The Use of the Academic Hood in Quire

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Abstract
In recent years, it has become more common to see members of robed choirs wearing academic hoods over their robes—no doubt because the number of graduates is increasing, but also because the number of bodies granting the right to a hood is also increasing. From time to time, arguments break out over when hoods may be worn, or by whom, or even if they should be worn at all. This paper is an attempt to cut through these arguments, and, while certainly not regarding itself as definitive, to make some suggestions which are based on historical practice. What the author has to say applies largely to the Church of England (and to an extent therefore to other branches of the Anglican Communion), and this stems from the fact that the universities were (until the foundation of the ‘godless’ University of London) ecclesiastical organizations—at least in origin. Indeed, the use of academic dress at London can be traced back to an enquiry in 1843 by a clerical graduate who wished to know what hood he might wear over his surplice so as to conform with the Canon: ‘the Canon making it imperative upon clergymen being graduates to wear hoods.’

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