

## 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY COSTUMES FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE COSTUME MUSEUM OF MADRID

**Abstract:** This paper introduces 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century garments from the collections of the Costume Museum of Madrid through some of the most relevant examples. Although some of the pieces presented here are likely to be of French origin, the most of them are purely Spanish garments. This is particularly true of the earliest pieces, which date from a time when Spain dictated fashions, but also of the interesting 18<sup>th</sup> century *majo* outfits. The overview of the collections is preceded by a summarized history of the Museum and complemented by a brief description of the conditions in which our costumes are stored and displayed.

**Key words:** 16<sup>th</sup> century costume, 17<sup>th</sup> century costume, 18<sup>th</sup> century costume, Spanish dress, *Majo* outfits

Our collections were initially developed in the second and third decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The starting point was a great exhibition of historical and traditional costume that took place in Madrid in 1925. The exhibition was inaugurated by King Alfonso XIII on April 18, and from the very beginning it received an immense amount of visitors. The success was such that it was decided to turn it into a permanent Costume Museum. A few years afterwards, while the works were still in progress, the Costume Museum became an ethnographic museum and changed its name to Museum of the Spanish People (*Museo del Pueblo Español*). Therefore, the scope of the collections widened too, and ethnographic objects started to flow to the Museum from all around Spain, adding themselves to the already growing collection of costumes.<sup>1</sup>



1. Боне украсен везом, око 1500–1525.  
Музеј костима, Мадрид  
1. Embroidered bonnet, ca.1500–1525.  
*Costume Museum, Madrid*



2. Дубле са корсетом, око 1660. Музеј костима, Мадрид  
2. Corseted doublet, ca. 1660. Costume Museum, Madrid

The abundant collections of the Costume Museum of Madrid (*Museo del Traje*) bring together historical costume, traditional dress and contemporary fashion, along with a virtually endless range of ethnographical objects.

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<sup>1</sup> Museum Patrons (*Patronos*) were appointed for each of the Spanish provinces. They were usually high-profile public figures in their respective areas, like the well-known archaeologists Pelayo Quintero (Cádiz) and Juan de Mata Carriazo (Seville), or the famous anthropologist José Miguel de Barandiarán (Álava). The Patrons quickly started gathering great amounts of objects and garments which were directly sent to Madrid (Berges Soriano, 1996, Seco Serra, 2009). The first Director of the new Museo del Pueblo Español was the eminent anthropologist Luis de Hoyos (Ortiz 1987).

Unfortunately, the Spanish Civil War made the Museum's pace come to a halt in 1936. The all-ready-to-start institution never opened its doors. The collections were packed and stored in different places, and except for a brief and extremely reduced exhibition in the 1970s, the Museum remained largely in the shadows. It would not be until 2004 that it eventually came to light and opened its doors in its present location.<sup>2</sup>

Our permanent exhibition is focused on costume, as it originally was in 1925, but, as an added value, a visit to our storage area is a plunge into the rural past of Spain. The ethnographical collections range from marsh boats, furniture or wrought iron cookers to amulets, pottery or carved yokes, and they are an invaluable study source for Spanish ethnographers and anthropologists.



3. Црно-бели женски свилени дубле, око 1670–1695.  
Музеј костима, Мадрид  
3. Black-and-white woman's silk doublet, ca. 1670–1695.  
Costume Museum, Madrid

The permanent exhibition is organized along a timeline, starting with the earliest costumes. Although we have a very interesting repertoire of ancient textiles, including some medieval Spanish-Islamic examples, the earliest complete pieces in our collections – several extraordinary doublets, headdresses, jackets, gloves<sup>3</sup> and a showy bonnet – date from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is hardly necessary to remark that during this period of costume history Spain established the guidelines of international fashion.<sup>4</sup> Dress was

often dominated by sober black, especially when it came to men's attire, although richly embroidered fabrics were favoured too.

This is the case with our gold embroidered bonnet (ill. 1, MT080290). It dates back to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and its soft silk velvet is decorated with the coat of arms of Emperor Charles V, a two-headed Imperial eagle crowned with a cross and a heart. Inspired by military caps, bonnets are known from the Middle Ages. They were initially worn by kings; later they became fashionable among priests from the upper echelons of the Catholic Church.



4. Мушко одело боје малине, око 1770.  
Музеј костима, Мадрид  
4. Raspberry red man's dress, ca. 1770.  
Costume Museum, Madrid

The sleeveless doublet (ill. 2, MT095516) was made around 1660 using ivory silk gros de Naples.<sup>5</sup> It is elaborately embroidered with gold thread and heavily boned with fourteen pairs of whalebones, so that the person wearing it would not need to wear a stay underneath. In Spain, doublets of this type were known as "*jubones encotillados*" or "corseted doublets".<sup>6</sup>

Slightly later in date is another magnificent doublet (ill. 3, MT001019).<sup>7</sup> It is a black-and-white piece decorated

<sup>2</sup> The project for the building which today houses the Costume Museum, authored by architects Jaime López de Asiain and Ángel Díaz Domínguez, won the National Architecture Prize in 1969. The building was inaugurated in 1975 as the Contemporary Art Museum. It housed the Contemporary Art Museum until 1988, when this institution was renamed as Museo de Arte Reina Sofía and transferred to its present location between the Paseo del Prado and Atocha train station.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the study on a pair of 17<sup>th</sup>-century gloves from our permanent exhibition in González Asenjo 2010.

<sup>4</sup> For a recent approach to the subject see the proceedings of the international congress *Vestir a la española (Dressing the Spanish Way)* (Descalzo and Colomer 2007).

<sup>5</sup> *Gros* is French for "thick"; the name refers to a rather thick silk fabric in which both warp and weft are doubled yarns.

<sup>6</sup> A monographic study of this doublet in González Asenjo 2011.

<sup>7</sup> This doublet once belonged to the private collection of Don Eusebio Güell López (1877–1955), Viscount of Güell, one of the driving forces of the 1925 Exhibition.

with flower-shaped silk cut-outs. The wide neck line and the characteristic point of the bottom edge follow Spanish fashions of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> Similar doublets can be seen in Spanish paintings, such as the many portraits of Queen Marie Louise of Orleans by Carreño de Miranda or García Hidalgo.

Queen Marie Louise was the first and beloved wife of Charles II, the last king of the House of Habsburg. It was precisely during her lifetime that shared elements with French

vests and jackets and a good number of interesting *majo*-style gaudy outfits.

Some seventy-odd years after the death of the last of the Habsburgs, black garments long-forgotten, we find a couple of Spanish noblemen dressing in raspberry-red (ill. 4, MT000474-MT000476), and celadon-green<sup>10</sup> (ill. 5, MT000650-MT000652), respectively. They both wear



5. Мушко одело сивозелене боје, око 1770–1780.  
Музеј костима, Мадрид  
5. Celadon green man's dress, ca. 1770–1780.  
Costume Museum, Madrid



6. Хаљина – полонеза, око 1775–1780.  
Музеј костима, Мадрид  
6. Polish-style dress or “polonesa”, ca. 1775–1780.  
Costume Museum, Madrid

fashion began to appear in Spain, despite official efforts to preserve the age-old “Spanish dress”. Don Juan José de Austria, stepbrother to King Charles, was the first nobleman to introduce French fashion in court. Dresses *à la française* and dresses *a la española* coexisted all through the reign of Charles II. After his death in 1700, the Spanish court, like all European courts, eventually adopted the French style.<sup>9</sup>

It is hard to choose among more than four hundred 18<sup>th</sup> century garments in the Museum collection. There are many elaborate dresses, hundreds of elegantly embroidered

<sup>8</sup> There is another Museum online monograph dedicated to this doublet: Descalzo Lorenzo 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Descalzo Lorenzo 1997.

<sup>10</sup> The colour we call celadon green is a subtle hue of light spring green, i.e. the colour of the eponymous type of glazed pottery. Celadon pottery was produced in China, Korea and subsequently Japan from very early times; it made its way to Europe in the Middle Ages and it was especially fashionable since the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. There are several theories as to the origin of the term “celadon”. Chinese potters simply call their pieces *qing ci*, green-blue pottery. Some suggest that the Western name came from the pale green ribbons of Céladon, one of the main characters in *L'Astrée*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century pastoral novel by the French writer Honoré d'Urfé, others suggest a Sanskrit origin (*from sila dhara*, “green stone”), while still other scholars speculate it to be a corrupt form of the name of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Sultan Saladin, who allegedly gifted celadon pottery to the Sultan of Syria. Be that as it may, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, celadon green attires were a proper symbol of exotic elegance.

embroidered silk coats, waistcoats<sup>11</sup> and breeches of a purely French design.<sup>12</sup> The green outfit is particularly interesting; we have portraits by Goya which show very similar attires.<sup>13</sup>

Spanish ladies of the time could choose from a wide range of styles which were worn for various purposes and enjoyed different degrees of fashionability depending on the moment. Among others, these included the French robe known as “*bata*”, the so-called Polish dress or “*polonesa*” and the English inspired outfit known in Spain as “*vaquero a la inglesa*”.<sup>14</sup>

The *Museo del Traje* collections include “*polonesas*” such as MT000592, which combines striped salmon silk and green silk taffeta,<sup>15</sup> or MT001004-MT001005 (ill. 6), a beauty of figured silk in pink and greenish blue with an exquisite lace touch.<sup>16</sup>

If, according to some authors, the name of Polish dresses, with their three-fold back drapery, had to do with first partition of Poland, the English “*vaqueros*” were believed to be

country attires and as such they were often combined with wide-brimmed hats, scarves and walking sticks. We have several “*vaqueros a la inglesa*”, covered with a splash of minute embroidered flower bunches.

The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century bore witness to the birth of a Spanish reaction against international fashions. Alongside French-style garments, we find the “*majo* style”, a gaudy way of dressing which recreated popular costume enriching it with characteristic decorations such as “*madroños*” or nets of small tassels. *Majo* costumes were seen as a national answer to foreign dress;<sup>17</sup> the Napoleonic invasion of Spain would accentuate this idea, turning *majo* outfits into symbols of national pride. *Majo* garments would be well in use until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly among popular classes.<sup>18</sup>

The *majo* jacket (ill. 7, MT001232)<sup>19</sup> is a wine-red velvet garment, much shorter than contemporary French-style coats. The fine silk fabric is decorated with gold thread lace and densely embroidered with gold-coloured silk; buttons are also covered in golden silk thread.

Textiles are fragile materials. For the sake of conservation, the costumes in the permanent exhibition are replaced every two years and we make sure that all support materials are acid-free. We have even designed our own mannequins, which are made to measure for each historic outfit. They are also cut and painted in such a clever way that once the garment is put on them they virtually disappear, leaving the costume in the full limelight – metaphorically, of course; light conditions are strictly controlled as well.<sup>20</sup>

The storage area is organized depending on the nature of the materials in each collection; historical costumes are stored in individual acid-free cotton bags. Well-preserved garments hang from padded hangers, while more fragile pieces and bigger outfits are kept in special boxes or in drawers.

Many of our costumes are already presented online and available through the centralized database of the Spanish Museums, Cer.es. Moreover, the Costume Museum of Madrid is one of the partners in *Europeana Fashion*, a European project which intends to gather online fashion collections from the most important European institutions. What we have presented here is but a glimpse of our collections, but not too far in the future – the portal is due to start operating in 2015 – much more will be available through *Europeana Fashion*, from ancient garments to contemporary designs, covering the time span from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.



7. „Махо“ жакет, око 1785. Музеј костима, Мадрид  
7. *Majo*-style jacket, ca. 1785. Costume Museum, Madrid

<sup>11</sup> For the waistcoat MT000476 see Herranz Rodríguez 1996: 124–125, fig. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Both outfits entered the Museum collections in 1934, having previously belonged to the private collection of the Guiú family.

<sup>13</sup> Like his famous portrait of the Count of Floridablanca, today held by the Prado Museum ([http://www.museodelprado.es/goya-en-el-prado/obras/ficha/goya/jose-monino-y-redondo-conde-de-floridablanca/?tx\\_gbgonline\\_pil\[gocollectionids\]=46&tx\\_gbgonline\\_pil\[gosort\]=b](http://www.museodelprado.es/goya-en-el-prado/obras/ficha/goya/jose-monino-y-redondo-conde-de-floridablanca/?tx_gbgonline_pil[gocollectionids]=46&tx_gbgonline_pil[gosort]=b)).

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of 18<sup>th</sup> century fashions in Spain see Leira Sánchez 2008a. For textiles from the same period see Benito García 2002; a study on Spanish silk production in *Espejo* 1911.

<sup>15</sup> Redondo Solance 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Herranz Rodríguez 1996:120, fig. 6bis.

<sup>17</sup> For turn-of-the-century fashions in both national and “foreign” dress *vide* Herranz Rodríguez 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Descalzo Lorenzo and Seco Serra 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Herranz Rodríguez 1996:127, fig. 19.

<sup>20</sup> A global analysis of conservation and display at the Museum in Pérez de Andrés 2008

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## Резиме

ИРЕНЕ СЕКО СЕРА\*

# КОСТИМ ОД XVI ДО XVIII ВЕКА ИЗ КОЛЕКЦИЈЕ МУЗЕЈА КОСТИМА У МАДРИДУ

Збирка Музеја костима у Мадриду (*Museo del Traje*) спаја историјски костим, традиционалне одевне предмете, савремену модну одећу и етнографске предмете. Настала је у другој и трећој деценији XX века, након величанствене изложбе историјског и традиционалног костима одржане у Мадриду 1925. године. Убрзо након тога, нови Музеј костима претворен је у етнографски музеј (Музеј шпанског народа), а све богатијој збирци костима придодати су и етнографски предмети. Због избијања Шпанског грађанског рата, радови су обустављени, па Музеј није отворио своја врата све до 2004. године.

Као и на самом почетку, 1925. године, стална поставка Музеја посвећена је костиму. Организована је хронолошки, почевши од најстаријих одевних предмета – неколико изузетних дублеа, жакета, рукавица и китњас-тог бонеа, из XVI и XVII века.

Издвојити само неке од преко четири стотине одевних предмета из XVIII века из збирке музеја није нимало лак задатак. Ту су богато украшене хаљине, стотине прслука и жакета украшених финим везом, као и многобројни примери занимљиве раскошне одеће у тзв. „махо“ стилу.

Текстил је осетљив материјал. Ради конзервације, костими у сталној поставци мењају се на сваке две године. Музеј сâм израђује лутке за излагање, направљене по мери. Простор у којем се чувају костими организован је у складу са природом материјала у свакој збирци. Историјски костими се чувају у засебним врећама од бескиселинског памука. Добро очувани одевени предмети окачени су на обложене вешалице, док се предмети који нису најбоље очувани, као и већи одевени предмети, чувају у посебним кутијама или у фиокама.

Многи од костима из збирке могу се видети на интернету. Музеј костима из Мадрида један је од партнера у пројекту *Europeana Fashion*, европском пројекту који има за циљ да обједини онлајн збирке моде из водећих европских институција. За две године, велики део одевних предмета из збирке Музеја костима, од предмета који датирају из далеке прошлости до савремених креација, односно од XVI века па све до данас, биће доступан посредством *Europeana Fashion* портала.

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