



Ecclesiastical Regulations 2025

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Introduction

This document is published as an incremental update to the existing Ecclesiastical Regulations (2020). It is not a complete or comprehensive guide to ecclesiastical portrayals in the early medieval period, but rather governs the core elements of depicting ecclesiastical life in the Anglo-Saxon period. Further information should be obtained through discussion with the Ecclesiastic officer and their deputies.

The Code of Law

Regia's ecclesiastical display is governed by a National Officer, the Ecclesiastical Officer (EcO, EccO, EcclO), and their Deputies.

The EcO scope of action is defined by the Code of Law.

Regulations 2B The Officers and their Areas of Responsibility

xviii. The HW may elect an Ecclesiastical Officer. (EcclO).

- a) He shall attend at least half of the Society's major events in any one year.*
- b) He shall initiate and correlate research into the Church in these Islands in the Society's Period of Interest.*
- c) He shall promote the ecclesiastical aspect of the Society's activities. He shall control the Ecclesiastical Rank system of the Society, in consultation with the local group leaders of members of the Society involved in this aspect.*
- d) He shall ensure that the bounds of good taste and authenticity are not exceeded by the words or actions of any religious ceremony or display at a Society Event, or by the actions or words of himself or those responsible to him. He shall ensure that all religious ceremonies performed as part of the public displays of the Society are verifiable from primary sources from the Society's Period of Interest. He shall advise the AO, MAA and LHC in this regard.*
- e) He shall call, organise and attend meetings of all those involved in the ecclesiastical aspect of the Society's displays. These meetings, known as Synods, may be attended by all those with an interest in this aspect, whether they hold ecclesiastical rank within the Society or not.*
- f) He shall promulgate policy and regulations regarding the ecclesiastical aspect of the Society's activities. This shall be distributed to at least the members of the HW.*
- g) He may appoint deputies, the number of which (including himself) shall not exceed 1.5% of the total membership of the Society, unless agreed otherwise by the HW. He shall co-ordinate their activities, and report back to the HW upon them from time to time.*

Ecclesiastical Displays



Ecclesiastical style “bell tent” (Edwine Psalter f.105r)

1. Regulations for active participants in ecclesiastical displays
 - a. Those wishing to participate in ecclesiastical activities must identify themselves in advance to the EcO or one of his Deputies, in addition to informing their GL.
 - b. The kit worn by ecclesiasts must be passed by the EcO or relevant Deputy before participation at a display.
 - c. Roles within any display at an event are assigned on the basis of quality of kit and a member’s experience at portraying their character. The dateline and setting of a show defines the type of ecclesiastical display possible. Please check what is acceptable before taking part.
 - d. It should be noted that the presence of isolated monastic clergy (single monks or nuns) is likely to be more unusual than that of ‘secular’ clergy (bishops, priests and deacons). Those wishing to portray monastic clergy must bear this in mind when discussing their role with the EcO.

2. The Battlefield

- a. Ecclesiastical involvement on the battlefield has a number of facets;
 - i. Clergy may provide a visual contrast to the warriors.
 - ii. Clergy may be used as plot development (shouting things or negotiating, for example, or the 'killing don't start until the fat bishop sings' principle), and so forth.
 - iii. The activity known as corpse-checking. Clergy may wander the field lifting shields (if necessary) and making a visual inspection of the corpses beneath. (This activity is carried out under liaison with the First Aid Coordinator).
- b. The protection of the Church is extended to those in dire fear of 'death' on the field. In general, defeated army commanders may claim sanctuary from the senior male cleric present (priest or bishop), often by kneeling and grasping their knees.
- c. In conjunction with the Military Training Officer the following rules apply;
 - i. The rules of the battlefield apply to non-combatants, most importantly sharps are not permitted.
 - ii. You must not conceal an injury from a corpse-checker, or feign one. You will be asked if you are OK, answer truthfully.
 - iii. No robed cleric is to be physically abused or impeded as he goes about the field (unless specifically ordered in advance by the script commanders as part of the display). Verbal 'abuse' is generally not authentic, but may be permissible in certain contexts. (see 2d. Ecclesiastical Guards).
 - iv. No non-combatant may attack a combatant or vice versa unless it is a prearranged part of the display.
 - v. Whilst claiming sanctuary the cleric is not to be felled to the ground: if he is, intervention by Ecclesiastical Guards may occur.
 - vi. Any 'Christian' combatant shall regard it as his duty to defend nuns and monks when appropriate.
- d. Ecclesiastical Guards

In cases where the clerics on the field are of significant importance, they may be assigned a guard or two – usually from the senior armoured divisions.

The duties of ecclesiastical guards are to:

- i. Defend clerics from abuse.

- ii. Revenge verbal or physical assaults.
- iii. Bear their standards.
- e. Any cleric required to take up arms as part of a prearranged plot, as Bishop Odo at Hastings, for example, loses the normal clerical privileges. He must equip and comport himself properly as a warrior of equivalent rank.

3. Church Buildings

- a. Occasionally, we are asked to put on displays in church buildings. It is a matter of absolute importance in these cases that the display is carried out with all due reverence, and respect for the local church authorities' views on the matter.
- b. Displays in church buildings can be divided into two types: church services or Regia displays.

- i. Regia Displays

Displays will take place with all due reverence. Mass will not be celebrated as part of a Regia ecclesiastical display.

- ii. Church Services

Regia is sometimes asked to attend real church services as part of a local festival. While we are happy to perform before or after a church service, we will take no 'display' role within one. This does not, of course, preclude Regia members taking a normal congregational role, should they so desire.

4. The Living History Exhibit

Various ecclesiastical displays may take place within the context of the LHE.

- a. Where possible monks, nuns and/or members of the clergy should arrange themselves on a shared 'wic'.
- b. Monks, nuns and/or members of the clergy should not be stationed on obviously pagan wics, except in limited circumstances where they may serve a narrative role (e.g when performing conversions, or as hostages).
- c. Interactive displays
 - i. Weddings.
 - ii. Coronations.
 - iii. Baptisms.
 - iv. Choir practice.

- v. Curing the sick or administering rites to the dead.
 - vi. Trial by ordeal
 - vii. Public assemblies and Things. Clergy are an integral part of these under any 'Christian' dateline and location. Clergy may appear to represent Church estates or as chaplain to the assembly.
- d. Displays deemed suitable for ecclesiastical portrayals
- i. A tent may be laid out as a chapel.
 - ii. The household of a senior cleric may be depicted.
 - iii. Chaplains or secretaries may appear in the households of thegns.
 - iv. A table display of ecclesiastical paraphernalia may be arranged.
 - v. The contents of an infirmary may be displayed.
 - vi. Crafts appropriate to a minster community may be demonstrated, such as fine metalworking, woodworking, boneworking, embroidery or illumination.
 - vii. Manual labour appropriate to a minster community may be demonstrated.
 - viii. A collection of tents may be arranged together as a "minster" in the appropriate context, subject to approval by the EcO and AO.
 - ix. Other displays deemed suitable by consultation with the EcO.
- e. Displays deemed *unacceptable* for ecclesiastical portrayals
- i. Armoury, weapons or other military displays.
 - ii. Trading or pedlar displays.
- Other displays deemed unacceptable at the discretion of the EcO. If in doubt please check first.

Ranks of clergy and their dress



Left to right: *St Cuthbert in priestly attire wearing the alb and chasuble (CCCC MS 183, f.1v), St. Cuthbert as a monk with a habit and integral hood (BL YT 26, f. 22v), and a nun being presented with Aldhelm's "De Laude Virginitatis", wearing a dress, mantle and wimple (Lambeth Palace Library, MS 200, f.68v)*

5. Secular Clerics

Secular (from the Latin 'secularis', in the world) clergy constituted the majority of ordained ministers in our period. They are ranked into three divisions, namely deacons, priests and bishops. When not engaged in a specifically religious function, secular clergy are dressed in normal clothing (unless they are also monks). Their vestments are donned at the beginning of services.

For detailed descriptions of individual vestments, see below. The EcO (or relevant deputy) should be consulted throughout the process of making or obtaining ecclesiastical kit.

a. Acolytes (AS *acolitus*)

Acolytes are not ordained clergy, but perform minor functions during services. They do not operate independently of senior clergy.

Acolytes will be vested in:

- i. Alb and cingulum
- ii. Amice

b. Deacons (AS *diacon*)

The lowest rank of ordained clergy we portray, deacons are assistants to higher clergy and/or new clergy learning their role. As such it would be unlikely that they would be on their own.

Deacons will be vested in:

- i. Alb and cingulum
- ii. Stole (over the left shoulder)
- iii. Planeta and amice
- iv. Dalmatic (C11th onwards)

c. Priests (*AS priest*)

The middle rank of clergy, who are the mainstay of the Church's ministry. Priests can perform all spiritual functions required by a community on a day-to-day basis. Priests hold a similar status to thegns under AS law. They may operate singly, or in conjunction with other clergy. They must be able to demonstrate a wide knowledge of clerical functions.

Priests will be vested in:

- i. Alb and cingulum
- ii. Stole (over both shoulders, crossed at front)
- iii. Chasuble and amice

d. Bishops (*AS biscop*)

Bishops are in charge of an area of land called a diocese – usually one or two shires in England. As senior clergy, all their kit was of the highest status.

Bishops will be vested in:

- Alb and cingulum
- Stole (over both shoulders, uncrossed at front)
- Chasuble and amice
- Maniple
- Pallium (for archbishops)
- Their signs of office are a ring, set with an amethyst to protect against drunkenness, and a crozier. The episcopal mitre is very rare in our period and does not seem to appear among the English vestments until after the Conquest. They may wear the cope and dalmatic where appropriate.

6. Descriptions of secular clothing

a. Alb (and Cingulum)

The alb is a floor-length garment of white linen. It is tied at the waist with a cingulum or girdle. This should be a decorated narrow strip of cloth.

b. Amice

The amice is a linen neckcloth worn under the alb to protect the vestments from oil and dirt around the neck and hair. It should be large enough to cover both shoulders and is usually tied by two linen ribbons attached to the top corners.

c. Stole

The stole is a long, narrow strip of cloth, about 5 cm wide. When worn around the neck and over both shoulders it should be long enough to reach below the knees. The stole is decorated at each end with crosses or portraits of saints, and with a cross or an Agnus Dei at the midpoint. It is worn as follows:

- Deacons: over the right shoulder
- Priests: around the neck, crossing at the front
- Bishops: around the neck hanging straight down

For bishops the stole should be accompanied by a matching maniple, and a pallium for archbishops.

d. Cope

For many functions, particularly for choral duties, the cope is worn as an outer garment. This is essentially a semicircular cloak, decorated along the straight edge. It is held together by infulae or ties, or can be closed by a brooch.

e. Dalmatic

Similar to the alb in construction, but usually shorter. This is a wide sleeved tunic in linen or fine wool with a square neck, decorated with clavi (vertical strips of decorative cloth from the shoulders to the hem) . For Regia's Very Early period this is a white garment with red (or purple) clavi: one round each wrist and two vertically on the body. Tassels in the same colour as the clavi are sewn to the left of each. In later periods, the dalmatic becomes heavily decorated with silk medallions or brocade, and contrasting clavi.

f. Chasuble

The conical chasuble is a semicircle (or more) of cloth sewn along the edge. This is decorated (at minimum) with an orphrey or vertical stripe down the front. Note that 'fiddleback' chasubles with sections cut at either side for the arms are not acceptable in any of Regia's period.

7. Monks

Monks live structured lives within a community, governed by a Rule. In the Anglo-Saxon period the Rule of St Benedict was not universal for English monasteries. Prior to the tenth century the church followed the so-called "minster" model, with monasteries housing both secular clergy and monastic brethren. The Rule observed would have been

determined locally by the relevant abbot. Monks within a monastery would carry out specific duties. The following types of monks may be portrayed

a. Converse

A monk coming to the rule late in life is called a converse (from the Latin. conversus - a convert). These men were frequently not as well educated as other monks, and as such performed duties such as assisting at services, which do not require learning Latin or reading.

b. Oblate

This usually refers to a monk entering the cloister as a child. (from the Latin oblatum – someone who has been offered). Monks entering the cloister as child oblates would have received a thorough education in the curriculum of the time, and would become choir monks if they decided to take vows in adulthood. Many such monks also became ordained as priests etc.

c. Clerical

When officiating at services, monks should wear vestments as secular clergy, according to their degree.

d. Abbot

The abbot, the head of the monastery, who was elected by the community, and appointed others to the various roles within the minster community.

e. Prior

A small monastery, or one attached to a cathedral would have its prior appointed by the bishop.

8. Description of monastic clothing

Monastic dress is identical and compulsory for all monks.

a. Undertunic and braies

The undertunic can be full-length, and both are of white linen. They follow the same basic construction as their lay counterparts of the period.

b. Habit

A full-length loose fitting tunic of locally produced undyed wool (as dark as possible). This is worn over the tunic. The habit should reach to the ankles and have a full, flowing construction with either a wide square body, or large gores inserted from the waist down. The sleeves should be wide and loose fitting such that they cover the hands completely when unrolled. A large hood of any acceptable construction should be attached to the habit around the neckline.

c. Scapular

The scapular is of similar woollen cloth to the habit. It is a rectangle of cloth with a neckhole in the middle. It should be long enough to pass through a belt at the front, and form a pouch when working. Unbelted, it should reach below the knees. The scapular functions as an apron and is only to be worn when “working” (i.e manual labour or some other task that would require protecting the habit).

d. Cowl

Cowls are not well evidenced in England during Regia’s core period. The hood should instead be attached directly to the neckline of the habit, or otherwise worn under the habit so as to hide the “apron” portion around the shoulders.

e. Hair

Those portraying monks are not expected to shave their hair into a tonsure. Conversely, bald caps and other such prosthetic attempts to achieve this look are not acceptable unless applied by a professional makeup artist for a specific context (e.g filmwork). Individuals with long hair who wish to portray monks must make an effort to disguise their hair, e.g by tucking it into the habit and wearing their hood at all times, or by tying their hair up in a discreet manner.

9. Nuns

Nuns in Regia’s core period were generally from very high status backgrounds, frequently royalty.

a. Nunne

To an Anglo-Saxon a ‘nunne’ would be a woman living a religious life in her own home. This was frequently done by widowed noblewomen, who would live out their time on their own lands before they were bequeathed to the Church on their death.

b. Mynecen

Nuns living in convents were known as ‘mynecen’ in AS (or ‘female monks’). In theory the structure of a convent was identical to that of a monastery, and a convent would follow the Rule, however, in most cases convents were much smaller than monasteries, and less independent, as convents require priests to perform sacramental functions, these could either be monks or secular clergy.

10. Description of conventual clothing

There is little evidence that nuns (mynecen) wore a uniform dress prior to the 12th century at the earliest. For Very Late period shows something *approaching* the archetypal Benedictine nun is acceptable. For Regia’s core period the following is encouraged:

a. Underdress

An underdress of undyed or white linen, following the same basic construction as lay clothes of the period.

b. Dress

A long dress of dark or undyed grey or brown wool. Following the same basic construction as lower status lay clothes of the period. The sleeves should not be of an especially loose fit.

c. Veil§

The veil is possibly the only element that identifies women in our period as being members of a convent. The veil is most likely a *small*, lightweight headdress of dark or undyed grey or brown wool worn on top of a wimple, if at all. The large, draping veils characteristic of later benedictine nuns are unlikely and particularly impractical with heavier wools.

d. Wimple

The wimple should be of white linen, with optional embroidery and of any acceptable construction.

e. Mantle

It is probable that nuns (myneccen) in our period wore a mantle, this is a sort of circular cloak, pinned at the front and should be of dark grey or brown wool.

f. Scapular

There is no evidence of scapulars for nuns in our period. They are strongly discouraged and are subject to the same regulation as monastic scapulars if worn at all.