

## Food for Family and Friends from Shrove Tide to Easter

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### Introduction

For ages Shrovetide and Easter were sober Lent's festive companions, each marked by its own set of special foods. But what happened to these habits when at Vaticanum II the Roman Catholic Church lifted its food bans for Lent? Did housewives till that very moment hold on to their traditional foodways? Or did they change them long before? After World War I for instance? And if so, why? These are the questions behind this investigation into tradition and innovation in food habits among farmers' wives in the rural area of St. Oedenrode.

However, there was precious little recorded about the food habits these women practised at that time of the year and even less about the rationale behind their clinging to tradition or inventing new foodways. This called for a so-called qualitative study of a small but well-chosen population using the open, tape-recorded interview-technique.<sup>(1)</sup>

A preliminary study of literature and of previous investigations into the rationale of tradition and innovation in food habits<sup>(2)</sup> (part 1) generated the questions for the interview-manual we used eventually in our field-work in St. Oedenrode.

The results of investigation are described in the second part of this paper, which is rounded off with a customary chapter, 'Conclusion'.

### I. The literature on fast, feast, food

#### Introduction

Literature referred to here falls into three different categories. There are in the first place publications dealing with the Church's ideas on food in relation to fast and feast. Then there are authors whose main interest lies with food-lore and cooking. Finally there are those who see food and cooking from the point of view of the mistress of the house. The different findings are described in the following paragraphs. Together they generated the basic questions for the investigation into tradition and change in the food habits in St. Oedenrode during the last eight decades.

#### The Catholic Church

Turning the pages of the Bible and reading them properly, one cannot but understand how it came about that the Church developed such mixed feelings on the subjects 'food', 'fast' and 'feast'.

In Genesis we read that immediately after his creation God gave Man for food all the seedbearing plants and the seedbearing fruits of all the trees (Gen.1:29). However once Man got the Garden of Eden to live in, to cultivate and to preserve, God forbade him to eat from one specific tree, the tree of knowledge (Gen.2:17). But Adam and Eve could not resist temptation and ate from the fruit of the forbidden tree. From then on Man had to live off the produce of the fields which had to be earned by hard labour (Gen.3:19). It was only after the Flood and when Noah had discharged his mission, that God decided to add all the animals that live on earth, in the sky, and in the waters to the list of foods Man is allowed to eat (Gen.9:1-3).

In other parts we learn about meals, dinners, suppers, picnics and of proper foods for special occasions and grand feasts. Among others in (Gen.18:6-9) (Adam and Sarah preparing a meal for visiting angels), (1 Sam.20:27-29) (David's absence from Saul's table), (Matt.14:19-21) (the miracle of the loaves and fishes), (Matt.26:26-29) (the establishment of the Last Supper), (John2:1-11) (marriage at Cana), (Luke15:23-25) (the prodigal son's return). There are furthermore passages where the virtues of living on a meagre fare are extolled such as in (Matt.3:4), where the austere diet of John the Baptist is described. And the virtue of offering food and drink to those who are starving, and the deadly sin of overlooking those in need of sustenance (a.o. Matt.25:35,42; Luke16:19-24).

The Scriptures' various messages on food, fast, and feast set the scene within the Church for heated debates on the rival merits of fasting and feasting - increasingly so when Christianity became shot through with an ardent desire to detach the soul from the world and to help it grow impervious to life's pleasures such as appetising food.

In medieval times one of the many debates on fasting arose around the locusts and wild honey, the only food John

the Baptist was sustained by in the desert (Matt.3:4). Because the consumption of these two foods suggested that he lived not only on meat but on a delicacy as well, purists among the scriptural commentators became uneasy about John's virtues. However, his reputation could be saved by declaring that the kind of locust he ate was an unpalatable plant or tree-pod and that wild honey was anything but sweet and delicious. (Henisch,1978,p.2,8).

At that time other debates bore on the virtues of fasting for the individual Christian and as a commendable means to cleanse and discipline society. With regard to Lent these debates resolved themselves into a number of very specific and strict rules in order to prepare the soul for Easter. These forbade the consumption of meat, butter and eggs, sometimes cheese and milk even, and allowed the ingestion of only one single meal a day, which had to be postponed till after the hour of vespers. (Henisch, o.c.,p.29-44). Where Lent lasts for forty consecutive days, these rules were very harsh indeed. But as time went on, the Church made more and more exceptions to them such as permitting the use of eggs (Mennell, 1985,p.28). Milk, butter and, cheese followed in due course and, in the middle of the 20th century, meat and meat products as well. At that moment the Church ceased to use food rules when preparing its flock for the feast of Easter.

The Church's involvement with Shrovetide is of quite a different order. In the first place because Shrovetide does not figure on the ecclesiastical calendar. It is therefore to be assumed that the Church would have dealt with the three days of Shrovetide as just an ordinary Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, if only their flock had nowhere and never been inclined to transform these days into feast-days of their own making, with singing, dancing, eating and all that stands for merriment. But the people of North Brabant were not that obedient.

According to Meurkens (1983) in North Brabant Shrovetide was up till 1850 synonymous with special privileges for the unmarried youth, such as singing to fellow-villagers and strangers for money, dancing and going courting. But the situation changed in about 1850, when the well-to-do saw fit to try and curtail these quite boisterous public feasts and to promote domestic order. Shortly afterwards the clergy too adopted this ideal. So much so, that the Bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch introduced in 1881 in his diocese a Forty Hours Devotion for Shrovetide. Since then the faithful of North Brabant were each year summoned to come to their parish church <sup>(2)</sup> as often as possible and to pray that they would resist the temptations of Shrovetide and not be led astray. With temporary success, however. For the next year saw the establishment of the first association for the organisation of festivities at Shrovetide by the inhabitants of 's-Hertogenbosch the very town where the Bishop himself resided (Rozema,1983,p.183). But till circa 1955 Shrovetide remained a very subdued affair in the rural part of his bishopric.

For Easter the Church seems never to have laid down any food rules. And in view of human nature, it would not have served the purpose. For the long sad journey of Lent in the guise of lack of flavour and abstinence asks for a happy ending with a feast surrounded with plentiful as well as nice food.

But where one man's meat is another man's poison, the Church allowed and allows its members a free hand on the point of selecting the foods that should grace their tables at ecclesiastical high-days. And wisely so. For otherwise housewives might not be able to cater to the likes and dislikes of their families - not even to such idiosyncrasies as a preference for strict adherence to traditional Easter Fare only, or the opposite: abhorrence of all that is traditional at Easter. And that would put the very joy out of this feast of feasts.

#### Folklorists and authors of Cookbooks

Writers of popular books <sup>(4)</sup> on Dutch food-lore in several parts of the Netherlands recorded 9 food specialties for Shrovetide and 13 for Easter, but did not provide the corresponding recipes. Those were found in the Amsterdam, the Hague and the NCB Cookbooks, three widely used Dutch cookbooks <sup>(5)</sup>. Especially those for Shrovetide specialties seemed of interest.

Now it became plain that the folklorists used two different names for one Shrovetide specialty - a bread baked in the Dutch oven. This brought the number of Shrovetide specialties back to 8. These are prepared either in a skillet, a griddle, a deep-fat fryer or a Dutch oven.

Heidenreich's Manual on the Methodology of Food Preparation (Heidenreich, 1979) gives the basic recipes for 5 of these 8 Shrovetide specialties (Table I)

Table I. Basic recipes for Shrovetide specialties

Ingredients	Pancakes	Baternuts	Doll's pancakes	D. Oven Bread
flour (gr)	200	200	200	200
milk (dl)	3.5	1.5	2.5	1.5
egg (piece)	1	1	1	1
yeast (gr)	10	10	8-10	10
salt (gr)	3-4	3	3	3
d. fruit (gr)	-	100	-	100
c. pork (gr)	50-100	-	-	-
apples (p)	2	-	-	-

Legend: baternuts = deep-fried balls of a batter

D. Oven Bread = bread baked in a Dutch oven

d. fruit = raisins, currants, and / or candied peel of the fruit of *Citrus medica* proper

c. pork = cured pork

Source: Heidenreich, 1979.

These basics were supplemented with the following notes on the respective batters:

the batter for Pancakes runs off the spoon as a thick cord.

" " " Doll's pancakes runs off the spoon as a broad ribbon.

" " " Baternuts drops off the spoon in pieces.

" " " Dutch Oven Bread ditto

and with the following rules for adaptations:

use for a thick batter at most 2 eggs / 1000 gr flour,

" at most 20 gr butter / 100 gr flour,

" between 50 - 100 gr filling / 100 gr flour,

" 8 gr yeast / 100 gr flour in case the filling is heavy,

count 1 egg for 0.5 dl milk,

count 100 gr butter for 0.5 dl liquid

As a higher amount of yeast makes for a quicker rising batter, it is interesting to note, that the Heidenreich recipes contain less yeast than three editions of the Amsterdam and The Hague respectively. The amounts found in two editions of the NCB-cookbook are even higher still. It looks as if the authors of the NCB-Cookbook thought that quick rising batters would be a real boon for the prospective readers, the housewives in rural North Brabant.

A further comparison of different editions of the three mentioned cookbooks proved, that after World War II housewives were supposed to use wheat flour for all these specialties. But between the wars this was the case only for Baternuts and the Dutch-oven Bread, whereas equal amounts of buckwheat and wheat flour were prescribed for the remaining 5. That this mixture was not advised for Baternuts and Dutch-oven Bread relates to the lack of gluten in buckwheat. This implies, that a batter of wheat flour mixed with buckwheat will not rise well in deep-fat nor in the oven.

For Lent the NCB Cookbook contained 6 menus. Their respective nutritive value per person was calculated and compared with the energy requirements of farmers, farmhands and the like which Bonnema formulated in 1947 (Table II).

As it turned out, one of the menus (Menu F) surpassed Bonnema's standard by 150 Kcal. But the other five fell short of that standard - Menu A by no less than 900 Kcal and Menu E by 500. It does not seem possible that these deficiencies could ever be made good by adding sugar to the dessert, for 900 Kcal asks for no less than 225 gram and 500 Kcal for 125 gram sugar. So when a housewife put these meals in front of her husband it was a very frugal one indeed - perhaps even too frugal for his spiritual well-being.

Table II, Calculated<sup>\*)</sup>) nutritive value per person in Kj and Kcal respectively of 6 NCB-menus#) for Lent. (rounded)

Menu A: main course with boiled eggs, dessert	4570 Kj	1070 Kcal.
" B: main course with fried eggs, dessert	7400	1750
" C: main course with scrambled egg, dessert	6820	1610
" D: main course with fish, dessert	7190	1700
" E: main course with fish, dessert	6090	1440
" F: main course with pulses, dessert	9030	2070

\*) The calculations of portions per person are based on the NCB-Cookbook and on Heidenreich (1979); their content on the Nederlandse Voedingsmiddelentabel (1987)

#) The recipes of the desserts of the first five menus don't contain sugar, which should be served separately. An average amount of sugar per portion is 15 gram and contains 250 Kj or 60 Kcal.

The folklorists linked the cock- and hen-shaped rolls, the breaded ring, and the cracknels specifically with the decorated pole that children carry on Palm Sunday on their round through the village, the so-called Palmpaas.

These figured breads were all ovenbaked as were the Easter specialties which the folklorists enumerated such as hare- and man-shaped rolls, twisted rolls, snipped rolls and loaves filled with a dried fruit with a mixture of dried fruits and/or rolls of Dutch almond paste.

#### The housewife in her kitchen

The notion 'food' in connection with 'fast' turns the mind automatically to ideas such as frugality, abstention, dullness, monotony, and merit. But when 'food' becomes linked with 'feast' and the feast is Easter, it evokes visions of well-laid breakfast-tables, baskets filled with all kinds of crisp new breads, bowls with coloured eggs, the choicest jams and marmalades in brimful jars and a festive atmosphere. Or one sees in one's mind's eye a daintily laid table and smells the delightful aromas of a delicious meal concocted from all the fresh meats, fruits and vegetables that spring offers.

But when Shrovetide comes nearer with Lent in it's wake, a housewife's mind will turn to her larder, her purse, her stock of recipes, her family's likes and dislikes, their physiological needs, and last but not least her and her family's diary. That is of course nothing out of the common. For there is no session in kitchen without a swift checking of the mouths to fill, a glimpse in the storeroom, a glance at the stock of habitual menus<sup>6)</sup>, a quick inventory of the physiological needs of the eaters, a hasty survey of appliances and utensils, a rapid calculation of the available time, fuel and labour, and need be and time and season permit a dash into the vegetable garden, the poultry-house, the rabbit-hutch or a trip to the shops with money in the pocket. Not even the most ordinary day of the year will witness one housewife-on-duty who skips this ritual. And for ages the prudent housewife has gone through all these motions well before Lent knocked at her door, for some of her mainstays in preparing nutritious meals for her family figured on the Church's list of foods forbidden for Lent.

In so far as these forbidden foods are perishable, the housewife had to rid her larder of them. This was in particular a dilemma for the quite prosperous housewife, who used in her kitchen meat and pork of home-fattened pigs. It was a little bit easier for the housewife who ordered these commodities at the butcher's. But *mirabile dictu*, it was easiest by far for the really poor housewife who had to live from hand to mouth and never had a piece of meat or pork in her larder.

But when just before Ash Wednesday one had still some meat or pork in the larder that would not keep till Easter, one had no choice but to concoct with these ingredients some more or less copious meals at Shrovetide. However, once done, the housewife and her family might well turn this invention into tradition and ever after have that kind of meal during Shrovetide (Henisch, o.c.,p.38)

Lent, however, lasts only 40 days and the outcome is Easter, a feast which the Church never burdened with lists of forbidden foods. So to the end of Lent the housewife can freely stock her larder with Easter specialties or the ingredients for them.

### A housewife's many activities

Everybody has but one head, one pair of hands, one pair of feet and needs some 8 hours for recuperation per day. This implies that nobody can put more activities into one day than he or she can cram into 16 hours, be it a work-, a Sun- or a Holy-Day.

Providing her family with at least three meals a day and cups of tea or coffee in between is a task a housewife has to perform. But a number of other domestic tasks compete for her time, energy, knowledge and skills. And so do all kinds of social institutions that the household or she herself is connected with. The Church, for instance, and kinsfolk, a circle of friends, occupational activities, public or corporate affairs, sports or recreational associations, the educational system and so on (fig.1).

Fig.1. The matrix of a housewife's economic web

warp of activities	domestic life	kin	friends	church	educat. system	work	affairs		sports a.o.
							public	corp.	
welt of assets									
capital (goods)									
time									
vital energy									
ready money									
knowledge									
skills									

(adapted from Edema, 1985,p.39)

It is self-evident that the more time and energy, money even, she is or feels obliged to spend on a particular day on those kinds of activities, the less time, energy and perhaps money she has left for the preparation of meals, snacks, and beverages. Which implies that her ways with food are not determined by the money she can spend on ingredients, the appliances she has at her disposal, the nutritional knowledge she possesses and her cooking skills. Consequently a housewife may be forced to change her foodways on some particular days, because she has to adjust her time-table. Or she might change them because on exactly these days the pressure on her time and energy is for some reason less than before. In other words, changes in a housewife's time-table may well account for changes in the food habits within her domestic circle. Which hypothesis implies that data gathered by interviewing housewives on their reasons for sticking to or changing their foodways, will fit the matrix of figure 1. But the very same reasons will at the same time point to the basic rules by which the interaction between the members of a single household is guided.

### The housewife and the members of her household

The members of a household interact in accordance with unwritten, but substantial rules. Foodways are often a manifestation of these rules and confirm them at the same time. When, for instance, parents are of the opinion, that their son is of marriageable age and he brings a girl home, the two will be treated to drinks and snacks that underline their adulthood. And by doing just that the parents demonstrate that they are willing to launch him into matrimony. Or when a housewife likes her children to participate in activities the Church organises, she will set the mealtimes to the Church timetable.

These and many other food-related interactions between the members of a household relate to the social values the household as a social institution incorporates (Edema 1983, 1985, 1988).

These values are at their most concise

to manifest a proper esprit de corps <sup>(7)</sup>

In this context the adjective 'proper' means three different things. Firstly that the individual member of a household is entitled to the other members' support and protection. Secondly that the household as a group has to support the common cause in money or in kind. Thirdly that in due time children, born within the group are launched into the world (e.g. into marriage).

- to watch over the spiritual well-being of the individual members (e.g. by obeying the Church's rules or by using food as balm for wounded feelings),
- to watch over the physical well-being of the individual members (e.g. by distributing food according to each one's appetite and nutritional need),
- to stimulate its members to participate in institutions outside the household appropriate to their age or sex, (e.g. by offering food and drink to visiting kin, friends and potential suitors and fiancées),
- to socialise each member of the household to behavioral codes which the household as such, as well as significant sectors of the larger society, approve of (e.g. the Church, the School, the Community, the Labour Market).

Because foodways are so closely linked with social values - which in everyday life crystallise into norms, goals, and expectations (Van Doorn & Lammers, 1976, p.177) - an investigator may find here the reasons why housewives are unable to find the time and energy for new and more time-absorbing foodways. Or he may discover that his interviewees looked for the earliest opportunity to curtail on specific days some of their customary activities in order to find room for new and more time-absorbing foodways, because one or more of these values were at stake.

### Conclusion

This overview of the literature generated the following questions about tradition and innovation in food habits from Shrovetide up to and including Easter in general and among farmers' wives in St. Oedenrode in particular.

Are today's farmers' wives of St. Oedenrode familiar with the foods the folklorists mentioned as specialties for Shrovetide, Palm Sunday and Easter? Which of them do or did they ever prepare themselves? What ingredients do or did they use?

What happened in the last 50 years with Shrovetide in St. Oedenrode? Did the Forty Hours Devotion survive or was it supplanted by Carnival? And what happened during those 50 years to the food habits at Shrovetide?

Did housewives before Vaticanum II serve special menus during Lent? And if so, what happened afterwards?

What happened during the last 50 years with regard to Palm Sunday, what to Easter? And what to the traditional food habits on these days?

How did tradition and change relate to the housewives' economic web? And to the five social values the household incorporates?

## II. From Shrovetide to Easter in St. Oedenrode

### Introduction

The above questions formed the backbone of the interview-manual for the investigation in St. Oedenrode. But they were supplemented by three written aids. One contained 22 cards, each one bearing the name of a food the folklorists mentioned as a specialty for this time of the year. The second was a compilation of all the ingredients the authors of the three consulted cookbooks enumerated in the recipes for these 22 foods. The third was a list of the materials Nannings (1932) and Naaykens (1978) described as traditional ingredients for the composition of a Palmpaas.

For the selection of our respondents we had to rely on two inhabitants of St. Oedenrode. They were able to introduce us to 18 farmers' wives who met our requirements which were, that they were born and bred in the rural fringe of the town St. Oedenrode, had lived there all their married life, belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. As the oldest was born in 1901 and the youngest in 1958, it was assumed that their collective recollection of food habits at Shrovetide and Easter would cover the entire period between 1910 and 1990.

This assumption proved correct. Those born between 1900 and 1925 started to talk about how things went in their youth, followed that up with data about the time their children were still at home and came in the end to the present time. Yet when an interviewee was born between 1930 and 1945 she started with here and now and turned from there to what was customary in her youth. But when born between 1945 and 1960 our respondent would talk merely about the present. Such differences between older and younger housewives did not really come as a surprise as the youngest interviewees had been married less than ten years, whereas previous research (NN, 1963) had born out that women need ten to fifteen years in order to turn from a novice in matters of marriage and household into a dyed-in-the-wool

housewife.

### Specialties, old and new

None of our respondents was familiar with 5 of the 22 foods mentioned by authors of Dutch food-lore as typical fare for Shrovetide and Easter. The following were the foods in question: the smoutebol, the doughnut, the two "Dutch-oven" breads, and one oven-baked bread.

Table III. Foods for special occasions

name of food	Occasion										
	St	PS	Eas	Xmas	NYE	TAF	C-Bd	Fday	Sday	YR	
1. Pancake (pork)	x										x
2. " (apple)	x										x
3. Batternuts	x				x	x					
4. Waffles	x					x	x				x
5. Doll's pancakes	x					x	x				
6. Stuffed rolls	x		x	x				x	x		
7. Cock-shaped rolls		x	x								
8. Chicken- " rolls		x	x								
9. Man-shaped roll			x								
10. Hare-shaped roll			x								
11. Easter-loaf			x								
12. Loaf with succade			x					x			
13. Loaf w. raisins			x	x		x		x	x		
14. Loaf w. currants			x	x				x	x		
15. Rusk-buns			x					x			x
16. Twisted rolls				x				x	x		
17. Snipped rolls								x	x		

Key: St = Shrovetide  
 PS = Palm Sunday  
 Eas = Easter  
 Xmas = Christmas  
 NYE = New Year's Eve  
 TAF = The Annual Fair  
 C-Bd = Children's Birthday  
 Fday = Feastday  
 Sday = Sunday  
 YR = now and again

That nobody had ever heard about the smoutebol was the most remarkable, for the interviewees were very familiar with the batternut and a smoutebol is nothing but a batternut deep-fried in lard. One explanation would be that the tradition of deep-frying batter-balls was invented after oil had become relatively cheap. Another might be that deep-frying in lard was such a tricky business that salad oil took its place as soon as it appeared on the market and the old habit of deep-frying in lard has been completely forgotten since then.

Asked if they ever used the remaining 17 foods at either Shrovetide, Palm Sunday or Easter it turned out that the twisted and snipped rolls (nos 16, 17) were never put to that purpose. But the stuffed rolls, the Cock- and the Chicken-rolls did double duty: the first were served at Shrovetide as well as at Easter, the figured rolls both on Palm Sunday and Easter. The remaining 12 did single service from Shrovetide till Easter: the pancakes, batternuts and waffles at Shrovetide, the breads and rolls at Easter (Table III).

From the data of Table III it can be concluded that none of the Shrovetide specialties is that special, that it is merely served at Shrovetide. And neither are three out of the four special loaves for Easter.

### Ingredients, old and new

In the course of time the ingredients used for four of the five Shrovetide specialties of Table III underwent some change (Table IV)

They are directly linked to some developments which the farming system underwent in this part of the Netherlands. Up to World War II buckwheat, potatoes and rye had been the main crops here, whereas some cows and one or more pigs had made up the farmer's livestock. As a careful housewife was not supposed to buy what was produced on the farm, every St. Oedenrode farmers' wife would stock her store-room with buckwheat and rye and the meat, sausages, pork and lard, a pig would provide her with and she would buy as little wheat flour, salad oil, molasses and sugar as possible. She would, for instance, only buy wheat flour when she had to fry batternuts for neither buckwheat nor rye flour could give her batternuts the required lightness.

This kind of background information makes it clear that in 1920 the old farming system was still in full swing, but by 1950 the first changes had already occurred. And ten years later the farmers' wives relied on the food-industry for all the ingredients they needed for preparing the specialties of Table IV. The data for 1990 demonstrate moreover, that the St. Oedenrode housewives are even very much abreast of modern ideas about the nutritive value of different flours and oils. That the farmers became at the same time more prosperous, is also born out by Table IV: in 1920 molasses and sugar were used as sweeteners of only two out of four specialties, but in 1950 all four were accompanied by a sweetener and icing sugar was added to the list of customary sweeteners.

Table IV. Flours, cooking fats, and sweetenings for 4 Shrovetide specialties before and after 1960

year	c.1920	c.1950	c.1960	c.1990
Pancake with pork	buckwheat  lard  -	b.wheat+rye b.wheat+wheat wheat lard  molasses	Self-raising fl.  margarine salad oil molasses	wheat whole wheat 4 grain mix (#) margarine  molasses sugar
Pancake with apple	buckwheat b.wheat+wheat  lard salad oil  molasses sugar	wheat  margarine salad oil  molasses sugar	baking fl.  margarine  molasses sugar icing sugar apple syrup	wheat whole wheat 4 grain mix (#) butter margarine sunflower oil molasses sugar icing sugar apple syrup
Batternuts	wheat  salad oil	wheat  salad oil icing sugar	baking fl.  salad oil icing sugar	baking fl. battermix (#) sunfl. oil icing sugar
Doll's pancakes	buckwheat sugar	bwheat+wheat icing sugar	bwheat+wheat icing sugar	D's pc-mix (#) icing sugar

(#) proprietary mixes available in the Netherlands

### Tradition and invention in Shrovetide specialties

Reminiscences of the older interviewees and data on present food habits bear out that pancake with pork and pancake with apple as its substitute were the real traditional Shrovetide specialties. In some households it constituted the main course of the cooked meal at noon and was served between the soup and a dessert of buttermilk-cum-barley or something similar. In others it replaced at the uncooked 6 o'clock meal the customary plate of warmed-up leftovers



of the cooked meal that had been served that day at noon.

Because Shrovetide fell around the time that the housewife had started her spring-cleaning and the farmer his ploughing, sowing, and harrowing, a labour-saving pancake-meal came in very handy indeed. The more so where Shrovetide was the time of the Forty Hours Devotion, because that implied that every member of the household had to go as frequently as possible to the Church for an hour of prayer. As a matter of fact, the bachelor sons and the unattached daughters did not mind changing their clothes a few extra times during those days for they might well see or even speak to a promising person of the opposite sex on the church-path or the church-square. Such a chance was not to be despised at a time when the Church did not allow co-education and mixed societies, frowned upon dancing and merrymaking at annual fairs and earmarked Shrovetide for labour and prayer and nothing else<sup>(6)</sup>. But in the 60's major changes occurred in Dutch society at large, which in due course affected life in St. Oedenrode as well.

At that time industrialisation pressed on in the Netherlands, wages boomed, and in agriculture specialisation, intensification, mechanisation became the order of the day. From that time onward the farmers of St. Oedenrode introduced labour-extensive and capital-intensive husbandry, primarily based on the fodder-industry, instead of the traditional system of labour intensive, but capital extensive mixed farming.

That and the growing demand for well-trained employees and skilled labourers outside agriculture caused many farmers' sons and daughters to turn to a vocational training for gainful employment outside father's farm and mother's kitchen, which made it possible for them to contemplate marriage at a much earlier age than former generations in St. Oedenrode had dared<sup>(7)</sup>.

Small wonder that the need for new forms of entertainment cropped up. Of this the founding in 1957 of the first St. Oedenrode Carnival Society was an overt sign, because in less than no time 10 more followed.

This development implied that housewives had to drop the traditional Shrovetide pancake as soon as Shrovetide took on a new meaning. For a pancake with pork as the main course of a meal might be up to the mark as a Shrovetide specialty as long as that period was set aside for labour and prayer. But it would never do for a housewife to serve pancakes as a snack<sup>(8)</sup> - not even to her family let alone to visitors. So when the notion took root, that Shrovetide should be set aside for the cheerfulness of the carnival procession, the sociability of surprise visits of family, friends, and neighbours, and the pleasure of card-playing in the afternoons or nights with some friendly couples, housewives had to look out for a convenient as well as appropriate snack. This they found in the traditional habit of New Year's Eve, when they fried a large batch of batternuts that took care of the evening itself as well as of every visitor who cared to call and offer his congratulations on New Year's Day. And if they thought the batternuts too rich and too sweet for the occasion, they found recourse in the less rich apple fritters, the less rich and sweet waffles - specialties of the annual fair - or the savoury stuffed rolls - a Christmas specialty. Some housewives with young children started even with doll's pancakes - also a specialty of the annual fair. But quite soon they discovered that that habit was too impractical for such a restless time as Shrovetide had become. Later on, when these children and their friends were old enough to keep carnival, their mothers invented for their benefit some new Shrovetide specialties, because now they had to see to it that the young would not publicly disgrace themselves by getting the worse for drink. Remembering the old saying the stomach takes alcoholic beverages best on a bottom of batternuts, they made a still larger batch of batternuts. What is more, they prepared as well a nourishing (pea-) soup and / or a good-sized (macaroni-) casserole and / or a supply of pan-fried chicken. With all that in their larders, they would be able to serve the young merry-makers (among them perhaps a future son or daughter in law) a square meal, when the latter cared to drop in for a bite. And taking into account that in St. Oedenrode tradition demands that one has fried eggs after an evening at the pub or a social event in some meeting-room, they would moreover lay up a good number of eggs and might put some stuffed rolls in the freezer for good measure.

As soon as the oldest generation among our interviewees perceived in what direction the changes went, they took the cue from the next younger generation of housewives and exchanged the batternut or the apple fritter or the waffle for the pancake with pork as well.

The youngest housewives had already grown up with the idea of keeping carnival and held on to that habit after they got married. Some did not even break the habit of keeping carnival with their former school-friends, others made merry with their husband and a few friendly couples. But since they were now housewives and mothers they had to take their young children to the procession and to the curly-heads' dance or another festivity for the very young, to arrange for a baby-sitter and last but not least to stock the larder with a good number of eggs and the freezer with savoury snacks and a number of square meals.

The above-mentioned data lead to the self-evident conclusion that shortly after the first St. Oedenrode Carnival Society was founded the most dramatic changes occurred in the St. Oedenrode Shrovetide specialties. Till then

housewives were preoccupied with work and Church. But in the 60's they exchanged work and prayer for work-free afternoons, spending the time and energy thus recovered on the members of their families, their kin and friends, the friends of their grownup children in particular, and on public amusements such as the Carnival Procession.

The covert reasons for these shifts lay in the fundamental economic and social changes the farmers' families underwent in the 50's. Till that time it was a blessing in disguise when farmers' children married when they were well into their thirties. But after the 50's marriage could be contemplated at a much earlier age. And a housewife could at least try and foster just that by stimulating her offspring to participate in the right manner in the Shrovetide activities by having snacks and meals ready for the merry-makers, by joining in the festive atmosphere at any rate by taking the afternoons off, and by lending the young merry-makers a sympathetic ear when they might need one.

#### **Tradition and invention between Shrovetide and Easter**

In relation to Lent proper neither specialties nor special menus were mentioned. In the memory of our interviewees it had just been a period of frugal meals. And that had been singularly hard on the farmers. For Lent fell in the season when the farmer had to plough, sow and harrow. In order to illustrate this, many a tale was told about farmers passing out in the field or coming home for a piece of pork. And that notwithstanding he had to pray for such a lapse and even to pay 15 cents!

It is interesting to note that similar stories were not told about farmers' wives. Lent was not only a time of hard work for the farmer but for his wife as well. For Lent stood formerly for a very thorough spring cleaning, which included among other things chimney sweeping, whitewashing, putting the winter clothes in moth-balls, making the summer clothes ready for wear, so that at Easter the house would be spick and span, the summer clothes put on, the stove put out and everybody in high spirits, but shivering with cold.

In relation to Good Friday one single specialty was mentioned. This was the old habit of having that day stockfish with a sauce of rape-seed oil. In later years fresh fish with brown butter supplanted the stockfish. But some kept at least to tradition and graced the dinner-table on Good Friday with a menu with fish, because 'every rule gets abolished, why not hang on to this one.' But nobody seemed to long for a return of all the former frugality of Lent.

Up till the early 80's Palm Sunday was just another Sunday but for the consecration of the bunch of box twigs people brought along in lieu of palm-branches, the Palm procession during High Mass, and in the afternoon the palming of the rye. But when in the 60's the importance of rye as one of a farmer's main crops diminished and corn or another fodder was more and more sown on the rye-fields, the farmers discontinued the habit of solemnly planting consecrated box twigs at the corners of the rye-fields. That made the resemblance of Palm Sunday to an ordinary Sunday even more pronounced.

However, in 1982 the Church started the Palmpaas ceremony, apparently for at least three different reasons. The first was undoubtedly to try and catch the interest of young children, the second to strengthen ties between the Church and the individual families and the third to create a certain link between the youngest and the oldest generations of the congregation, the infirm included.

The first reason is an obvious one, because the Palmpaas is a very festive sight and has interesting details such as figured rolls. The third is as obvious as the first as the children bring their Palmpaas in procession to the Roman Catholic Old People's Home and to the houses of the infirm.

The second reason is less overt but nevertheless present, for the Palmpaas has to be put together at home in accordance with an instruction leaflet which the children bring home from school and which is prepared by the Church's Palmpaas Committee, a group of active laymen and women. The instructions relate among others to the kind of decoration to use, figured rolls, twisted bread, fruit, ribbons, etcetera.

From the farmer's wife's point of view the invention of the Palmpaas caused her to invest more time, energy, ready money, knowledge and skills in Palm Sunday than ever before, part of which she spent more or less directly on her children, the rest more indirectly on the Church and the larger society.

#### **Tradition and invention in Easter Specialties**

The Easter loaf and the four figured rolls are proper Easter specialties (Table III). But it is definitely beside the truth to assume that the figured rolls are a well-worn tradition. Our data bear out in fact that figured rolls were not used before 1982, when the ceremony of the Palmpaas came into being and brought a need for figured rolls in its wake, for a Palmpaas is not complete without a Cock- or Chicken-roll on top and is often embellished with a braided bread-

ring or a cracknel as well.

It was certainly a matter of housewives' luck that the Church had not hit on this particular idea twenty years before, when bread was still home-baked from rye flour. That flour gives a very sticky dough that does not handle well. It would therefore have been very difficult for farmers' wives to produce the required rolls, let alone a braided bread-ring. It was just the Church's luck that it had not perceived the need for an innovation such as the Palmpaas two or even one decade earlier, because in the early 80's mothers of young children were quite familiar with the idea that bread could be freely selected from the baker's varied supply.

The Church was not instrumental in the invention of other Easter novelties such as Easter breakfast, Easter brunch, Easter eggs, and Easter egg hunting. Those skills farmers' wives and daughters learned at the NCB Cooking-schools and special courses for housewives. For years farmers' wives were not able to use these skills, because they had to tread the Church path twice in the morning and once in the afternoon. Till Vaticanum II therefore they kept to the tradition of serving Easter eggs and currant loaves after Lauds at the 4 o'clock high coffee.

But the rules for Easter were lifted and the farmers' wives started to turn their hands at painting Easter eggs, preparing an Easter breakfast or brunch, cooking a fine dinner with for instance savoury patty shells or a savoury fruit & chicken salad as a starter, special cuts of meat and different vegetables as a main course, and a Bavarian Cream or a Charlotte Russe for dessert. And last but not least to lay the table with an Easter tablecloth and Easter napkins, and to decorate a twisted branch of the *Corylus avellana Contorta* with coloured or painted blown eggs and ribbons.

Our respondents' opinions on the merits of these changes differed slightly, but when summarised read as follows: 'Formerly one put on one's new clothes on Easter Sunday and went several times to Church and on Easter Monday one paid a visit to one's parents and parents-in-law. And that was it. Work on the farm never stops. Now Easter unites the family, because there is time for doing things together. And there is still Easter Monday for seeing kin and friends. A pity, that commercialisation set in in such a big way. The same as what happened with Christmas. One has to be on one's guard'.

It seems plausible that when farmers' families worked as well as lived on their own farms the lives of the individual members converged so much that a trip to the Church was a legitimate means to see and speak to more people than just family, kin, and near neighbours and was welcomed as such.

But when the agricultural system became thoroughly modernised, it became difficult for the farmers' families to maintain their esprit de corps as long as the Church claimed such large parts of their Sundays. For now the lives of the individual members diverged so much, that the family had to set time aside for doing things together in order to foster that we-feeling, that feeling of belonging together and of shared responsibility without which a family is not a family (Lumpkin, 1933, p.26-29) and no day of the week lent itself so well to this purpose as Sunday and no days of the year so well as feast days like Easter. The withdrawal at Vaticanum II of the old rule - that one dare not break one's fast before Mass, had to attend Mass twice in the morning and Lauds in the afternoon - came at least in this part of the world at a time when it was most needed.

## Conclusion

The above data make it abundantly clear that before the 50's the St. Oedenrode list of specialties or Shrovetide up to and including Easter, was very short indeed and contained only meal-time items such as pancakes and breads. Not that the St. Oedenrode farmers' wives were unfamiliar with the more snack-like specialties the folklorists mentioned, but they used these on other occasions such as the annual fair, Christmas or New Year's Eve. Till the 80's however, figured breads were an unknown item.

The introduction of new specialties occurred first at the end of the 50's, when the farmers' wives started to exchange snack-like specialties such as batternuts, apple fritters, and stuffed rolls for the traditional Shrovetide meal-time item pancakes. By that time they had already wrought some minor changes in the ingredients they used for batternuts as well as pancakes. The latter changes relate to the fact that the farmers' wives got less and less buckwheat and rye flour directly from the farm, but had to buy their flours at the grocery instead and could select there what suited them best.

Changes in the farming system were also instrumental in the introduction of the first mentioned changes. Because of these changes the farmer's wife had to spend more time, energy, money, knowledge and skills on her family, kin and friends and even on social activities such as the Carnival Procession than ever before. She managed to do so by cutting down on the time she formerly spent in the Church and on her domestic duties, cooking excluded.

Vaticanum II did not bring about much change in the food habits the farmers' wives in St. Oedenrode practised during

Lent, but they were now allowed to look after the physical needs of their families properly, that is to provide them at this time of the year as well with nourishing meals, thus setting themselves free from the fear that their husbands would pass out during their work. Some, however, kept to the habit of serving fish at dinner on Good Friday.

In 1982 the Church introduced the ceremony of the Palmpaas on Palm Sunday thus familiarising farmers' wives in St. Oedenrode with figured rolls, braided bread-rings and cracknels. These they bought at the bakers' in order to put the required Palmpaas together at home.

After Vaticanum II the traditional Easter eggs and Easter bread were no longer served after Lauds, but in the morning as part of an elaborated breakfast or brunch. It became also a tradition to serve later in the day a nice and elaborate dinner.

### Conclusion

The conclusions of Part II do not do full justice to the last question of Part I 'How did tradition and change relate to the five social values the household as an institution incorporates?'. But by rephrasing that question, it too is answered.

Firstly, once industrialisation and modernisation set in on the farms, the farmers' children could contemplate marriage at a much earlier age than a generation earlier. And a housewife could try and foster just that by stimulating her offspring to take an active part in Shrovetide activities, at the same time impressing upon them that they had to behave well. When framed in terms of the social values which the household incorporates this conclusion reads: in order to manifest a proper *esprit de corps*, in the 60's farmers' wives in St. Oedenrode had to spend much time, energy, ready money, knowledge and skills on activities, that would help their offspring to participate in age and sex appropriate activities outside the household and to behave there in accordance with the prevailing codes so that they may be launched into matrimony at the appropriate time.

Secondly compliance on the part of the farmers' wives with the Church's innovation of the Palmpaas has also to be understood as acting in accordance with the social value, that the members of the household be stimulated to participate in activities outside the household, but in this case for small children.

Thirdly the introduction of an elaborate Easter breakfast or brunch and of Easter dinner is an overt sign that at the time of Vaticanum II the modernisation of the farming system had gone so far already that time, energy, money, knowledge and skills had to be set aside for activities favouring the family's *esprit de corps* - so much so that on Easter Sunday the Church had to give way to the domestic circle.

These conclusions make clear that the rationale behind tradition and change in food habits has first of all to be sought in the interconnectedness of a housewife's economic web and a household's basic social values. Secondly developments within the economic sector these households are connected with and in the third place in other social institutions such as the Church.

For it might well be true, that the changes Vaticanum II brought about in the Church's teachings for Shrovetide up to and including Easter were a prudent answer to rising conflicts between two social institutions, namely Church and Household.

### Notes

- 1) Such a small-scale qualitative study based on a well-selected homogeneous sample from a close-knit society is not to be confused with a pilot study from a heterogeneous population. The latter's results have still to be verified by a large-scale quantitative investigation, the former's do not.
- 2) See Edema, 1988.
- 3) In North Brabant every church of the dioceses has its own Forty Hours Devotion. This may well be due to the more or less veiled controversies between the secular clergy and the regular priests with regard to their pastoral rights and duties. These date back to the middle of the 19th century, when the rulers of neighbouring countries began to perceive them as 'the ordained body-guards of Rome' and did not want them to reside on their territories, which started an influx of regular priests into the predominantly Roman Catholic province of North Brabant. (Bax, 1983, p.150).
- 4) Consulted were Engels-Geurts (1988), van Hoeven (1983), Keuper & Harmsen (1988), van Lamoen (1987), Lotgering-Hildebrand (after 1940), van Oirschot (1979), Stam-Dresselhuys (1980), Streekrecepten (after 1967).
- 5) Wannèe (1938), Stoll (1938) and the NCB-kookboek (1938) belong in this category as the first two are

extensively used in teacher training courses for home economics, while the latter was composed by teachers in home economics and intended for the rural population of North Brabant.

- 6) Da Costa Senior & Duister (1986) discovered that to a housewife individual recipes are of no use as long as she has no idea of how to piece them together into menus for proper meals.
- 7) The term 'esprit de corps' is from Katherine Lumpkin, an anything but well-known author in academic circles. In the 80's Anne-Marie Rocheblave - Spenlè granted her nevertheless the title of precursor of role theory, as she was the first to apply the concept 'role' systematically (Rocheblave, 1962, pp.15/6). But she used it for a specific problem and not a general one. This and the circumstance that she had not taken recourse to statistics but applied the case study method throughout, may well account for the fact that her name does not figure on the list of role theorists.
- 8) This and the fact that sons and daughters are preferably employed at their father's farm or other enterprise and in their mother's household respectively, made courting a time-consuming business. Both factors might at least partly explain why our oldest respondents were all over 30 when they got married, which was before 1960. The younger respondents married between 1960 and 1970 but were between 25 and 30, whereas the youngest, who married after 1970, were not yet 25 years old.
- 9) At least in Dutch society serving pancakes implies that the table has to be set with plates and cutlery and that the baking has to start shortly before everyone is seated. But batternuts can be taken directly from the bowl and eaten with the fingers and therefore offered to anyone who cares to call. (see also Mary Douglas, 1975, pp.249-276).

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