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## “Interpretation of garb...”. The history and symbolism of the Carmelite habit in Polish convents

### Introduction

The issues raised in the above title fall into the sphere of fashion-related research concerning monastic garb, which, together with forms of dress worn by society at large, constitutes an important element of each epoch, shaped by factors that influence culture such as religion and social and historical conditions. This study analyses the forms of the habit of the Polish Carmelite nuns, as well as the rich sphere of symbolism represented by this garb, and the spirituality of the order connected with it.

Both branches of the Carmelite nuns existed on Polish soil. Communities of Carmelite Nuns of the Ancient Observance emerged with the foundation of the Ruthenian province and were formed by local candidates in Lwów (1632), and subsequently in Dubno (1688).<sup>1</sup> Reformed communities (Discalced Carmelites) resulted chiefly from the foundations established by magnate and gentry families. The first community was founded in Krakow in 1612 from a group of nuns that had arrived from the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent foundations occurred in Lublin (1649), Wilno (1638), Lwów (1641), Warsaw (1649) and Poznań (1660), and again in Krakow (1725).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. Borkowska, *Karmelitanki Dawnej Obserwancji w Polsce. Dzieje zapomnianego zakonu*, “Nasza Przyszłość” 73 (1991), p. 91–101.

<sup>2</sup> Cz. Gil, *Życie codzienne karmelitanek bosych w Polsce w XVII–XIX wieku*, Kraków 1997, p. 6ff.

<sup>3</sup> M. Borkowska, *Zakony żeńskie w Polsce w epoce nowożytnej*, Lublin 2010, p. 336–339.

## The habit of Carmelite nuns of the Ancient Observance

The first Carmelite nuns in Lwów “settled [there] following the model of devotees bearing the habit of the Third Order.”<sup>4</sup> Following the change of their status for that of nuns, and the commencement of regular convent life, the sisters used, as M. Borkowska indicates,<sup>5</sup> the constitutions intended for the Italian Carmelite nuns (originated in 1482, finally approved in 1611).<sup>6</sup> The constitutions treated the clothing, made from coarse woollen material, as one of the forms of asceticism.<sup>7</sup> There were also some forms of punishment provided for seeking luxury in one’s clothing (fol. 24r). The constitutions likewise contained a warning against the introduction of novelties in clothing and footwear (fol. 23r) and also against the use of fur (even sheepskin, fol. 23v).

The shape of the habit combined in itself the Carmelite tradition (tunic) and an element of women’s clothing (headwear). The nuns’ tunics were modelled on the tunics of Carmelite monks (fol. 21v); they were not to be too tight on the shoulders, so as not to discourage the sisters from carrying out mortification of the flesh. A scapular of the same colour was worn over the tunic, shorter than it by a hand’s width (fol. 22r). During holidays and celebrations a white cloak was worn of hodden gray (*szarza*).<sup>8</sup> One can assume that when following such guidelines, the sisters sought to refer to the local models and adopted forms used at that time,<sup>9</sup> namely the mob cap, the wimple and the wrap (*rańtuch*).<sup>10</sup>

The simple, cloth mob cap, which covered the hair and part of the face, and to which a wimple was attached, was a form of dress for the home (fig. 1). The mob cap was covered by the wrap which was a typical element of Polish women’s

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<sup>4</sup> *Kollekta funduszu kościoła i klasztoru... wielebnych panien karmelitanek dawnej obserwacji pod tytułem św. Agnieszki panny i męczenniczki, w mieście JKMOści we Lwowie na Halickim przedmieściu zostających*, Biblioteka PAN w Krakowie, cited in: M. Borkowska, *Karmelitanki...*, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> M. Borkowska, *Zakony żeńskie...*, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>6</sup> *Statuti de le Religiose sorelle dell’Ordine de la Beatissima Vergine Matre de Dio del Monte Carmelo*, [in:] C. Catena, *Monialium Carmelitanarum*, “Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum” 17 (1952), p. 195–326.

<sup>7</sup> *Statuti de le Religiose sorelle...*, op. cit., parte I, caput 1.8, p. 205ff.

<sup>8</sup> Hodden is a coarse kind of home-made cloth from undyed wool.

<sup>9</sup> I did not chance upon any material that pointed to foreign models for the Carmelites’ clothing.

<sup>10</sup> M. Gutkowska-Rychlewska, *Historia ubioru*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1968, p. 427, 529; A. Sieradzka, *Tysiąc lat ubiorów w Polsce*, Warszawa 2003, p. 64.

headwear, worn by married women and widows alike. Its form was that of a rectangular piece of cloth, which fell loosely over the shoulders.<sup>11</sup> One can find countless examples of this garment in Polish 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century art, particularly in funerary sculptures and votive painting (fig. 2).

An engraving in a study by B. Szymański illustrating the probable look of the habit of Carmelite Nuns of the Ancient Observance appears to confirm the fact that the sisters adopted elements of lay dress (fig. 3).<sup>12</sup>

## The habit of Discalced Carmelite nuns

When it comes to presenting the habit of the Discalced Carmelite nuns, we have extensive materials at our disposal, both in source material and in the sphere of iconography, the latter exemplified by portraits of certain personages, as well as Marian and allegorical depictions. A key factor in the analysis of the clothing is the provenance of the first community, which had a direct connection with the community from Ávila.

A fundamental element of the habit was the tunic, which was made “from thick dark grey cloth (or wild grey<sup>13</sup>). Let the habit be as narrow as is possible, [...] equally rounded, not longer at the back than it is at the front.”<sup>14</sup> The tunic was sewn in three basic sizes. It had a small opening at the neck that was finished with a facing. Simple sleeves were sewn in with the aid of gussets (Polish *ćwikle*),<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> F. Kotula, *Rańtuchy. Elementy kultury ludowej w wyposażeniu kościołów*, “Nasza Przeszłość” 10 (1959), p. 378.

<sup>12</sup> B. Szymański, *Rys historyczny zgromadzeń zakonnych obojej płci wraz z rycerskimi zakonami i orderami państw*, t. 2, Warszawa 1848, tafel VII, ill. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Wild grey (*barwa dzika*), in other words bright russet, see also M. Michałowska, *Leksykon włókiennictwa*, Warszawa 2006, p. 81 [later cited as: LW].

<sup>14</sup> *Reguła y Consitutie zakonniczek karmelitanek bossych zakonu Najświętszej Panny Marię z Gory Karmelu potwierdzone roku Pańskiego 1248*, Kraków 1653, Archiwum Karmelitanek Bosych “na Wesołej” w Krakowie [later cited as: AKwes], cat. 135 I, chapter VIII, p. 52. This meant a warning against lengthening the tunic. This custom, in women’s dresses, was denounced by moralists as a sign of a lack of modesty, see also A. Sieradzka, *Żony modne*, Warszawa 1993, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> *Ćwikle* – trapezoidal pieces of fabric connecting the sleeves under the arms with the rest of a tunic, shirt or kaftan. They were preserved in traditional folk costumes under the name of *przyramki*, T. Karwicka, *Ubiory ludowe w Polsce*, Wrocław 1995, p. 16.

so as to ensure greater freedom of movement. *Ponty in breadth*<sup>16</sup> – seems to refer to lacing, with the possibility of adapting the tunic to one's figure. Such a form of clothing was already in use in women's fashion – it was known in Poland as a *letnik*,<sup>17</sup> in Spain as a *saya*,<sup>18</sup> and in France as a *cotte*.<sup>19</sup> "Let the tunics and headscarves be in the manner of a *saya* (Polish *saia*) or a *cotte* (Polish *szkot*)."<sup>20</sup>

The habit was complemented by a scapular cut from the same material, slightly different to the traditional model – with a square opening for the head.

The Carmelite nuns used two veils – the so-called small one "for Holy Communion and daily wear"<sup>21</sup> (fig. 4), concealed under the cloak, as well as an outer one, the so-called great veil (*welum wielkie*), which was smooth and fell to the shoulders with a folded back border. St. Teresa of Ávila described them with the term "shroud."<sup>22</sup> When the folded back part was dropped forward, one could conceal the face from the gaze of others. Both veils were made from cloth that was dyed black, and it had to be thick cloth "to be strong enough to deal with the biting dye."<sup>23</sup>

The headwear was a canvas cap made from hemp or flax, known as a *toca*,<sup>24</sup> which covered the forehead, the neck and the shoulders.<sup>25</sup> It recalled a form known also as *tocados*,<sup>26</sup> worn by married women and widows in Spain during

<sup>16</sup> *Zebranie zwyczajów od wvmm Naszych Fundatorek y pierwszych Matek Świątobliwości sławnych Konwentu S. Marcina podane y dotąd chwalebnie zachowane*, AKwes mn, cat. 268, p. 70. *Pont* – the term comes from Portuguese, and it means lacing or seam.

<sup>17</sup> A. Sieradzka, *Tysiąc lat...*, op. cit., p. 64; M. Mozdżyńska-Nawotka, *O modach i strojach*, Wrocław 2002, p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> E. Aragonés, *La moda medieval navarra. Siglos XII, XIII y XIV*, "Cuadernos de Etnología y Etnografía de Navarra" 74 (1999), p. 526; A. Carnicero Cáceres, *Guía de indumentaria medieval femenina. Mujeres en los Reinos Hispanos (1170–1230)*, Madrid 2010, p. 15ff.

<sup>19</sup> F. Boucher, *Historia mody. Dzieje ubiorów od czasów prehistorycznych do końca XX wieku*, Warszawa 2004, p. 144.

<sup>20</sup> *Saja* – a lightweight clothing fabric, initially woollen, then half-woollen from low-grade types of yarn, LW, p. 327; *szkot* – a lightweight fabric, half-woollen with a linen or cotton warp yarn, LW, p. 379.

<sup>21</sup> *Zebranie zwyczajów...*, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>22</sup> Św. Teresa od Jezusa, *Księga Fundacji* 9.5, [in:] *Dziela*, t. 3, Kraków 1995.

<sup>23</sup> *Zebranie zwyczajów...*, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>24</sup> Św. Teresa od Jezusa, *Konstytucje*, [in:] *Dziela*, t. 2, Kraków 1995, p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> On the little mob caps it is enough for three cubits minus a quarter [...] with under the scapular four fingers in good measure should be visible [...], these are the customs we should keep. *Zwyczaje jakie chować powinniśmy*, 1724, AKwes, mn, cat.164, k. 71.

<sup>26</sup> A. García Cuadrado, *Las Cantigas. El códice de Florencia*, Murcia 1993, p. 156; E. Aragonés, *La moda medieval...*, op. cit., p. 525.

the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>27</sup> (fig. 6). In keeping with the principles of poverty, the Carmelite *toca* was “thick, without decoration, without pleats.”<sup>28</sup> Both ends of the canvas were joined under the chin, creating the characteristic knot. The artist who painted *Our Lady the Queen of Carmel* (fig. 7), depicted with particular attention to detail the garb of the Carmelite nuns kneeling at the foot of the Virgin Mary. Their habits were covered by cloaks made from *haba*,<sup>29</sup> used for the choir, and finished with a pleat – “circular, wide as two fingers [...] yet in the middle [...] a wooden peg on a white ribbon for fastening.”<sup>30</sup>

A different, characteristic attire was worn by candidates during their preparation for convent life. The clothing of probationers who were to become converses (who carried out more domestic chores) was supposed to be modelled on a grey, woollen form with sleeves and an apron (also known as a *kształciczek*), that is a gown with a tight-fitting bodice and wide skirt, which was in fashion during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 8). Naturally that analogy only concerned the basic form. “Choir nun” candidates (who devoted more time to prayer) wore “a gown modelled on a habit, without a scapular, and a mob cap made from linen was worn on the head, sewn up to the chin.”<sup>31</sup>

The garb for novices that was provided for their vestition was composed of a habit (not always new) and a white veil.<sup>32</sup> During their taking of the vows, they received robes that were specially blessed, as well as a scapular and a belt. This rite was accompanied by a veiling ceremony, that is, the putting of the black veil on the choir-professed nuns.<sup>33</sup>

Clothes were kept in communal chests, and individual items were labelled with the name of each sister, and the task of the *rubarka*<sup>34</sup> included mending the clothes (probably also sewing them) and providing an additional habit for exchange.<sup>35</sup> Shoes, namely hemp sandals, were made by the *calcearka* (“nun – shoemaker”)

<sup>27</sup> Such a form of knot did not exist in Polish fashion.

<sup>28</sup> *Reguła...*, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>29</sup> The thickest white cloth, LW, p. 109.

<sup>30</sup> *Zebranie zwyczajów...*, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>31</sup> *Zwyczaje...*, op. cit., k. 68v.

<sup>32</sup> *Zwyczaje...*, op. cit., k. 71v.

<sup>33</sup> *Zwyczaje...*, op. cit., k. 79v. The veiling ritual occurred a day after the profession of vows, or on a day allocated by the superior.

<sup>34</sup> Rubarka – the person responsible for monastic clothing.

<sup>35</sup> *Zebranie zwyczajów...*, op. cit., p. 75.

according to old instructions<sup>36</sup> until leather sandals were introduced in the year 1664.<sup>37</sup>

From the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the habit was regarded as a sign of belonging to a community, hence the care that was taken to ensure it was in keeping with monastic rule, and without alterations in its appearance. The Spanish constitutions did not provide for fur during cold weather, but only an additional gown made from thick cloth. This was insufficient protection against the Polish climate, as the Lwów Carmelite nuns found on returning from Podoliniec to their convent in 1658. So as not to break the religious laws, they declined to use the furs that were offered to them. “We preferred to suffer the cold than to violate our observance even in the smallest manner,” wrote a chronicler at the time about the experience.<sup>38</sup>

Detailed instructions concerning the habit are contained in *Opisanie kroju odzienia naszego* (*A description of the cut of our garb*) from 1729, which can be found in *Zebranie zwyczajów* (*A collection of customs*). In addition to this description, there is an example of the clothing on a small mannequin (fig. 4) given to the first community in Krakow. Interesting examples of attention to detail regarding the garb, and likewise the way in which depictions of saints were updated, can be found in small chapels, most probably from around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, containing figures of canonised nuns dressed in faithfully portrayed monastic robes.<sup>39</sup>

## The symbolism of the Carmelite habit

In line with the oldest monastic traditions, the nuns’ garb had a nuptial meaning, which was denoted above all by the headwear, which was comparable to that of married women (veil and mob cap). The vestition ceremony emphasized the concept of a spiritual marriage. In the case of Carmelite nuns, after the Holy Mass

<sup>36</sup> *Instrukcje różnych urzędów*, AKWes, rkps, cat. 152, lack of pagination.

<sup>37</sup> K. Targosz, *Piórem zakonniczy. Kronikarki w Polsce XVII wieku o swoich zakonach i swoich czasach*, Kraków 2002, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> *Klasztory karmelitanek bosych w Polsce, na Litwie i na Rusi, Ich początek, rozwój i tułactwo w czasie rozruchów wojennych w XVII wieku. Rzecz osnuta na kronikach klasztornych*. Lwów–Warszawa, t. 2, red. R. Kąlinowski, Kraków 1901, p. 75ff.

<sup>39</sup> Well-known examples are: the chapel of St. Teresa of Ávila (Norbertine Convent in Zwierzyniec, Krakow), and that of St. Scholastica (Benedictine Convent, Staniątki) and the Blessed Bronislava (Norbertine Convent in Zwierzyniec, Krakow).

a candidate dressed in a white gown, with a wreath on her head, changed her dress in the enclosed part of the convent – the gown of the bride was replaced by “the robes of the bride of Christ”<sup>40</sup>, that is the habit of a nun. She also received a new name with a predicate – signifying her new dignity.<sup>41</sup> The nuptial character of the vestition and the profession of vows was also emphasized by: a ring (used in the consecration of Carmelite Nuns of the Ancient Observance)<sup>42</sup> as well as a crown that features in the veiling ceremony,<sup>43</sup> constituting its traditional element. It was referred to by Remigius of Reims (d. 533)<sup>44</sup> and Isidore of Seville (d. 636).<sup>45</sup> The Polish Carmelite nuns used a crown in the form of a wreath, fashioned from rosemary, echoing Polish wedding rituals. The legal status of the wreath in Polish legislation had no legal equivalent in western customs. It was made from flowers, myrtle or rue. It symbolised virginity (*insignum virginittatis*), but also a dowry, that is, that which the woman had brought to the new, communal home.<sup>46</sup> The nuptial symbolism of the wreath was also bound up in its apotropaic meaning as a perfect form – a defence against malevolent forces that could destroy a person’s inner harmony.<sup>47</sup>

Another element that invokes the idea of marriage was the act of cutting the hair that preceded the ritual of putting on the mob cap and the veil. In Polish wedding customs, this constituted a part of the ceremony called *oczepiny* that consisted of putting the mob cap of a married woman on the bride. This ritual had its own symbolic meaning. Hair was regarded as an attribute of a beautiful woman, and the trimming and covering of it emphasized that from henceforth, she was only to please the one she had married. In the context of convent life,

<sup>40</sup> *Sposób obłóczenia nowicy w habit naszego zakonu*, AKWes, cat. 135 I, p. 102.

<sup>41</sup> The predicate is a dedication which goes after the Christian name, which alludes to one of the mysteries of the faith, or the Christian name of one of the saints, see also: *Reguła...*, op. cit., p. 97–101; *Księga Głosów*, 1707, AKWes, mn, cat. 257.

<sup>42</sup> M. Borkowska, *Karmelitanki...*, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>43</sup> *Zebranie zwyczajów...*, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to King Clovis concerning his sister Alboflede, ed. E. Marténe, *De antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus libri ex variis insigniorum Ecclesiarum...*, vol. 2, Antverpia 1736, cap. VI, 13.

<sup>45</sup> St. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive origivolum Libri XX, De ornamentis capitis feminarum*, vol. 2, London 1966, XXXI. 4.

<sup>46</sup> K. Turska, *Ubiór dworski w Polsce w dobie pierwszych Jagiellonów*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1987, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> A wreath or bandeau on a woman’s head also had an apotropaic meaning in German culture (second half of 111 century); M. Tempelman-Mączyńska, *Części stroju kobiecego w okresie rzymskim na obszarze środkowo- i wschodnioeuropejskiego Barbaricum*, Kraków 1985, p. 83; U. Janicka-Krzywda, *Zwyczaje, tradycje, obrzędy*, Kraków 2013, p. 228.

this had a specifically spiritual dimension – striving to please God with spiritual beauty rather than external beauty.

The putting on of the habit also had a baptismal symbolism – entering a new life through the choice of God and the discarding of the robes of the former self.<sup>48</sup> The habit – *tunica sacra* was connected with the obligation to strive towards perfection in one's conduct. Awareness of this duty was supposed to accompany the nuns from the first acts of the day: "Most Great Lord and God of mine, I dress, so that I may be mindful of my service to Your Divine Majesty."<sup>49</sup>

The belief in the sanctity of the habit as a guarantor of salvation has its roots at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and its confirmation in papal privileges.<sup>50</sup> Religious orders obtained the privilege of dressing laypeople in the habit in the hour of their death, laypeople who had requested it. The daughter of Marie Louise Gonzaga (d. 1667)<sup>51</sup> – Maria Anna Theresa: "was given a gown of black cloth and a long scapular, and a leather belt, and upon her head she had a black veil like that of a nun, and hemp sandals upon her feet."<sup>52</sup> The habit was supposed to ensure Divine protection and care for the princess.

The monastic nuns' habit, replaced over time with the scapular,<sup>53</sup> was likewise worn by members of confraternities – operating in connection with convents – as a sign of a spiritual connection with an order. The vision of Simon Stock (d. 1256) in 1251 and the "Saturday privilege" confirmed with the bull *Ex clementi*, by Pope Clement VII (d. 1534) in 1530,<sup>54</sup> made the scapular *sacramentalium*. And in the Post-Tridentine epoch it became a form of piety relating to souls suffering in purgatory,<sup>55</sup> and thus a defence of one of the dogmas of the Catholic faith that had been negated by Protestantism. It was also an expression of faith in the powers of the Virgin Mary to intercede on one's behalf in a bid to attain salvation.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Sposób obłóczenia...*, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>49</sup> *Ćwiczenia klasztorne albo praktyka uczynków albo aktów żywota zakonnego*, Kraków 1645, AKWES, cat. 281, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Privileges that lessened the punishments for sinners were bestowed upon those who wore habits by popes including: Clement IV (d. 1268), Nicholas IV (d. 1292), Urban V (d. 1370).

<sup>51</sup> Marie Louise Gonzaga (1611–1667) was the queen of Poland as the wife of two Polish kings, Władysław IV Vasa (1645–1648) and John II Casimir (1649).

<sup>52</sup> K. Targosz, *Piórem zakonnicy...*, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>53</sup> M. Zawada, *Tren królewskiej szaty*, Kraków 2000, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> M. Zawada, *Tren królewskiej szaty*, op. cit., p. 22ff.

<sup>55</sup> B. Panek, *Dzieje bractwa szkaplerza świętego przy kościele oo. Karmelitów w Krakowie na Piasku do końca XVII wieku*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 10 (1963), p. 43ff.

<sup>56</sup> Matka Boża ukazała szkaplerz jako przywilej: "Kto w nim umrze, nie zazna ognia piekielnego". L. Saggi, *L'ambiente della bolla Sabatina*, "Carmelus" 14 (1967), sp84.



An affirmation of this belief can be found in Marian images of the *Mater Misericordiae* kind, in which the Blessed Virgin Mary wears a habit or scapular, in some examples with the crest of the Carmelite Order (fig. 7). An expression of Marian piety and reverence for the innocence of the Virgin Mary was the white cloak of the order, which also recalled that the order belonged to her.<sup>57</sup>

The monastic tunic and scapular refer to the symbolism of the Passion. This is illustrated by *The image of a perfect nun* (fig. 9). The form of the tunic echoes the arrangement of the beams of the cross. While striving to attain perfection, a member of an order is exposed to external attacks (serpents, a leviathan) as well as internal weaknesses (described on the arrows). The practice of virtues becomes a struggle. In this context, the habit is a symbol of a knight of Christ. The figure of the nun as *Bellatrix Christi* (knight of Christ) appears in Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) in the work: *Ordo Virtutum* (1151).<sup>58</sup>

A special element of the knight's attire was the belt (*cingulum militare*), which made it easier to fight by constricting the robe and provided protection against blows.<sup>59</sup> The Carmelite belt denotes obedience, which defends against the attacks of Satan. This symbolism is illustrated by an engraving that depicts St. Teresa of Avila triumphing over attacking demons (fig. 10). The saint stands at a table, on which there is a skull as well as keys among oak branches. Her hands tighten the belt encircling her habit, and she tramples on the thorns that lie under her bare feet. The belt, thorns and skull are elements that indicate penance and mortification of the flesh. They give the nun fortitude and persistence against temptation, as symbolised by the oak branches. A fleeing demon is visible in the background. The battle with him and victory, like the key, open up the treasures of Divine grace.

In Carmelite convents, a life of austerity was to assist in developing prayer toward contemplation, as well as to satisfy God for sins by voluntarily carrying out the mortification of the flesh, one of the forms of which was the monastic garb. The symbolism of the monastic habit constitutes the reflection of a specific spiritual path, and the expression of a relationship with God. Forms of piety change, yet the essence of spirituality remains. Perhaps this very essence provides the explanation for the conservative character of the monastic attire.

<sup>57</sup> C. Catena, *Le Carmelitane...*, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>58</sup> Scene 2. 145, see P. Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin plays*, Cambridge 1994, p. 170. A depiction of the female warrior is also featured with St Jerome, *Epistle* 107.9 (PL 022.686) and *Epistle* 130.10 (PL 022.986).

<sup>59</sup> This is the *balteus* – belts with metal studs that protected the underbelly of a legionary, J. Durakiewicz, *Wandalowie, strażnicy bursztynowego szlaku*, Lublin 2004, p. 171.

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## Abstract

The habit of the Carmelite Nuns of the Ancient Observance, formed on the basis of their constitutions of 1482, combined forms borrowed from the habit of the Carmelite Monks (tunics) with the models that came from Polish women's fashion (headwear used by married women and widows – mob cap, wimple). The analysis of the habit of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns is based on extensive written sources as well as iconography. Their habit demonstrated the reception of forms of women's clothing of Spanish provenance (a dress called *saya* and *toca* – a headdress), modified in accordance with the spirit of poverty and austerity. In the dress of candidates and in the symbols introduced to the vestition ceremony, native elements are visible. The symbolism of the habit is connected with Carmelite spirituality, whose main features are the cult of the Virgin Mary, that of the Passion, and the spirit of expiation. It also contains some meanings that come from the monastic tradition: the nuptial and baptismal significance being the symbol of new life. The habit is also the *tunica sacra* and the armour of the *Miles Christianus*.

## Keywords

symbolism of habit, saya, Discalced Carmelite Nuns, reception of women's clothing

## Abstrakt

**„Objaśnienie o sukience...” Historia i symbolika habitu karmelitańskiego w polskich klasztorach żeńskich**

Strój karmelitanek dawnej obserwancji, ukształtowany w oparciu o konstytucje z 1482 roku, łączył formy zapożyczone ze strojów karmelitów (tuniki) oraz wzorce płynące z polskiej mody kobiecej (nakrycie głowy używane przez mężatki i wdowy – czepiec, rańtuch, podwika). Podstawą do analizy stroju karmelitanek bosych są bogate teksty źródłowe i ikonograficzne. Habit wykazywał recepcję form ubiorów kobiecych o proveniencji hiszpańskiej (suknia zwana *saya* oraz *toca* – nakrycie głowy), modyfikowanych zgodnie z duchem ubóstwa i surowości. W ubiorach kandydatek oraz w symbolach

wprowadzonych do ceremonii obłóczyn widoczne są pierwiastki rodzime. Symbolika habitu łączy się z duchowością karmelitańską, której głównym rysem jest kult maryjny, pasyjność, duch ekspiacji. Niesie także znaczenia płynące z tradycji monastycznej: nupcjalne i chrzcielne będąc symbolem nowości życia. Habit to także *tunica sacra* oraz zbroja *Miles Christianus*.

### Słowa kluczowe

symbolika habitu, saya, Karmelitanki Bose, recepcja ubioru kobiecego



1. Woman in domestic dress, T. Dolabella (?), *The birth of Mary*, about 1627, cathedral basilica, Łowicz. Repr. M. Walicki, W. Tomkiewicz, A. Ryszkiewicz, *Malarstwo polskie. Manieryzm, barok* [Polish painting. Mannerism, baroque], Warszawa 1971, fig. 74



2. *Rańtuch*, tomb of Anna Guldenstern, 1541, church of St. Barbara, Krakow.  
Phot. M. Łukawska



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4. Mannequin – model of Carmelite habit, The Netherlands (?), early 17<sup>th</sup> century, monastery of the Carmelite Nuns “na Wesolej”, Krakow. Repr. Archive of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Krakow. Phot. J. Gogola





5. *Great veil*, P. J. Jędrzejowski, portrait of M. Marchocka, mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Jagiellonian Library, Krakow. Source: [http://www.bj.uj.edu.pl/wgr/katalog?sessionId=2010112312265503742&skin=bj\\_wgr&lng=pl&inst=consortium&host=192.168.1.3%2b1235%2bDEFAULT&pa tronhost=192.168.1.3%201235%20DEFAULT&search=KEYWORD &function=INITREQ&sourceScreen=CARDS&pos=1&rootsear ch=1&elementcount=1&u1=1003&t1=J%e4%99drzejowski,%20 Pawe%e5%82%20J%e3%b3zef%20\(17.-.18.-.\)&beginsrch=1](http://www.bj.uj.edu.pl/wgr/katalog?sessionId=2010112312265503742&skin=bj_wgr&lng=pl&inst=consortium&host=192.168.1.3%2b1235%2bDEFAULT&pa tronhost=192.168.1.3%201235%20DEFAULT&search=KEYWORD &function=INITREQ&sourceScreen=CARDS&pos=1&rootsear ch=1&elementcount=1&u1=1003&t1=J%e4%99drzejowski,%20 Pawe%e5%82%20J%e3%b3zef%20(17.-.18.-.)&beginsrch=1) (17.08.2011)



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7. *The Queen of Carmel*, 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century, monastery of the Carmelite Nuns “na Wesołej”, Krakow. Archive Disalced Carmelite Nuns in Krakow



8. Sculptures of girls in Polish dresses, S. Gucci, the tomb of Wawrzyniec Spytek Jordan, 1603, church of St Catherine, Krakow.  
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9. *The perfect nun*, 18<sup>th</sup> century, monastery of the Carmelite Nuns “na Wesołej”, Krakow. Repr. Cz. Gil, *Życie codzienne karmelitanek bosych w Polsce w XVII–XIX wieku* [*Everyday life of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in Poland xvii–xix century*], Krakow 1997, fig. 26



10. A. van Westerhout, *St. Teresa of Ávila triumphs over attacking demons*, ca. 18<sup>th</sup> century, monastery of the Carmelite Nuns “na Wesolej”, Krakow.  
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