch of life and warmth by means of strips gold lace, or embroidery in red, yellow or other colors.’*

*Roulin*

When planning a design for a set of vestments and furnishings, a theme is often chosen that relates to the season or occasion when they will be used. This theme is carried throughout the complete set of vestments and furnishings including the cope, dalmatics, and frontal. For instance, a set maybe made for the Christmas or Lenten season, in honor of Mary under one of her titles, in honor of a particular saint, or may relate to the Passion of Our Lord.

When carrying a particular theme the style of the vestments, fabric, trims, and colors used should be in harmony with the theme used. For instance, in a Marian vestment, white, gold or silver with blue trim are the most commonly used colors. For a vestment pertaining to the Passion of Our Lord the pattern of the fabric may have crosses, the crown of thorns, or passion flowers in it. To continue carrying out the theme appliques with religious symbols or figures are often used on the chasuble and on the accessory pieces of the set. On white vestments symbols of Our Lord, Our Lady, or the saints are usually chosen. On red the dove for the Holy Ghost or a cross and crown for the martyrs might be utilized. Symbols for the passion may be used on a purple vestment for Lent.

When designing vestments the style chosen should be carried throughout all the pieces. In other words, if the American Roman, French, or Gothic style is chosen for the chasuble, the accessory pieces, the cope, dalmatics, humeral veil, and frontal should also be made in the same style. This lends to unity in design and integrity in style. (One should not break the integrity of a vestment style, otherwise the style will not be passed on to future generations in tact.)

The vestment style and fabric pattern should be compatible. The Classical Italian style for instance, is very adaptable to large patterned damasks, while the American Roman is more suitable to moire faille and smaller patterned fabrics. The American Roman also makes a good simple travel vestment. The French makes up well in beautiful brocades and tapestry fabrics and may be highly ornamented. The Gothic styles need a material that drapes well such as silk. The wrong vestment style or trim can kill an exquisite fabric and ruin the whole design.

Another consideration is the size of the priest who will wear the vestments. A very short, slightly built priest would appear to be wrapped in a blanket in a large Gothic or Conical vestment, while a big tall priest would look like he was wearing a baby bib in a small Swiss style chasuble. Very large and very small priests take extra considerations. Patterns may be enlarged or reduced in size three to 5 percent on a photocopy machine for these priests.

## **COMMENTARY ON DESIGN, FABRICS AND TRIMS**

Those who want to engage in vestment making must not only be able to sew well but also must learn what is liturgically correct, the meaning of religious symbols, and develop a sense of good taste for the design and ornamentation of vestments and paraments. Church sacristies, church museums, and the archives of churches, convents, and monasteries are wonderful places to do a hands-on study of church vestments and textile furnishings.

One of the most interesting aspects of designing vestments is that the ecclesiastical fabric patterns and trims have changed very little since the Middle Ages. Study the art books or visit a museum, you will find many of the same beautiful brocade patterns and trims there that one works with when making vestments.

The old art masterpieces, religious painting with antique vestments in them and even old holy cards and prayer books can sometime spark ideas for your own vestments. Old church goods catalogs from such companies as the Benziger Bros. Co., Diedrich-Schaefer Co., the Daleden Co., the Wildermann Co., and Stoltzenberg Co., or museum textile exhibit catalogs can also be an inspiration for designs.

University, public and art museum libraries are great places to find additional information on vestments and suppliers. The categories one should check under are church vestments, embroidery and needlework. Check bibliographies of the books you take out for other books on the subject and new sources of supplies. I suggest that you make photocopies of the books that are out of print and keep them for reference.

Also, by searching the Internet you can find other sources of information. Websites such as French Yesterdays, Adrian Hamers, and Ebay have beautiful pictures of vestments. Download them and put them in a file for reference.

## **PATTERNS**

To make the master patterns, I've taken patterns from old vestments and also enlarged pictures of vestments and patterns from old books on the photocopier.

I do a first drawing from my pattern source on a heavy brown paper 48" wide with a 1" grid pattern available from sign companies. I then correct any distortions, and refine the master patterns using a straight and a curved ruler.. From this master pattern I make a working pattern using grid marked pattern tracing cloth available from a fabric store.

The patterns in this book are drawn without seam allowances. In making vestments ½ inch seams are usually used unless otherwise marked. Seam allowances must be added all around to each of the pattern pieces.

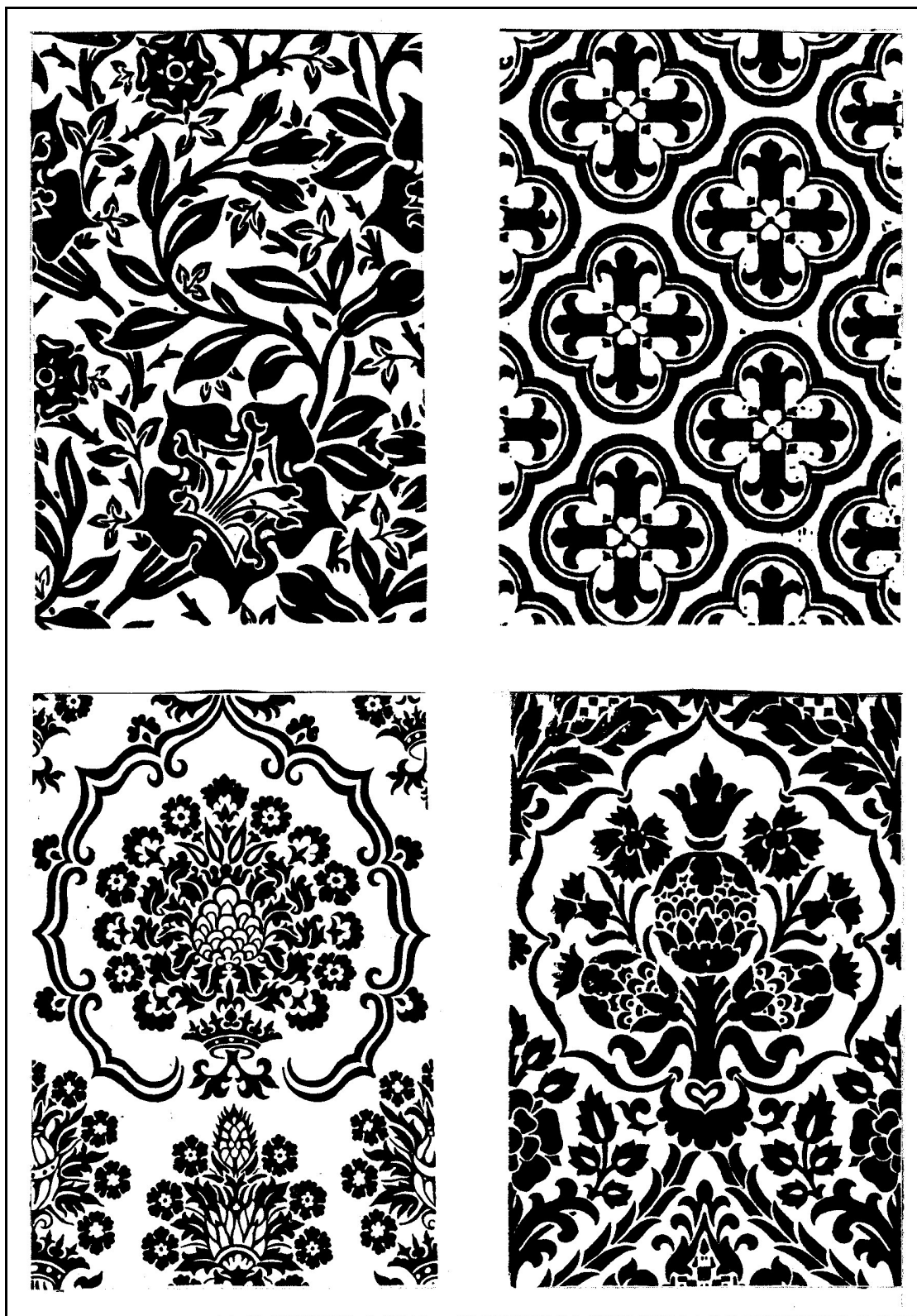


Figure 5

Ecclesiastical Fabrics



## **FACE FABRICS FOR VESTMENTS**

Face fabrics for vestments should be the proper weight for the style chosen. The Gothic style may use light to medium fabrics that hang in good folds. The Roman style, on the other hand, can accommodate medium to heavier weight fabrics but not too heavy for comfort.

Silks, rayons, silk/cotton brocades, damasks and tapestry fabrics, moire faille, bengeline, silk satin, and cotton velvet are some of the fabrics suitable for the face material of vestments and furnishings.

There are a number of companies that deal in fabrics for ecclesiastical use. Check the suppliers list at the end of this book.

## **FABRIC AMOUNTS**

For a basic five piece Low Mass vestment set in the Roman style about 3 yards of 45" to 50" face fabric is required. A Standard 48" Gothic Low Mass set takes about 5 yards of 50" to 54" fabric. For a wider Gothic style more fabric is required.

## **INTERFACING**

Woven interfacings are preferred to non-woven. Although I don't recommend iron-on interfacing for general use, I do use the woven iron-on interfacing for reinforcing the face of the burse, to stabilize certain band trims, and to reinforce worn areas when doing repairs. Narrow bands of this interfacing may also be used on the back of the face fabric on the Gothic chasuble to stabilize it in the area where trims will be applied.

A light to medium weight woven interfacing is needed for the Gothic style stole and maniple depending upon the weight of the face fabric. A very light weight interfacing is used to stabilize the yoke area of the Gothic chasuble.

A good stiff woven interfacing is needed for the Roman style chasuble, maniple, and stole. Collar interfacing such as "Stiff Stuff" from Greenburg and Hammer or "T-16" from Black & Co. are interfacings I like for this use. Folds and wrinkles may be removed with just a light press. Heavier weight hair canvas, cotton canvas, stiff duck, or dowlais can also be used but they tend to make the chasuble rather heavy. Both Greenburg & Hammer and Black & Co. also have a good variety of 45" wide interfacings.

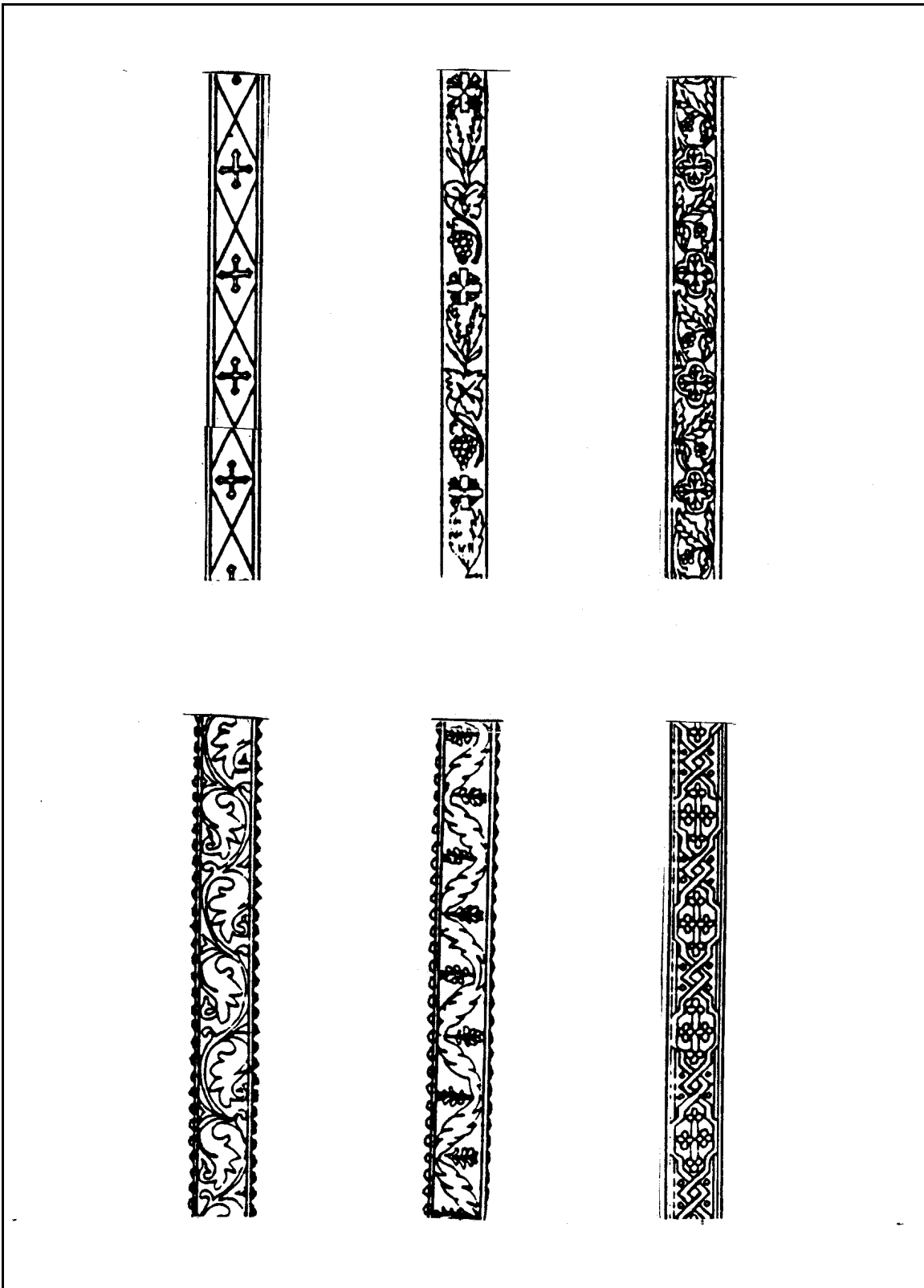


Figure 6

## Galloon Banding

## **LININGS**

Slick linings in fabric such as satin tends to shift and slide around on the priest and are quite bothersome as he offers Mass. For this reason most priests prefer a non-slippery lining especially in Roman vestments.

Habotai-China silk, silk pongee, or a good quality silk, polyester or acetate taffeta are good choices for lining Gothic style vestments. For the Roman style suggested lining materials are silk broadcloth or twill if the face material is silk or a silk blend, finely woven poly/cotton poplin, sateen, or heavier weight broadcloth.

## **TRIMS**

There are several different types of trims generally used on vestments. Narrow galloons or braids 1/2" to 1 1/2" wide are used to make an outline cross on a Roman chasuble, for crosses on the accessory pieces, to finish the edges of bands of fabric when used for trim, and to trim the edges of the vestments. A 3" to 6" wide woven orphrey bandings and also contrasting fabric bands can be used to trim the chasuble and pieces in certain Roman styles and in the Gothic style. In addition, bands of contrasting fabric are sometimes used as a background for an embroidery trim or applique. Appliques with religious symbols or figures are often used in the center of the chasuble back or front and on frontals and other paraments.

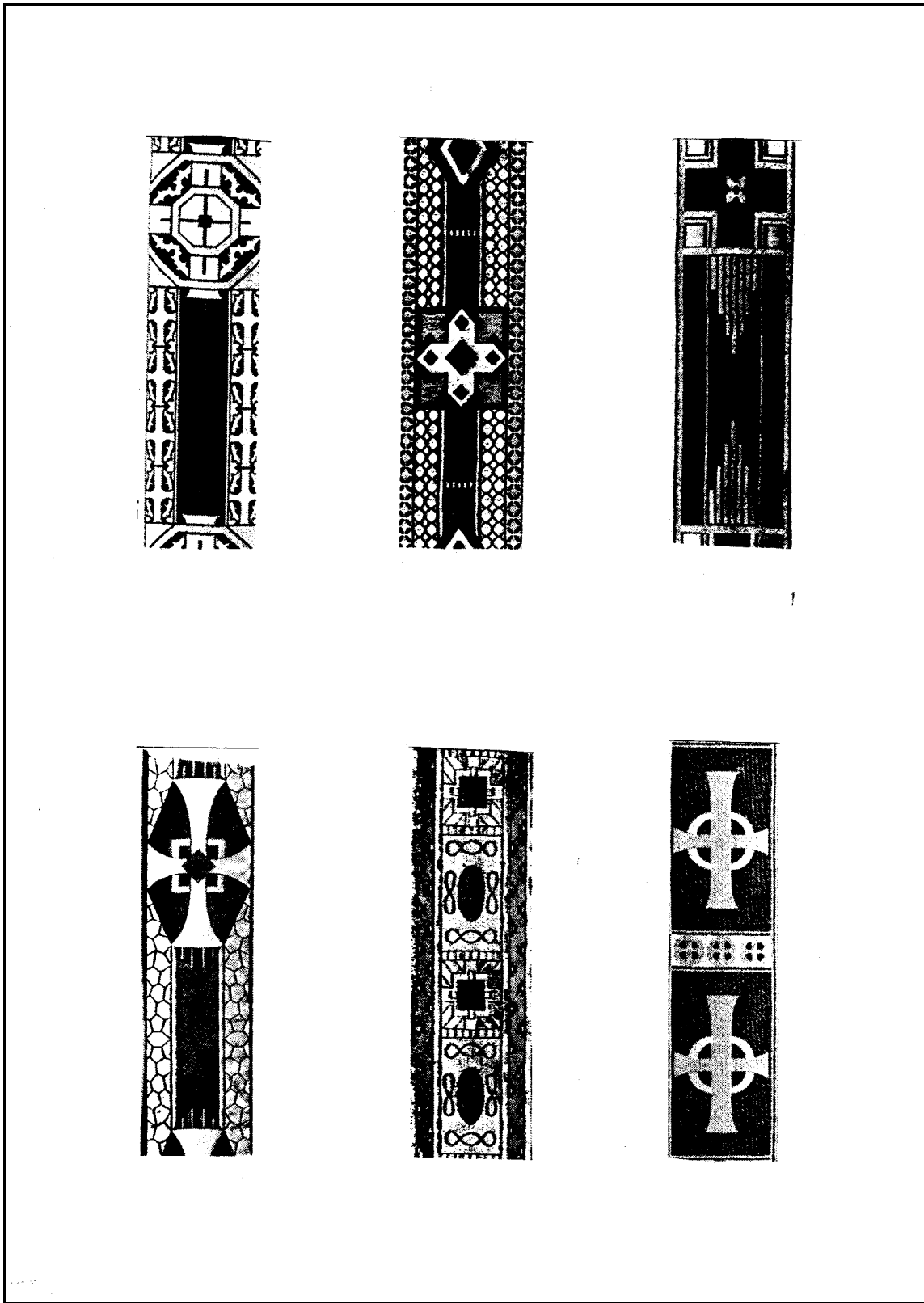


Figure 7

## Ophery Bandings

