

The Baroque influence on the uniforms used by the Chivalric Orders as exemplified by the Order of Saint Lazarus in France

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The 17th century Baroque period was characterised by an elaborate rather eccentric redundancy and excessive abundance of detail, which contrasted to the clear and sober rationality of the preceding Renaissance and the subsequent Enlightenment. The movement is generally believed to have originated in Rome, at the beginning of the 17th century and spread to France and most of Europe. Generally associated with the artistic movement, the elaborate baroque style was to permeate to various aspects of life including male dress fashion especially that of the nobility and members of the chivalric Orders.

The Order of Saint Lazarus saw its origins in the Kingdom of Jerusalem after the First Crusade at the end of the 11th century. Starting primarily as a Hospitaller Order caring for victims of Hansen's disease [leprosy], the Order eventually assumed a military role participating in various military campaigns against the Islamic forces. The *raison d'être* of the Order changed in the subsequent centuries and, during the 16th century, the Order was transformed completely from a Crusader Hospitaller Monkish Order into a Chivalric Military Order enjoying French Royal protection. The changing role of the Order throughout the centuries was reflected by the dress adopted by its members and by the fashion imposed during the Baroque Age.

The 12-13th century dress of the members of the Order is not depicted anywhere. However, because of the apparent close relationship of the Order with the Order of the Temple, it is assumed that the Lazarite monks and knights wore similar clothes to those worn by the Templars identifying themselves by the use of a green cross instead of a red one. “We command that all the brothers’ habits should always be of one colour, that is white or black or brown. And we grand to all knight brothers in winter and in summer if possible, white cloaks;..... But these robes should be without any finery and without any show of pride”¹ By 1255, the Order of Saint Lazarus was placed under the Rule of Saint Augustine.² One may assume that the Lazarite monks then adopted the dress of this religious monastic Order which aimed to “Avoid singularity in dress, and strive to please others by your conduct and not by your clothes”.³ The choir and outdoor dress of the Augustinian friars is a tunic of black woollen material, with long, wide sleeves, a black leather girdle and a large shoulder cape to which is attached a long, pointed hood reaching to the girdle.

The first depiction of the dress used by members of the Order dates to the early 14th century in the form of a tombstone depiction of Thomas de Sainville who served as *maître* of the Order [died 1312]. Here, the master is depicted as wearing a sombre long round-necked cloak laced with a collar and charged with the cross of the Order on the

1 J.M. Upton-Ward. *The Rule of the Templars*. (Boydell Press, Woodbridge,2005), 24.

2 The Order of Saint Lazarus was confirmed by Pope Alexander IV as an *Ordinum Fratrum & Militul Hospitalis Leprosorum S. Lazari Hierosolymitani sub Regula S. Augustini* on the 11 April 1255. Vide Papal Bull *Cum á nob is petitur*.....Transcribed in: L. Cherubini, A.M. Cherubino. *Magnum bullarium romanum, a B. Leone Magnovsque as S.D.N. Innocentium X*. (P. Borde, L. Arnaud & C.I. Rigad, Lyno, 1727), vol.1, 106.

On 15 July 1255, Pope Alexander IV issued the bull, *Cum quaedam salubria*, to command a number of religious groupings to gather for the purpose of being amalgamated into a new Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine. The delegates from other small religious communities met in Rome on 1 March 1256, which resulted in a union. Lanfranc Septala of Milan, Prior of the Bonites, was appointed the first Prior General of the newly constituted Order. The belted, black tunic of the Tuscan hermits was adopted as the common religious habit.

3 *The Rule of Saint Augustine*. www.op.org/domcentral/trad/default.htm



Figure 1. Tombstone effigy (left) of Thomas de Sainville, died 1312.

Figure 2. Pedestal effigy showing Lazarite monk and knights (15th century).

left shoulder. The garments beneath are depicted as being similar to a monkish long garment with buttoned sleeves, fastened by a heavy belt very much in the Augustinian tradition. A similar habit was worn by other 14th century serving *maîtres* including Jean de Paris [died 1349] and Jacques de Besses [died 1384] whose tombstone effigies were also recorded.⁴The effigy depicts no military endowments, though an effigy depicting monk-knights on a pedestal in the Chapel of Saint-Antoine-de-Grattemont in France shows the monk-knight to be carrying a sword, while the mendicant monk appears to be carrying a jug.⁵

The 14th century Statutes of the Order prescribed the wearing of a square green cross insignia sewn onto the habit, mantle and harness.⁶ The use of the green cross was by the 1418 extended to all the members

4 *Recueil de mémoires et documents concernant divers Ordres français ou étrangers. Recueil de pièces, extraits, mémoires et documents concernant les Ordres de Saint-Lazare et du Mont-Carmel. I. Ms. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Clairambault 1316; ff. 17, 19, 21.*

5 Pedestal in Chapel of Saint-Antoine-de-Grattemont, France. Depicted in Hyacinthe R. (2003) *L'Ordre de Saint-Lazare de Jerusalem au Moyen Age*. (Millau: Conservatoire LarzacTemplier et Hospitalier), 134-135.

6 Siegfried von Schlatt. *Dei Regein des Heiligen Orderns S. Lazari*. Ms. Seedorf Monastery, 1314/1331. Transcribed in: G. Gall Morel (ed.). *Die ältestenstatuten für deiLazaritenklosterSeedorf*. Der Geschichtsfreund: Mitteilungen des HistorischenVereins der fünferte Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden ob und niddem Wald und Zug, 4(1847) 119-158.

of the Order including tenants, domestics and commandery servants.⁷ The dress of the *fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari* throughout the 14-16th centuries appears to have continued to emulate the simple religious habit of the other monastic orders. A 16th century broadside depicts the Lazarite monk as wearing a loose-fitting ankle length tunic and a ferraiolo-type cape. He appears to be wearing a clerical hat over a hood. He holds the leper's clapper in the right hand and a book and shaft in the left. This fails to illustrate the green cross insignia sewn onto the habit or mantle.⁸ The eight-pointed cross is clearly depicted in the illustration depicting the 16th century dress of the Lazarite monk and knight published by Pierre Hélyot in 1716.⁹ The square green cross was probably changed to an eight-pointed cross in the mid-16th century when a series of grandmasters of the French branch of the Order were members of the Order of Saint John. Thus in a Chapter of the Order held in Biogny in 1578, Grandmaster François Salviati decreed that individuals with a joint membership to both Orders were obliged to wear a green bordered white eight-pointed cross, while those who were simply members of the Order of Saint Lazarus were obliged to wear an eight-pointed cross vert.¹⁰

The Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements of the 15-16th centuries brought about a distancing of the Order from the purely medicament and military role adopted in the earlier centuries.¹¹

7 Schwarber, Joanno. *Statuta nona F. Joanno Schwarber Commadatore dominorum Seedorf, Anno 1418*. Ms. Seedorf Monastery, 1418.

8 16th century broadsheet related to leprosy. Reproduced in J. Harter. *Images of Medicine*. (Bonanza books, New York, 1991), 202.

9 Pierre Hélyot, Maximilien Bullot. *Histoire des ordresmonastiques, religieux emilitaires, et des congregations seculieres de l'un et de l'autresexe, qui ontétéétabliesjusqu'àprésent*. Nicolas Gosselin, (Paris, 1714), vol.1: 257-271

10 *Process verbal du Chapitre General du 19 et 20 mai 1578*. Transcribed in *La Vie Chevaleresque* 24/25 (October 1939), 161-165.

11 This change in role was initiated in the 14th century by the about marked socio-medical changes brought about by the Plague pandemics that reduced the prevalence of chronic debilitating disease including leprosy. This changed the ethos of the Order's *raison d'être* so that the leprosy-dedicated hospitaller function changed to a more general one of furnishing hospice and support to the needy ones in the immediate vicinity of the various establishments. This in effect changed the



Figure 3. Left, Lazarite monk, 16th century [detail after Broadside]; middle and right, Lazarite monk and knight, late 16th century, [after Pierre Hélyot, 1716].

The members of the Order became increasingly involved with the military campaigns and the Order assumed the role of a land-owning organization managed by non-religious gentry-members of the Order. This change was satirically depicted by a mid-16th century illustration which clearly shows the Lazarite monk changing his dress from the earlier sombre monkish habit to assume the trendy secular clothes of the period. The illustration shows the Lazarite monk to be wearing a dark brown loose-fitting tunic possibly covered by a scapular and cowl. The head is covered by a hood. He carries a leper's clapper in the left hand and a "paternostres" string of 14 beads in the right. The Lazarite gentry-member is wearing a linen white shirt with a V-necked collar ruff and matching wrist ruffs, which were probably starched to be kept stiff and bright. Over the shirt, the individual wears a bright red tight-fitting open waist-length jacket with long sleeves. A series of sixteen buttons runs down the right side of the jacket from the neck to the waist. The lower body is covered by an upper hose and a nether hose. The upper hose is a padded trunk hose reaching down to above the knees. It

Order into a land-owning establishment using the resources to maintain itself and give solstice to those in need – very much assuming the role of other monastic medicament religious Orders.



Figure 4. *Le frère hypocrite*. 16th century.

appears to be paned or pansied with strips of red fabric over a full inner black lining. The lower hose consists of red close-fitting stockings. The black-coloured shoes are ankle height of a flat-soled variety. The individual wears also a black conical hat decorated by gold trimmings and a feather. The dress worn by the gentry-member *fratres hospitalis Sancti Lazari* was very much designed according to the fashion of male gentry during the late 16th century.¹² There is no sign of the green cross in the illustration.

Le frère hypocrite. 16th century

The onset of the Baroque Age was to see the Order assuming the role of a Chivalric Military Order enjoying Royal protection whose members belonged to the nobility. This was to set the wheels in motion to the adoption of a more flamboyant form of official dress reflecting the change that occurred in Western European dress fashion. In the first half of the 17th century, the dress fashion changed gradually with the

¹² *Le frère hypocrite*. 16th century Illuminated manuscript. San Marino, Huntington Library, ms. HM160, fol.129. Depicted in Hyacinthe (2003), *L'Ordre de Saint Lazare*, 170.

disappearance of the ruff collar to favour broad lace or linen collars. The dress design was generally cut close to the body with tight sleeves and a low, pointed waist. The hose continued to be used. In the second half of the 17th century, Western European dress fashion gravitated towards a “dictatorship” of French fashion as determined by the royal court of the powerful Sun King Louis XIV. The body silhouette was transformed to become gradually more softened and broadened with a rise in waistline. Sleeves became fuller and gradually became slashed or paned to show the voluminous sleeves of the shirt or chemise beneath. The hose was replaced by breeches. This period also marked the rise of the periwig as an essential item of men’s fashion. During the first decade of the 17th century, the Order of Jerusalem was administratively combined with the newly setup Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel [est. 1608]. This required changes in design in the insignia of the members from the use of a green cross to two overlain crosses worn on the front tunic – one green and one amethyst. The dress fashion was also determined by rank being more richly decorated the higher the rank of the individual.

The grand master was the most richly dressed reflecting his position and authority. A 17th century depiction shows him wearing an intricately gold-embroidered white wide-sleeved loose tunic over the standard dress of the time. The underlying shirt was also wide-sleeved edged with wrist lace ruffs. A lace *jabot* was worn tied around the neck. He further wore trunk breeches reaching down to above the knees. The lower hose consists of close-fitting stockings. The shoes were ankle height of a heeled variety. He wore a black hat decorated by gold trimmings and three feathers. His insignia medal was carried as a neck cross. The chevalier and serving brothers of the Order had similar dress designs wearing a white non-embroidered tunic [the chevalier’s tunic was embroidered at the hem] with the green-amethyst cross running all the way down the front. These ranks all wore a body-long voluminous amethyst coloured cape with green lining and depicting the eight-pointed cross of the Order. The grand master’s cape was further embroidered with gold and had a marked neck lapel. The novice seemed to be similarly dressed except that the cape was shorter reaching up to



Figure 5. Seventeenth-century dress of members of the Order.¹³

the waist. The herald wore a tunic-type overcoat illustrating the arms of the Order on the front.¹³ The hussier wore the standard dress *à la française*: a coat, waistcoat, and breeches. Lace jabots were worn tied around the neck. Breeches stopped at the knee, with stockings worn

¹³ Pierre Hélyot, Maximilien Bullot. *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques, Religieux et Militaires et des Congregations Seculieres...* Nicolas Gosselin, (Paris, 1714), vol.1, 257-271

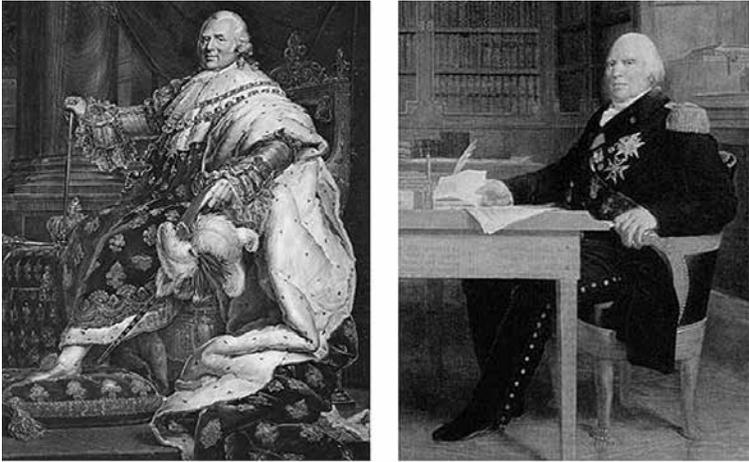


Figure 6. Paintings of King Louis XVIII by artist Baron François Gérard commissioned in 1814 and 1823 - oil on canvas, *Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon*, Versailles, France.

underneath and heeled shoes. A skirt-like coat was generally worn open to expose the waistcoats. Elaborate periwigs in the King Louis XIV style, preferably white, were worn by all members. The ecclesiastic is depicted wearing a dark coloured cassock, or soutane-like garment with a series of buttons down the whole front. This is overlain by a white loose tunic embroidered at the edge. A *mozzetta* or short elbow-length cape with long lapels and depicting the eight-pointed cross of the Order was worn over the shoulder. His insignia medal was carried as a neck cross.

A significant shift in culture which valued reason over authority occurred in France at the beginning of the 18th century during the cultural process known as the Enlightenment. New dress fashions introduced now had a greater impact on society, affecting not only royalty and aristocrats, but also the middle and even lower classes. Fashion played a large role in the French Revolution. Patriotically, the revolutionaries characterized themselves by wearing the *tricolor* – red, white, and blue – on items of their clothing. Since the lower working class of the population wore ankle-length trousers, the revolutionaries further

identified themselves as the *sans-culottes*, or “without breeches”. This caused knee breeches to become extremely unpopular and even dangerous to wear in France. Anyone caught wearing an extravagant suit was accused of being an aristocrat risking an encounter with Madame Guillotine. The dress fashion influence brought about by the French Revolution initiated a change from the baroque flamboyant dress fashion to the more sombre rather military-style design of men’s dress fashion seen during the nineteenth century. The different styles can be contrasted by two portraits of King Louis XVIII, one shown wearing the flamboyant baroque dress emulating his grandfather’s late 17th century baroque fashion, and the other wearing the more sombre uniform-like dress adopted in the early 19th century. King Louis XVIII served as the last grand master of the Order during the *ancien regime* and as protector until his death in 1824.