

SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

Maria Przędziecka — THE ORIGIN OF CASUBIAN EMBROIDERY

The problem of modern Casubian embroidery and its affinity with local popular traditions has been many times discussed in Polish folk art literature. Yet, the problem has never been treated in all its complexity and all the accounts available on this subject are of a fragmentary character.

In reverting once more to this subject, Miss Przędziecka discusses the genesis of Casubian embroidery against the background of general artistic trends at work and the various local schools characteristic of certain periods of time which influenced the development of Casubian embroidery.

The lack of primary sources makes it impossible to ascertain whether popular Casubian embroidery existed in the past and the purely decorative character and the rich variety of colours of modern Casubian embroidery are out of line with Polish popular traditions. Present day Casubian needlewomen use as many as seven different colours, while facilities for colouring were limited in the past. The assumption seems justified that Casubian embroidery developed under the influence of urban and guild art and the authoress puts special stress on the influence of convent embroidery which through the Church penetrated easily into the peasant milieu.

The convents in Zukow and Zarnowiec were in the 17th and 18th centuries important embroidery centres in the Casubian area and the rich collections of embroidery which have been preserved show an affinity with Renaissance patterns which, beginning with the 16th century were printed in Italy and Germany. The preserved embroidery shows no link with folk art traditions of that time.

Modern Casubian embroidery has much in common with the 17th century Zukow and Zarnowiec convents embroidery and with ornaments of later periods which consisted mainly of floral designs, tulips, pomegranates and roses. An analogy with the convent embroidery can also be traced in the themes of the compositions.

It would be difficult to state when was it that folk embroidery had reached for patterns of the elitarian art. The preserved specimens of women's bonnets from the 18th century (cloth of gold) were most probably embroidered in the convents. The most recent information on Casubian popular embroidery originates from the beginning of the 20th century, but it would be reasonable to date it back to earlier times, when rural women and girls embroidered robes to dress figures of saints. Characteristic of the Zarnow district, the robes were most probably closely linked with the Zarnow convent. Unfortunately, not one of these robes has been preserved. Research into Casubian folk art does not exclude that Casubian motifs, characteristic not only of embroidery, but of other specimens of Casubian folk art,

take their origin from ornaments dating back to the 17th century.

Casubian embroidery of our times was initiated at the beginning of the 20th century by Izydor Gulowski, a teacher in the village of Wdzydze and his wife Teodora, who had artistic inclinations and being a sister of the convent's vicary, came to study the convent embroidery. Mrs Gulowska next studied painting in Berlin where, alike in Poland, folk art witnessed a stage of revival at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The embroidery centre in the village of Wdzydze set up by Mrs Gulowska did not draw upon popular traditions. Mrs Gulowska herself composed the designs and decided on the colours. Yet, she drew inspiration from Casubian popular art, as for example, from pottery, furniture and sometimes also from old Casubian bonnets. Thus, the embroidery initiated by Mrs Gulowska takes up in an indirect way local Casubian traditions by using creatively patterns from other fields of folk art. And yet, from the very moment of its birth the Wdzydze embroidery has never been of a purely folk character and despite the fact that by now it has been in existence for 50 years it did not take root among the Casubian people and remains a regional peculiarity produced for sale in the towns. It represents Casubian art outside the Casubian area, a factor which should not be underestimated when thinking about the future of Casubian embroidery.

Władysław Müller — DECLINE OF POPULAR ARCHITECTURE?

The radical changes which had been going on in the Polish countryside since after the first world war and the impact brought about by the last war dealt a severe blow to traditional rural architecture. The advancing industrialization had also reached the countryside where wooden huts, mills, fulleries and smithies are being ousted by modern industrial buildings and concrete and bricks are definitely replacing wood, until recently the familiar building material in the Polish countryside. Higher standards of living induce the peasants to abandon the old, traditional building patterns and to build along modern lines.

It would be useless to try and check this inevitable process of modernisation, but something should be done to save the fine traditional rural architecture from complete decay. Under the present circumstances many among the finest specimens of rural architecture are in a state of dilapidation, some are reconstructed along modern lines, while many more are pulled down altogether.

The voivodship (regional) Conservator is the official in charge with the duty to protect the buildings worthy of being preserved. It would, be, however, too much to expect of the Conservator to take care of each individual building in the area under his

supervision; overburdened with his daily routine work, the Conservator is content if he manages to keep an accurate inventory of all the buildings which badly need repair.

Next come the financial worries: the conservatory cannot afford to meet all the expenses connected with the upkeep of buildings which on account of their historic value should be preserved, while the owners show no interest in investing money in old-fashioned dilapidated buildings; they prefer to build houses with modern amenities.

The author suggests as the only possible solution for saving rural architecture from complete oblivion, the setting up of a Skanson centre, composed of buildings in various regional styles. The accumulation of the finest specimens in one area has, in the author's opinion, many advantages: it makes easier the study of the various styles to experts and offers an interesting sight-seeing to tourists.

In conclusion, the author criticises the work of the designing offices which, according to him, show a lack of understanding for the need to preserve the fine traditions in popular architecture, even though they also lack in understanding for modern requirements in present-day building.

Janina Krajevska — CASUBIAN POTTERY

This article contains the data which Miss Janina Krajevska collected in the Casubian area in the years 1934—39, at the time she was making research which preceded the opening of an ethnographic section in the Gdynia Municipal Museum. Miss Krajevska makes a survey of Casubian pottery, including the production technique of Casubian earthenware (pottery for domestic use, religious objects, ornamented tiles) and the methods of ornamentation.

The biggest pottery centres were concentrated in the towns of Kościerzyna, Kartuzy and Chmielno, followed by Wejherowo and Puck. Some of the potters also settled in villages. The earliest information the authoress succeeded in tracing about the Casubian potters dates back to the beginning of the 19th century.

Clay, Technique and Ornamentation

The Casubian potters used for their products local clay. The preparation process started in the autumn and lasted several months. Cleansing was usually done by hand and only bigger workshops had at their disposal a slime-cleaner. (See drawings 2 & 4) It was not until the end of the 19th century that machines replaced hand-cleaning. The earthenware was shaped either on whetstones or in moulds. The latter technique was mainly used to produce religious objects (minute figurines of saints, aspergilla, etc). At the end of the 18th century, the Kartusian Monastery produced these religious objects in mass quantities.

Glazing and Enamel

In the period under review (end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries) flower-pots and saucers to be placed under them were mostly left unglazed, but judging by the pottery in the neighbouring regions it would be safe to assume that more biscuit vessels for domestic use were produced in earlier times.

Varnished pottery was glazed in brown, yellow, white and green and then covered with a vitreous brown, green or dark blue coating which served as a basis for ornamentation.

The Technique of Ornamentation

The Casubian potters used various ornamentation techniques, including engraving and glued applications. Religious figures were usually adorned with glued on plastic ornaments, while painted ornaments were done by means of a funnel or brush in white, green and brown. Whitewash and metal oxide were used to obtain the colours.

Ovens and Firing

The ovens were mainly built of bricks, but clay-ovens — similar to bread ovens — were also used in earlier times. Not infrequently, the equipment was much more primitive, with a pit in the earth, or a chimney being used as an oven.

The authoress gives a description of all types of ovens and their construction, discussing in detail the methods of firing and placing the vessels in the oven.

Organisation of Work and Sale of Wares

The poorer potters worked usually by themselves. Owners of bigger workshops employed apprentices, each one of whom performed just one stage of the work. The potters themselves travelled to small townships and villages to sell their wares.

Olga Mulkievicz — KAŃCZUGA NET-LAGE

The art of net-lace making has not been much discussed in Polish folk art literature. Miss Olga Mulkievicz' detailed account of the net-lace history in Kańczuga (Rzeszów Voivodship) is an attempt at filling the gap. The study contains much comparative data from other regions.

Bordering upon wicker-work and weaving, the net-lace technique was known in the remote past and is still alive in many European countries.

Formerly, Kanczuga net-lace was chiefly used — or at least it appears so in the light of present day findings — for making bonnets and belts and almost every woman in Kańczuga was a skilled lace-maker. The production of net-lace bonnets began to dwindle away in the inter-war period and it vanished altogether in the years 1940—1942. Jewish vendors used to finance the production of net-lace, they then dyed the lace, lined it with linen and sold ready-made bonnets in all the regions neighbouring on Kańczuga.

Small looms were used for cotton or silk yarn weaving. (See drawing 1).

The technique and weaving designs as applied by the various needle-women are discussed in detail by Miss Mulkievicz (See drawings 4, 5, 6). Vertical stripes and sometimes chequer designs were characteristic of Kańczuga bonnets. There is no sufficient comparative material to find out whether groups of particular designs can be linked up with either regions or production centres. A general conclusion seems to be justified that though the Kańczuga bonnets were distinguished for the variety of their designs, the bonnets from Lublin and Podlasie regions testify to better workmanship of the women lace-makers from that regions.

Similar in their general character to the net-lace products in other European countries, the Polish specimens are most akin to Czechoslovakian and Wołyń net-lace articles, which can be explained by close neighbourhood and trade relations.

Teresa Karwicka — NUPTIAL VERGES IN THE LUBLIN AREA

The custom of nuptial wicker verges has rich traditions in Europe. In Poland it was a general custom in the middle of the 19th century, though now it has completely vanished. In the Lublin area, the bride's maids made the verges from tree branches and adorned them with coloured glossy paper, feathers, ribbons and sometimes with candles. When the verge was properly adorned, the bride's maids used to go to the bridegroom who hung gifts for his future wife on the verge.

Miss Karwicka makes a detailed analysis of the various kinds of verges used in the Lublin area and the mode of adorning them

Zofia B. Głowa — CRACOW EMBROIDERY AND ANCIENT „LOKTUSE”.

Miss Głowa makes an analysis of some exhibits of the Cracow Ethnographic Museum. She dwells

in particular on square home-spun linen kerchiefs, either plain or with embroidered edges, known in the past as „loktuse”, which in southern Poland were an important element of a woman's gala dress. The custom of weaving „loktuse”, as a shoulder kerchief, survived until the end of the 19th century.

Ewa Fryś — EXHIBITION OF NORTH LUBLIN FABRICS AND REGIONAL COSTUMES

Miss Fryś reviews the exhibition of North Lublin fabrics and regional costumes which was organized in Biała Podlaska by the People's Council's Cultural Department, in cooperation with the Lublin Museum and the Lublin Ethnographic Society. Giving a short description of the exhibits, Miss Fryś highly values the initiative of the organizers, saying that exhibitions of this kind are much more useful than the usual regional exhibitions including all forms of folk art.



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R. XI—1957

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