Embroidery of liturgical vestments in Lithuania in the 19th–20th centuries: styles and ornaments

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Abstract

The article presents embroidered liturgical vestments in Lithuania from the second half of the 19th c. to the first half of the 20th c. Investigations of survived embroidered vestments present the history of the decor of liturgical textile, typical embroidered techniques and motifs. Connections of these Lithuanian phenomena with processes of the European art of embroidery are discussed. Embroidery from the second half of the 19th c. to the first half of the 20th c. has specific features that are related to the changes of embroidery techniques and artistic style. In addition, these features are related to the accents of iconography and changes in dissemination (circulation, reproduction, workshop and private activity). The article presents similarities of ornaments from needlework books. Embroidery patterns of the investigated liturgical textile presented in the article are similar to those in the books of ornaments. Embroidery patterns reached Lithuania in special periodicals (magazines for women). Ornaments of Biedermeier style in the embroidered liturgical vestments adapted of local craftsmen spread quickly. Berlin wool work ornaments were very popular because they were easily accomplished using cross-stitch embroidery. In the period of Historicism, the decoration of liturgical textiles was accomplished using neo-stylistic motifs. The beginning of mass production and the creation of ecclesiastical workshops led to the rapid development of such stylistics in churches, and as a result, liturgical vestments in Lithuania were similar to those in the western countries.
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