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SUMMARIES

Patchwork and politics: the national celebration skirt 1946-1948

Jolande Withuis

Immediately after the Second World War the idea for a national celebration skirt was launched by A(drienne) M(inette) Boissevain-van Lennep (1896-1965), who was a well-known figure in the Amsterdam resistance movement during the war. The bringing together of all sorts of fabric in the patchwork skirt was meant as a symbol of the political breakthrough which was to be achieved: the pre-war division between the different religious and non-religious organisations would be abolished. According to Boissevain's guidelines variations on the pattern were welcome, but the hem should consist of plain patches, which were to be embroidered with the dates of national celebrations, starting with '5 May 1945' centre front. On the rest of the skirt personal memories were to be recorded.

Boissevain was a leading feminist in whose opinion women had an important role to play both at home and in society as a whole. The skirt symbolised both these roles, and if all women wore their skirts at important occasions, both feminine value and women's unity would be guaranteed.

Surviving examples of the celebration skirt can be found in various museums. The most impressive of these, made by Mrs. J. de Jong-Brouwer (born 1924), is in the Leeuwarden Resistance Museum. On the skirt a record is embroidered of many things which happened in the period between the birth of Princess Beatrix (1938) and her coronation in 1980.

Mrs. de Jong used 'real' patches: a bit of the shirt of a returned prisoner, a piece of 'parachute silk'. This was exactly what Mrs. Boissevain intended. The idea for the celebration skirt was inspired by a small patchwork scarf which was smuggled into her overcrowded prison cell in Amstelveen, shortly after she had been arrested. It had been made specially for her from dresses she knew and it was a great consolation. So when in 1945 Boissevain became the only woman on the committee in charge of issuing guidelines for national celebrations, she thought of the patchwork skirt, also because it was in keeping with the impoverished state of the country. The skirt was furthermore an expression of Boissevain's philosophy of life: working with one's hands as a means of therapy.

It is not known how many women and girls actually wore the celebration skirt, but more than 4000 skirts were registered. Photographs exist of groups of women wearing celebration skirts. On 2 September 1948, Queen Wilhelmina's golden jubilee, a group of hundreds of women in celebration skirts sang the 'skirt song'.

The celebration skirt, quaint as it may seem now, was an expression of feminism. Mies Boissevain believed that women had a lot to offer the world, in which 'feminine harmony' was missing. The celebration skirt was an expression of this way of thinking.

The long cap in Katwijk by the Sea and Katwijk on the Rhine

Greet van Duijn

The oldest known depiction of the long cap as worn in Katwijk (the name for two neighbouring villages in the Dutch province of Zuid-Holland), can be found in Maaskamp's costume book of 1807. The earliest records of the *oorijzer* (the metal frame worn inside the cap), *boeken* (the ornaments on the ends of the *oorijzer*) and caps are found in 18th-century inventories. Both silver *oorijzers* with gold *boeken* and sets made entirely of gold are mentioned. Both kinds were worn well into the 20th century. The golden *oorijzer* was worn by the wives of shopowners, farmers, captains and shipowners. They also wore gold cap brooches, earrings and pendants on the *boeken*. Different kinds of gold pins were used to fasten the cap to the *oorijzer*.

We have many photographs from the latter part of the 19th century of women wearing the long cap. It is clear that the long cap in Katwijk by the Sea was worn longer than in Katwijk on the Rhine, which is situated slightly further inland. The long cap was only worn by the women of a few well-to-do families.

In both villages the way the *oorijzer* is worn changed during the 19th century. Maaskamp shows the *boeken* at cheek level. By 1870 they are worn at eye level, in 1900 they have risen to the forehead, to end finally at the hair line. The long cap went out of favour before the short one did.

As far as we know the long cap was always worn with a dress following mainstream fashion. In the last phase (the 1960s) this used to be black and it became usual to wear a hat on top of the cap when going out.

The long lace cap was not worn every Sunday, just on special feast days. On ordinary Sundays the short lace cap was worn with the *oorijzer*. During mourning the long cap made of lace was exchanged for one of plain material.

The history of the necktie

Daan Wieman

This article is about the history of the necktie. As this accessory is inextricably linked to the development of the shirt it was worn with, this is also discussed. During the Middle Ages the shirt was worn as underwear. The first visible neckties date from the 1660s. At about the same time the doublet and hose were exchanged for coat, waistcoat and breeches. As the coat had no collar, the collar of the shirt was covered with a long strip of linen or cambric, sometimes edged with lace. This necktie was knotted in front and the knot was secured with a ribbon. This ribbon bow was called a cravat.

The shirt was still the same as the one worn under the doublet. The front opening was covered with a strip of cambric, later to be replaced by lace. This ruffle was called *jabot*. After 1692 the 'Steinkirke' came into fashion: one end of the long necktie was pulled through a buttonhole. During most of the 18th century the necktie was worn in such a way that no knot was visible, so all the attention would go to the lace jabot. This method of tying probably evolved from the stock or *col noir*, which was originally military attire and made of black leather. This item was sold in France by the *boursier*, who also sold black leather bags to put the queue of a wig in. The ribbons of the bag were then tied in a bow on top of the necktie. This style was called the *solitaire*.

At the end of the 18th century the necktie was tied in more flamboyant knots. The *incroyables* started the habit of using large triangular pieces of black cloth in a casual knot.

In the 19th century the triangular neckcloth folded into a broad strip had become generally accepted. In this period the first booklets were published on the art of tying the cravat. By 1822 the shirt closed with one or two buttons, causing the jabot to fall to one side. These shirts had either a high standing collar or a small one. In the last case a detachable collar was worn with it.

The triangular necktie went out of style in the second half of the 19th century. The modern necktie came into use between 1857 and 1860, at the same time as the modern jacket, which evolved from the *palletot*, a popular type of overcoat for winter.

By 1907 high double collars were worn with the necktie knotted just under the chin between the two layers of the collar. Because this was very difficult to achieve, many devices were thought up to make it easier, or to avoid the knotting altogether.

The 'toer'

H. Linskens

Before World War II many women in North-Limburg (the southernmost province of the Netherlands) wore a 'toer' on their head, a construction of lace, wire, net and starch, decorated with artificial flowers in delicate green and pink and ribbons. The toer is often confused with the Brabant *poffer*, to which it bears a great resemblance.

In the 18th century country women in Noord-Limburg followed German fashion: they wore a linen cap with a large straw hat on top. These were still worn in the 19th century, but younger women switched to the *dormeuse*, a very large cap which was decorated with ribbon.

From the ribbon which was arranged around (French: *autour*) the cap, the toer developed around 1860. More and more women started wearing the toer and by 1875 it was in general use and became bigger and bigger. It was not an easy headdress to wear, especially out of doors, as it was very fragile and moisture sensitive.

The first time a girl was allowed to wear the toer was at the age of 13, when she did her first Holy Communion (Limburg is for the most part Roman Catholic). At 17 or 18 she got to wear a flowered toer, whereas older women wore one decorated with flower buds. Women of all ages could wear a toer decorated with bows of ribbon. For widows there was a special mourning toer without any lace. For heavy mourning black crêpe was used and for light mourning black flowers. Limburg was a poor province and the women wore hardly any gold jewellery. Their status was shown by their headdress, especially by the lace that was used. Well-to-do women wore handmade lace, poorer women the machine-made variety.

Women who had a certain position wore their toer every day. Other women wore it only at festive occasions. The cap could be worn by itself, but the toer only in combination with the cap. In photographs one sees very little difference between the toers of different places, because the only variation would be at the back, in the length of the ribbons.

The materials for the toer could be bought in specialised shops or from a pedlar. The artificial flowers came from Saxony or Czechoslovakia, the lace from Belgium, France or Ireland. The silk ribbon came from Switzerland, tassels from Leipzig. All these different materials were put together by the toemaker, who would work without a pattern. The base of the toer was a crescent-shaped piece of cardboard, often cut from dated butter boxes, which has proven very useful for dating toers.

In the years before World War II it became more and more difficult to obtain the materials for the toer. It disappeared gradually, no new women learned the art of making toers and the last maker died in 1965.

Dutch civil uniforms

C.J.M. Kramers

Before World War II members of the Royal Court, ministers and other civil dignitaries appeared at official functions such as the state opening of parliament, in civil uniform. This would be a dark, cloth tailcoat with gold, silver or coloured silk embroidery on collar and cuffs and sometimes also on the pockets, waist and front. There were no epaulets on this coat. With it went knee breeches - later trousers with braid down the side seams - , shiny buttons, a sword and a cocked hat with an orange cockade and often white or black feathers. Nowadays this uniform is hardly ever worn.

In post-revolutionary France the need for an official uniform for civil dignitaries was felt. Under Napoleon the different uniforms were severely regulated and this example was followed in the Netherlands. When the Prince of Orange returned in December 1813, he did order that all French insignia to be removed, but the wearing of civil uniform was continued. Members of the Royal Household wore a prescribed uniform.

During the 19th century more and more civil servants obtained an official uniform, which had become a coveted status symbol. Not all of these uniforms were officially registered, and many that were, were never recorded in print.

Many of the distinctions between the uniforms were in the details: the feathers on the hat, the decoration on the buttons and the embroidery. The most common motif were oak and orange branches, but post office officials for instance, had an embroidered post horn.

Not every civil servant succeeded in obtaining a uniform though. The first socialist ministers, Alberda and Van den Tempel, objected greatly to the wearing of uniforms, but in 1939 Queen Wilhelmina was adamant. It should be noted that the uniform was wholly paid for by the wearer.

When one looks at the whole of the 19th century, it is noticeable that the shape of the coat did change with fashion. Even more obvious is the change, after 1840, from knee breeches to trousers and from buckled shoes to laced shoes. Some wearers continued wearing their old uniform after getting a new post.

Many Dutch civil uniforms have survived in several museum collections, but as yet hardly research has been done into this subject.

The seven costumes of Vlaardingen

Herman Roza

Very little has been published about the regional dress of Vlaardingen (a fishing town on the river Maas), apart from my own study in the *Historisch Jaarboek Vlaardingen 1982*, which is mainly based on documentation and photographs in the Municipal Record Office of Vlaardingen and interviews with old inhabitants of Vlaardingen.

The most fascinating aspect of regional dress in my opinion is the unwritten code which decreed what people of a certain class could and could not wear. Vlaardingen consisted of the town itself and the countryside around it, Vlaardinger-Ambacht. In this area we can distinguish seven different costumes, three in the town and four in the country.

Vlaardingen:

1. The costume of the ship owners' wives died out first. These women wore gold *oorijzers* (the metal frames worn in the cap) with gold ornaments under very expensive, long, lace-edged caps. They would also wear expensive jewellery.
2. The middle class dress was for the women who were not married to either ship owners or fishermen. It could be seen until 1900. When the ship owners' wives started to wear dresses following mainstream fashion in the second half of the 19th century, the middle class women gave up wearing jackets and skirts too. These women wore silver *oorijzers* and smaller pendants on their *krullen* (the spiral-shaped ornaments on the ends of the *oorijzer*) than either the ship owners' or the fishermen's wives, under the type of cap called a *hul*.
3. The fishermen's wives dressed very showily when they were not working. By 1900 their jackets and skirts were usually black, though older women might still wear coloured jackets. Silver *oorijzers* were worn with gold *krullen* with large pendants. Their cap was also of the *hul* type and had a wire support sewn into the front.

Vlaardinger-Ambacht:

Three of the four costumes of Vlaardinger-Ambacht were the same as in the rest of the surrounding countryside.

4. The rich farmers' wives wore either the short or the long cap over an *oorijzer* with *boeken* on the ends instead of *krullen*. Like the shipowners' wives they wore decorative pins with the long cap. They wore their costume until about 1935, and in the last phase the long cap became shorter.
5. The middle class farmers' wives wore the short cap of the *hul* type over a gold *oorijzer* with *boeken*.
6. The farm labourers' wives wore a *hul* without the *oorijzer* or decorative pins. This did not necessarily mean that these women were poor; they just didn't belong to the richer upper classes.
7. In the costume of Vlaardinger-Ambacht the shape of the cap was derived from the Vlaardingen fisherwomen's costume. The *oorijzer* with *boeken* would be partly visible. Before 1850 jacket, skirt and apron were worn, and after that 'city' dresses.

Fashion or fantasy in the 17th century

An inquiry into the realism of the women's costume in 17th-century genre paintings and portraits by Gerard Ter Borch

Rozemarijn Hoekstra

For the study of 17th-century dress we have to rely on visual sources such as paintings, because very few actual clothes survive. In their genre pieces the Dutch masters of the 17th century have supplied us with a valuable source for the daily life of the rich 17th-century burgher.

Recent iconological research has shown that genre painting was not meant as a straightforward depiction of daily life, but usually contained a moralistic message. But these same paintings are regularly used as sources in books about the history of costume. Gerard Ter Borch (1617-1681) was one of the first painters who around 1650 specialized in a new type of genre painting of elegantly dressed people in a richly furnished interior. Ter Borch's satin-clad girls always seem to be caught up in ill-considered love affairs. His 'Woman in front of a mirror' is dressed in a white satin dress with an uncovered low neckline. In another painting a similar dress is worn with a black kerchief around the shoulders. Another article of clothing all genre painters use, is the fur-lined jacket.

The women in Ter Borch's portraits of the same period are dressed more soberly in black, with white kerchiefs and undersleeves. After 1660 Ter Borch's portraits show a more flowing style of dress with a lower neckline, but the dress is still black and kerchief and undersleeves are still worn.

Does this then mean that dress in genre painting is fantasy, or that women wore their most dignified and sober clothes for their portraits and dressed quite differently in daily life? An answer may be found in the sketchbooks of Gesina Ter Borch (1631-1690), the artist's younger half-sister. Her watercolours show very elegant figures reminiscent of her brother's genre pieces, but all her women wear either collar or kerchief and the white puffed undersleeves are seldom absent.

Another source of information are household inventories, for example the inventory of clothes of Wendela Bicker and her husband, the famous statesman Johan de Witt. All dresses she mentions the colour of, are black. But she must often have worn a jacket and skirt, for she owned far more jackets than dresses.

So we may conclude that the costume in genre painting certainly did not originate in fantasy, but we have to be suspicious of the way it was worn. This deviates from the style of dress seen in reliable portraits in that in most cases the more common parts of daily dress, such as the white collar or kerchief and the white cuffs or undersleeves, are missing.

We also have to take into account that after 1640 a habit to idealise dress in portraits took hold. Research shows that after 1640 portraits become less reliable witnesses of what was actually worn. In future research further comparison of visual sources will have to be correlated to written ones.

Lost and found

Cora van Beek

During the course of an archaeological survey in 1989 of the House van Brecht in the Dutch town of Breda, a small knitted purse containing 17th- and 18th-century coins was found. The house dates from 1534, but the purse was found in a cellar amongst debris that mainly dates from the 19th century. As it was first thought to be a scouring pad and had probably been found and discarded before, the purse had inevitably become dislodged from its original context, maybe even before the survey, at the time of the building work carried out for the foundation of the sewers. The author found three

clay pipe bowls dating from between 1740 and 1770 near the purse, but this evidence cannot be thought to be conclusive because of the displacement.

Inside the purse were six coins dating from between 1619 and 1766, all from the eastern provinces of the Netherlands, and a small iron key. The difference in age between the oldest and the most recent coin (147 years) was not unusual for the period before 1840, when all the old money stayed in circulation.

The purse is knitted from wool. It is a most unusual find; the author could find no evidence of similar archaeological finds, which is not surprising considering the scouring pad look of this one. Nor did any of the museums she applied to for information, have any comparable purses.

The experts consulted cannot agree whether the purse closed with a drawstring or a clasp. Fragments of metal at the opening and the lack of holes for threading a drawstring would seem to indicate that the purse closed with a clasp. The key can be dated with considerable certainty to the late 17th or early 18th century. The coins in the purse, 8 *stuivers* and 1 *duit*, would have bought a pound of butter, two pounds of cheese and an egg in 1766.

To whom did the purse belong? The owner and occupant of the House van Brecht in this period was Abraham Mathias Chombach (1758-1790), a captain in the army of the Republic. The purse may have belonged to his wife or one of her servants.

The article ends with a knitting pattern of the purse.