

England and Engelland

Reflections of the theories of Grimm and Mannhardt can still be found. In 1946 J. Gessler contributed a short notation on ‘The “Engelland” of the nursery-rhymes’ to the rubric ‘Kleine Mededeelingen’ of the journal *Volkskunde*. He starts with a memory, which takes us back to the beginning of the 20th century.¹ ‘When I was a street-urchin, I sometimes sang, holding a certain little beetle (*Coccinella septempunctata*) in the closed fist:

“Lieven Heere-kuiskske,
Geef mich water en broed,
Anders houw ich dich doed

(Ladybird, give me water and bread, otherwise I knock you dead).” Numerous versions of this kind were recorded by Mannhardt and other German folklorists: a selection of them Knappert presented in his folkloristic dissertation and noted: “While these rhymes create no problems, harder to explain are other ones, in which the beetle is advised to flee before the danger that threatens a certain country, usually called Engelland, sometimes Pommerland (reference to Knappert, 280 with examples).” [...] The question that arises is: what is actually this “Engelland”, the position of which is indicated in a rhyme from Gelderland, also cited by Knappert, as follows:

“Achter de karke daar ligt rood zand,
Het is de booiem van Engelland

(Behind the church there lies red sand, It is the soil of Angel-land).” That here not the birth-ground of Shakespeare and Dickens is meant, is obvious. Actually the word discussed here is a toponym that can boast a long existence. There is already in 801 mentioned a *villa quae dicitur Englandi*.² As street-name “Engelant” was formerly known in Hasselt and also elsewhere.³ When we consult Verdam concerning the meaning, then his indispensable *Middelnederlandsch Handwoordenboek* teaches us that with the word [Engelant, p. 164] actually is indicated a meadow, grass-land. We are dealing here with a tautology, for *enge* already means “field, meadow” (cf. *anger*).⁴ That this original meaning evolved, mainly by contamination, is obvious and stays here out of view as the only concern was to show, to avoid all misunderstanding, that the “Engelland” of the nursery-rhymes does not necessarily have to indicate Great Britain.⁵ The problem is not confined to folklore research. In Jean-Pierre Bayard’s *La Symbolique de la Rose-Croix* (Paris 1975, 31, n. 1) there is the following notation: ‘Bien que Bernard Gorceix ait traduit par Angleterre [in the *Fama Fraternitatis* (Cassel 1614)] nous [i.e. Bayard] préférons la traduction de E. Çoro [Paris 1921] qui écrit: *Engelland*.⁶ Or Paul Arnold montre, dans son

¹ J. Gessler, ‘Het “Engeland” der kinderrijmpjes’, in: *Volkskunde* 47, 1946, 45-47.

² Cf. Th.J.J. Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, Düsseldorf 1840, I, n°22. An ‘Engeland bei Apeldoorn in Gelderland’ is mentioned under the radical ENGE in E. Foerstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, Bonn 1913, II³, kol. 817.

³ C. Bamps & E. Geraets, *Hasselt-Jadis*, I, 53; reprint from *Bulletin des Mélophiles*, 30, 1890. An Engelantgat at Bent is mentioned in the large edition of the *Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek* by Verwijs and Verdam.

⁴ Verdam 164f: *Eng = enk, enc* ‘arable land, farm-land’. ID., 41: *Anger, -ier* ‘field, meadow, pasture’.

⁵ Further reference is made to the *Navorser*, N. S. 21, 1889, 568 and 22, 1890, 1 etc. Boekenogen makes also mention in *De Zaalse Volkstaal* II, 91 of: *Engeland* (subst. neutral): name of a little island in the Poel near Wormer; also mentioned on the maps of the 17th c. – Also under Heiloo there is a piece of land with this name. – *Engeland* and *enge* (or *enk*) means *grass-land, meadow*, and appears in this meaning in most of the Germanic languages. Etc.

⁶ Çoro translates from the German *Allegemeine und General Reformation der gantzen Weiten Welt. Beneben der Fama Fraternitatis, dess Löblichen Ordens des Rosencreuzes, an alle Gelehrte und Häupter Europas geschrieben*, Cassel 1614. If here also ‘Engelland’ is spelled I have not checked (yet).

Histoire des Rose-Croix, p. 30, l'ambiguïté entre Engel-land, pays des anges, et England, l'Angleterre.⁷

The idea that not England but an imaginary ‘land of Angels’ is meant is opposed by Sloet (referring to Mannhardt, *GM*, 687, etc.). A powerful objection he sees in the fact that England is put on one line with other existing countries. For instance, in the song ‘Little Peter had his little horse shoed’ (from Westphalia) Maria comes with a white lamb out of the opened door of heaven:

‘Weist die Wolken über Land,
Von Brabant nach Engelland,
Von Engelland nach Spanien,
Mit Aepfeln und Kastanien.’

Sloet also cites the above mentioned count-out song from the Veluwe:

‘Achter de karke doar ligt rood zand;
Het is de booiën van Engeland.
Engeland en Spanje,
Drie appeltjes van Oranje...’

The children are sooner made aware of heavenly then the earthly angels. The similarity of the name may have led to the confusion of real people with the ideal beings and that in the nursery room there was sometimes a belief in an imaginary land of angels. And Sloet concludes with disagreeing (most of the times) with Schiller’s maxim: ‘Hohen Sinn liegt oft im kind’schen Spiel.’⁸

The English spell England, the Dutch Engeland, which has 3 syllables just like Engelland, which is the usual way of spelling England in Flanders, Rhineland and other parts of West Germany. For instance, in the Flemish folklore journal *Biekorf* 1, 1890, 48: ‘te Salfort in Engelland’, 87: ‘Norwich in Engelland’, 100: ‘in Engelland staat de throonverbeidende Vorst van Wallis’, 185: ‘In Engelland bestaan de volgende spreken’; 224: ‘Het popline-weven kwam naar Engelland’; 252f: ‘Engelland ... Vrankrijk ... Belgenland’; 256, 281f, 344, 346f: ‘Vlamingen in Engelland’. In 2, 1891, 95: ‘In het graafschap Sussex, ten zuiden van Engelland’; 233: ‘koning Karel II van Engelland’; etc. In 3, 1892, 158: ‘Eene Sassische begraafsteê der VI^e eeuw in Engelland gevonden.’ Also from further years many places can be adduced.⁹

An old usage of Engelland (in the meaning England) can be found in Hartmann Schedel’s *Chronicle* of 1493 in a passage about the witch who was abducted by the devil: ‘Ein boßgastige zawbrerin was in engelland...’¹⁰

The Germanic mythological ideas are mostly expressed in commentaries of the song of the ‘White and black swans’, as it is called nowadays. E. Heupers, in an article on ‘contemporary children’s games’ in the Dutch folklore journal *Neerlands Volksleven* (15, 1965, 31f) quotes another folklorist, Jan van Mourik, who published in *De Wandelaar* 3, 1931, 87ff, the following version:

⁷ That England is meant can be deduced from the fact that the earl of Norfolk is cured. Also other real countries are mentioned in this description of the life of Brother C. R. (Christian Rosencreutz).

⁸ Sloet 1887, 119-122. See his note 122, 2: At Simrock, *Kinderbuch*, 228f are two nursery rhymes where the key is broken or lost and the lock rusted, further they contain nothing but nonsense just like at Vloten, 28.

⁹ Also elsewhere: The Belgian folklorist Alfrid Harrou spells *Engelland* (*Ons Volksleven* 10, 1898, 78).

¹⁰ Hartmann Schedel, *Chronicle of the world*, Köln 2001, Blatt CXCa.

<i>Zwarte zwanen, witte zwanen,</i>	Black swans, white swans,
<i>Wie wil mee naar Engeland varen?</i>	Who wants to sail with to England?
<i>Engeland is gesloten.</i>	England is closed.
<i>De sleutel is gebroken.</i>	The key is broken.
<i>Daar is geen smid in 't heele land,</i>	There is no smith in the whole country,
<i>Die de sleutel maken kan.</i>	Who can fix the key.
<i>Laat doorgaan, laat doorgaan,</i>	Let pass, let pass,
<i>En de laatste zullen wij vangen.</i>	And the last one we will catch.

We don't have to think here of England... When one knows how old the rhymes are, and how in almost every country they came into existence in the earliest times, then it is understandable that many concepts, as we now find back in the nursery rhymes and children's songs, go back to the grey antiquity and can tell us about all kinds of religious customs of diverse peoples. Rather one should think of the Light-land, the Realm of Angels or Souls, or the Land of the Dead that one will reach after a final journey by boat.

But already Van Duyse, in *Het oude Nederlandsche lied* under n°382 ('Ik zoude nu zoo geiren naer Engeland gaen varen), remarks that according to J. ter Gouw, *Volksvermaken* (1871, 106), the song (*Groene granen, Witte Zwanen, Wie wil mee naar Engeland? Etc.*) belongs in 1651 at the English Navigation Act. Also Büshing and Von der Hagen, *Sammlung deutscher Volkslieder* (1807, 281 n°115: Eene, meene, mieken, Mäken) have such a song (with the passage: *Kumm will'n beid' nå England gähn. Engeland is togeschläten, Schlötel is intwei gebräken*) and add the comment: "Merkwürdig ist die Erwähnung von England, und das Lied stammt vielleicht noch ursprünglich aus den Zeiten der Wanderungen der Angeln und Sachsen nach Britanien." Erk and Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort* (III, 600 n°1867) and Böhme, *Deutsches Kinderlied und Kinderspiel* (390 n°1731), on the example of many others, are of a different opinion. For them "Engelland" is, according to the explanation of Mannhardt, the "Land der Engel, Seelenreich, Lichtreich, Alfenland", that is valued as "Inbegriff aller Freude". And Van Duyse quotes another version of the song mentioned above:

<i>Achtern Kerkhof stuff dat Sand,</i>	Behind the churchyard the sand flies,
<i>in Engelland, in Brabant.</i>	in Engeland, in Brabant,
<i>Juffer mit de Tute</i>	Miss with the <i>tute</i> .
<i>Helle mit beschute, etc.</i>	<i>Helle</i> (?) with biscuits...

"Naer Engeland varen" will have no more to do with the Wandering of the nations than "naar Oostlant" or "in Oostlant varen" (a previously treated song). "Engelland" opposed to "Brabant" proves enough, that we are dealing here not with a supernatural country of souls, but with an earthly place. Also in another song England has the sense of land of happiness, of pleasures. The *Tute*, according to Böhme a horn or trumpet, will rather be a pointed hat (French *bonnet tuyauté*). According to Schuermans, *Idioticon*, 339, a *tuit, tute* is a cap, woman's headgear, after De Bo. The word *tute* is still known in West Flanders.¹¹

¹¹ German *Tute* = trumpet; Verdam, *MNL*. 622a: *tute, tuyte, toy(e), tuit* 1. tankard; 2. a pointed hairdressing of women; also braid (3. strumpet). A version of this song can also be found in the Coll. Boekenoogen, send in by Miss Bruins Slot from the village De Wijk near Meppel (prov. Drente) under the designation 'lie-rhyme': "Achter ons huis daar stoof het zand, Men kon het wel hooren in Engeland. Daar speelden twee juffers met duiten..." (Behind our house the sand was flying, you could hear it in England. There two maidens were playing with pennies...). In Haan 1978, 104 n°18 as count-out rhyme: "Oonder de mölle daor stöf et zaand. Daor kwam nen heer oet Engelaand. Engelaand, Broabaant! Jufferkes met den toeten..." [Under the mill the sand was flying. There came a gentleman from England. England, Brabant! Little missies with the pointed hats...]

The song of the ‘Swans’ is also the subject of a publication by Heleen van den Bos in 2005. Nowadays the song is called *Witte zwanen, zwarte zwanen* and it is part of a game. This game was not only played in the Netherlands; the oldest versions are German. Since 1883 it can also be found frequently in Dutch sources. Many authors try to find the meaning of the song. Most of the attention goes to the word “Engeland”. According to G. Kalff in *Het lied in de Middeleeuwen* (Leiden 1883) this word is not just a geographic designation. He refers to the explanation of Mannhardt, in which England comes from the world of the fairytale: “das Land der Engel, Seelenreich, Lichtreich, Alfenland, gilt als Inbegriff aller Freude”. “Nach Engelland fahren” would mean “so viel als vergnügt sein”. Kalff quotes a German song-text to illustrate this:

“*Wir haben ein Schifflein mit Wein beladen,
darmit wolln wir nach Engelland fahren.
Lasst uns farn, farn, farn,
Lasst uns farn nach Engelland zu.*”

Also he has an example of England as ‘wonderland’ from Denmark:

“*Hör du kjaereste Eline!
Og du skal blive min viv;
Als de Guld i Engelland er,
Det vil jeg Dig nu giv.*”

[All the gold that in England is, that I will give you now.] Finally Kalff returns to the Netherlands and one of his examples is the first recording of the ‘Swan-song’:

“*Kroene kranen, Witte Zwanen;
Wie wil mee naar Engeland varen?
Engeland is gesloten,
De sleutel is gebroken;
In Engeland daar stuift het zand...*”

Next she (Bos) turns to Boekenoogen, who, by the way, was a pupil of Kalff in high-school (which explains how he came to read Mannhardt as a student). So Boekenoogen looked for the origin of the nursery rhymes in the Germanic times. One of these songs is the ‘Swan-song’. According to Boekenoogen, the soul-cult was in the Germanic time an important part of the religion. A soul was loose of the human body. At birth the soul came into the body, at death the soul left the body again. The souls that had (temporarily) no body stayed in some sort of paradise [cf. the meadow of Frau Holle]. This paradise was located underneath a glass mountain or on an island accessible by a bridge or with a boat. This “*zielenrijk, het Engeland van vele sproken en rijmen* [soul-realm, the Angel-land of many fairytales and nursery rhymes]” (*Onze Rijmen*, p. 17) was only accessible with a key made of bone, or a knuckle. Boekenoogen has the same version of the ‘Swan-song’ but spells ‘Engeland’, and adds the last line:

“*Daar luiden de klokjes: boem!*”

[There the little bells sound: boom!] The fourth edition of Van Vloten, of 1894, is redacted with the assistance of Boekenoogen. On p. 22, there is the same version of the ‘Swan-song’, but this time ‘Engeland’ is spelled and the ending is:

“*Daar gaan de klokjes bingeldebang,
Bingeldebandeboeze;
Achter onzen hoeze
Daar staat een groote noteboom.*”

[There the little bells go jingle-jangle, jingle-jangle-mouse; behind our house, there stands a big nut-tree.] Many songs about England have been collected by Böhme, one of them recorded in 1808:

“Ahne, Krahne, wickele wahne,
Wollen wir nich nach Engelland fahre?
Engelland ist verschlossen,
Schlösser sind verrostet,
Schlüssel sind verloren,
Müssen wir ein Loch nein bohren,” etc.¹²

So here the locks are rusted, and the keys are lost, so we have to drill a hole to get in. Böhme has also about the ‘sand’:

“In der Kücke liegt der Sand,
Der ist gekommen von Engelland,
Engelland ist zugeschlossen,
und der Driicker abgebrochen...”

There are several versions of the ‘Swan-song’. Some have as explanation for the word ‘Engeland’ the soul-realm:

“Krone, Krane schwickle Schwane!
Mone mö wie noh Engelland fahren.
Engelland es geschloten,
de Schlöttel es tebroken.
Wo sö wie’n dann met wier mak’n?
Met Benerkes, met Stenerkes.
Krupe, krupe allenerkes!”

Here we see also the ‘beentjes’ (little bones), which Boekenoogen already adduced as the key to the Glass mountain or the soul-realm. Böhme has also a version:

“We well met no Holland fare?
Holland es geschlossen,
De Schlössel es zerbrocht.
Wannê krieg mer ne neue?” Etc.

We now come to Fl. van Duyse whose *Het oude Nederlandsche lied* we have already seen, as well as the version of the ‘Swan-song’ from *Volksvermaken*, 1871, with the reference to the English Navigation Act of 1651. Unfortunately Van Duyse gives no explanation of this Act nor its connection to the song. Between the 14th and the 18th century several Acts (laws) were proclaimed in England with the objective to protect the English trade. These Acts limited the possibility of foreign ships and merchants to trade in and with England. The most famous of these Acts is from October 1651. In this Act there was amongst others regulated that only English ships were allowed to transport goods from English territories to Great Britain; goods from other countries had to be brought in by English ships or ships from the country of the origin of the goods; fish must be brought in by English ships and no ‘foreigners’ were allowed to trade fish. Also it was required of all foreign ships that they saluted the English ships they should meet in English waters. This last demand would have been the cause for the outbreak of the First English-Dutch War in 1652. Before the passing of the Act a Dutch ship went to England to try to stop the Act. This didn’t work, and England from that moment on was as good as closed for the Dutch

¹² This is the version from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* III, 448, and sent to Boekenoogen as part of the collection made by C. Honigh (n°64): Here no mention of the ‘swans’, only ‘cranes’. It has the designation ‘count-out rhyme’.

trading fleet. [CH: A famous part of this War was the fact that the English had made a chain over the Thames, barring all ships from entering, and that it was the famous Dutch Admiral Michiel de Ruyter who broke with his ship this chain. But even this doesn't explain the song.^{13]}]

In Gent in 1905, Remi Ghesquiere published part I of his *Kinderspelen uit Vlaamsch België*, and refers to Böhme for the mystical meaning of 'Engeland'. His version of the 'Swan-song' agrees only in the first part with the previous versions. About the last part Ghesquiere remarks that the part about the weaver has been added with no reason. So after the line of the broken key there follows the logical question: "Waar willen we nen nieuwen van maken (From what will we make a new one)?" The answer: "Van die oude boonestaken (from those old beanstalks)?" is edited as a question, after which there is a jump to another rhyme about the weaver, which is very familiar in chain-rhymes as were recited with New Year or Carnival (to collect money or other goods).

We jump to Laura Hiel and her collection *Zing Mee!* (Brussels 1941: 'Sing along!') which has no green grains or green cranes, but green beads: "Groene kralen, witte zwanen," and they have become green swans as opposed to the white swans in J.C. Daan, *Wieringer land en leven in de taal* (Alphen a/d Rijn 1950). Daan also presents a swing-song, starting with "groenze zwanen witte zwanen", which already in the third line swerves to another song (called 'Torrentje bussenkruid') as follows:

"Wie gaat mee naar Engeland varen?
Engeland dat bussekruit,
Wat steekt daar uit," etc.

Lots of examples like these can be found in the Coll. Boekenoogen. Joh. Kieviet (later a famous author of children's books), teacher at Oosthuizen (prov. N.Holl.), where they call a swing a 'zôje bôje', sent in the rhyme:

"Zôje bôje,
Rikke, rakte, rôje.
Engel(l)and is er gesloten,
't Sleuteltje is er gebroken.
Kom, laoten we naar vaoder gaon..."

(Come, let us go to father, he will give us a cent that we will give to the baker, who will bake a little bun for us...).

Meanwhile Bos has skipped an important contribution, that can be found in A. Hallema and J. D. van der Weide, *Kinderspelen voorheen en thans inzonderheid in Nederland* ('s-Gravenhage 1943, 129-131), called 'Groene zwanen, witte zwanen. Two girls make a gate, the others walk through the gate, while singing the song and the last girl in line is caught and must choose between an

¹³ Another historical origin theory was put forward by J. Schuitemaker, who wrote an article entitled 'Vermakelijke onzin' (entertaining nonsense), in *De Vacature, Nieuw Advertentieblad voor het Lager, Middelbaar en Gymnasiaal Onderwijs* (10, 1895, n°35, p. 1). In a long rhyme, we suddenly meet the song of the 'Sand': "Achter de kerken daar stuift het zand, Je kunt her wel hooren in Engeland, Engeland is gesloten, De slotjes [here: little keys] zijn gebroken, Je kunt ze nog wel maken Van allerlei steenen en beenen Met gouden haken." From the words "England is closed" it appears clearly that we are dealing here with the continental system of Napoleon. It sounds quite naughty that the broken keys can be made from all kinds of stones and bones with golden hooks. With other words: although England is closed, when you complain *steen en been* (a Dutch expression meaning 'stone and bone' for complaining bitterly) at the customs-officers and especially when one has golden hooks and smears the hands of the watchers – then one can still carry on a smuggle-trade.' But then he 'read Boekenoogen's article *Onze Rijmen* and that the rhyme doesn't refer to England but to the *soul-realm* or the *Engelland, land of Angels*. "That realm of souls, the Engelland of many fairytales and rhymes," says the writer (B.), "lies, as imagined, under a glass mountain. Access gave only a special key, namely a little bone or knuckle, of which the soul, leaving the dead body, could easily provide itself." According to this writer the intended rhyme is of pagan origin. So I (S.) have stepped with my supposition that it originated in the French time in an ugly way on slippery ice!"

imaginary golden or silver object, and belongs then to that group. As the first line differs greatly so also the names of the game are different. They give a list (very random and selective) and two complete versions, one from Friesland ('*Zwaan, zwaan, witte zwaan*' so not in dialect), and one from Limburg ('*Kroene kranen, wiesse schwanen*' in dialect). When we compare these words then we (Hallema & Weide) see some connection. All the rhymes speak of England and a key that is broken. Some people have thought they were dealing with the key of the gate of heaven that is broken or lost. They then thought also that 'Engeland' was a distortion of 'Engel-land'. Other researchers have contested that claim. [...] Maybe the version from S. Limburg is the most original one, where *kroene kranen* means wild geese, so a bird-species. This could point to a folk-belief that birds have been given the task of bringing the souls of the deceased to the Hereafter. Still it is more logical to think in this context of a white swan, as the swan is a more majestic and noble bird than the goose. One has, by the way, to be very careful with drawing conclusions. It seems to be confirmed that the white or green swans or cranes or beads are connected with the already mentioned folk-belief. Here we enter with the search for the possible origin of the game again the terrain of the folklore and pagan cult mixed with Christian doctrine. For it is certain that the choice between a golden and a silver object originally meant a choice between the sun and the moon, between day and night, between the light and the darkness, and finally between the angels and the devils. In many regions this game ends with two rounds, one of the angels and one of the devils, but this ending can also be different. For instance, the girls that formed together the gate give each other the hands. That way a low gate is formed [more a swing]. The 'angels' may lie on the arms and the children then sing: 'The angels have to float.' The 'devils' have to take place between the arms and are shaken to and fro. The group sings then: 'The devils are beaten.' This beating is sometimes taken quite literally; the 'devils' have to walk then through a double row of 'angels'. For the sake of completeness two other endings are reported although they will have nothing to do with the original game. Both parties hold a game of pulling, or the greatest group has won. These are probably both changes introduced by the youth themselves. And the authors end with the statement that in most of these nursery rhymes often a profound folkloristic world of ideas is hidden.

Bos continues with a version from W. J. Stam-Van der Staay, *Een mandje vol amandelen; een bundel liedjes voor kleuters en jonge kinderen* (1963) from which it is clear that the key cannot be repaired. Then follow four versions from G.J.M. Bartelink, *Twents volksleven* (1967), and a version from B.E.W. Veurman, *Volendam, leven en lied* (1968). Harrie Franken, in *Kroniek van de Kempen* (7, 1987), assumes that the 'Swan-song' is based on the belief in reincarnation. The souls or spirits of the dead reincarnate. When there is not immediately a body available, they have to wait in the spirit-realm, a "beautiful garden with flowers and singing of birds".

'Engeland', the land of the angels, was such a spirit-realm. It was situated underneath a glass mountain, to which one could only gain access with the assistance of a (hard to get) golden key. As soon as a body became available to incarnate in the soul left again the spirit-realm. The key in the text cited by Franken is not of gold (because there is not one carpenter that can fix the key). Judith Eiselin, in her *Iene miene mutte; over knikkeren, bokspringen en nadere straatspelletjes* (Amsterdam 1996, 54), who has the same line about the carpenter (to fix our key), adds another possible meaning. She indicates that several investigators of nursery rhymes are of the opinion that this song has a sexual content: *Engeland* stands for 'het enge land', in which 'eng(e)' has the meaning 'narrow' [CH: it can also mean 'scary' or 'creepy'!]. This narrow land is the female genitals, that has to be opened by the male, namely the key.

We now arrive at the conclusions of Bos. It is a good thing that the children who sing the songs are mostly totally unaware of what grown-ups have thought about these songs. Otherwise the

game played with the ‘Swan-song’ could take a quite different turn... Concerning the theory of Eiselin, Bos is very curious to know which researchers of nursery rhymes she has consulted. Unfortunately Eiselin does not provide any clarity on the matter. Bos in any case hasn’t met in her research anyone mentioning or supporting that theory. On the other hand almost all the authors concern themselves with the possible mystical meaning of the word ‘Engeland’.

Van Duyse told that ‘Engeland’ might refer to the Wandering of Nations that brought the Angles to England, and that the song dates from that time, i.e., the 5th century, a very long time ago. According to Boekenoogen, Böhme and others, ‘Engeland’ is a fairytale-like country, the land of the angels. In some (German) songs England is not spelled as is normally done in German (i.e., also England), but it becomes ‘Engeland’ or even ‘Engelland’. The question is whether this is because the song really deals with the land of angels, or whether there is recorded what was sung, which sounded more like Engelland than as England. [See above for the German dialect spelling of England as Engelland.]

Another theory introduced by Van Duyse is the one about the English Navigation Act of 1651. After the proclamation of this Act England was as good as closed for foreign trade ships. This agrees with the text of the songs. Still, it was mainly the Dutch trade that suffered from this Act, much more than the German trade. Then it is at least curious that the oldest versions appear to come from Germany. Also the starting words of the song suggest a German origin. In the German versions appear *Kroene Krane* (cranes). In several Dutch versions appear besides *Kroene kranen* also *groene granen*, *groene zwanen* and *groene kralen*. A ‘kraan’ also in Dutch is a crane. The step from *Kroene Krane*, *wickelfahne* to *Groene granen*, *witte zwanen*, or to *Groene zwanen*, *witte zwanen* is as to sound not great. Sometimes the swans remained green, or became beads (‘kralen’) of different colours. In other songs the text was more adapted to reality and the swans became white and black: “*Witte zwanen, zwarte zwanen.*” Bos thinks it more likely that the song has come from Germany to the Netherlands than the other way around. And would the Germans who hardly had a sea-trade with England make a song about an Act limiting that trade?

Van Duyse gives, after reproducing other people’s theories, also his own opinion. ‘Engeland’, is England, is a place like any other, chosen here because it fits in the rhyme. So it is not surprising to see in some versions other places like Bentheim.¹⁴

Still, in the *Kroniek van de Kempen* the mystical side of the song pops up again. ‘Engeland’ as location of the Glass Mountain wherein the souls are stored until they can reincarnate. The key necessary to gain access to that mountain is sometimes seen as the intent of the game. During the game a child is caught in the arms of two other children and then has to choose between two objects, for instance, something of gold and something of silver, between heaven and hell. Such a Glass mountain appears more often in songs and in folktales and legends. The Glass Mountain of Boekenoogen and in the article in the *Kroniek van de Kempen* doesn’t appear out of nowhere. But still it is far from sure that with ‘Engeland’ the Glass Mountain is meant.

Jos Schrijnen wrote in his *Nederlandsche Volkskunde* (Zutphen 1915, II, 215): ‘Also the opinion that England = Engel-land is the soul-realm, is nowadays practically outdated.’ But Tjaard de Haan in his *Nederlandse Volksverhalen* (? , 154) has a version of the Swan-song as children’s

¹⁴ Bentheim (in Germany, very close to the Dutch border and formerly Dutch) appears in the versions from Twente (Bartelink 1967, 20f): ‘*Hosse bosse ziegezagen, Wilt met hem naar Bentheim jagen? Bentheim was gesloten, De sleutel was gebroken,*’ after which continuation with the song of the weaver. Or: ‘*Ziege, zage, hotte, page, Wee wil met noa Bènthem jagen? Bènthem is gesloten, De sleutel is gebroken. Is der dan geen man in’t land, Die die sleutel weer maken kan? Jawel. Hoe heet die dan? Jonker Jan. Hoe hiet zijn vrouw? Kniep in den arm, maar niet in de mouw.*’ And also a version of the game with no carpenter who can fix the key, after which all fall down.

game and refers for ‘Engeland’ to K. ter Laan, *Folkloristisch woordenboek van Nederland en Vlaams België* (1949, 94). Professor Schrijnen contended the opinion of Dr. Boekenogen that England could mean ‘the land of the dead’. Nowadays we again are inclined to agree with Boekenogen, amongst others on the basis of the ample (ethnological) material. In the provinces Groningen and Friesland the land of the dead is thought to be mainly in northern direction. Next follows a ‘Sand’ variant:

‘Hoe luiden de klokken,
Hoe stuift het wit zand
In het Engelse land (or *In Enge(l)land*¹⁵).”

In both these traditional rhymes it is possible that the memory of a western realm of the dead reachable by ship – Britain, Albion or Eng(el)land lives on more or less veiled to our days.

The song of the swans is also part of the discourse in Aat van Gilst, *Wijze vrouwen en godinnen* (wise women and goddesses) (2001, 82f). This *engeland* that appears in several nursery rhymes some have wanted to spell as *engelland*.¹⁶ But against this objection has been justly made, because the old “belief” didn’t know angels. In the journal *Volkskunde* of 1946, J. Gessler has shown that *engeland* is an old designation for meadow or field. The *engeland* may therefore correspond with the meadow of *Frau Holle*, the other world. The key to that meadow is in the possession of the key-goddess, *Frau Holle*. The *engeland* of the nursery rhymes [...] appears in some geographical names [...] and has nothing to do with Great Britain. [...] ‘The key is broken’ means that the access to the subterranean world of *Frau Holle* is barred. In numerous legends the key of the white woman serves to find subterranean treasures and to unlock the access to the other world. In these legends appears a lady with a key [...]. This appearing is a quality transferred to Maria, who according to the folk-belief is also the carrier of a key.¹⁷

Also the ladybird receives ample attention. Widely dispersed is the folk-belief that the ladybirds guide the dead. Already in the Antiquity beetles appear in this role, for instance in Egypt the scarab (*Scarabaeus sacer*), according to its Latin name a holy insect. In Europe the maybug and above all the ladybird had a mythical meaning. Especially the last beetle has from olden times been loved, as appears from the many folk-names. ... Already Mannhardt has devoted it an extensive dissertation, proceeding more from mythology and numerous nursery rhymes than from the many popular names that allow for a broader and deeper study. A list of names follows:

Dutch: *(onze-)lieveheersbeestje, kapoentje, onze-lieveheerhaantje*; Flemish: *onze-lievevrouwbeestje*, Middle Dutch: *Mariaschoen, Onser Vrouwen schoen, Mariakever*; German and German dialects: *Marienkäfer, Jungfernkläferl, Jungfraukläferl, Muttergotteskläferl, Frauenkläferl, Liebenfrauenkläferl, Mariekälbchen, Sonnekälbchen, Muhkälbchen, Frauenküele, Marihäne, Sunnwendkläferl, Sonnenkalbel* (Austria), *Sünneküken, Sommerkalber, Sonnenkalw* (Pomerania); English: *lady-bird, lady-cow*; Swedish: *jungfru Marie* or *Maries Nyckelpiga* (key-maiden), *guldhöna*; Norse: *marihöne*; Old Norse: *Freyahoene, Freyjuhoena*; French: *bête de la vierge*; Italian: *anima de la Madonna, commaruccia* (midwife), *regina* (queen); Spanish: *vaca* (cow) *de San Antón, vaquilla de Dios*; Rumanian: *vaca-Domnului*; Russian: *bozja korowka* (God’s little cow); Sardinia: *bacca (vacca) de santu Joanni*.

What do these names teach us? Clearly they show traces of different cultural periods: the Old-Norse *Freyahoena* and the Norse *marihöne* are subsequently the pagan and the christianised

¹⁵ This version in Tj.E.R. de Haan, ‘Sagepoezie van B.W.A.E. Sloet tot Oldhuis’, in: *Neerlands Volksleven*, 13, 1963, 362f about the motif of the nightmare in Sinninghe’s *Katalog* n°784: *Hoe de klokken luiden in Engeland*.

¹⁶ This is not correct; Engelland is the usual spelling, see above.

¹⁷ Gilst, Aat van, *Wijze vrouwen en godinnen*, Soesterberg 2001, 82f.

names, while the names with Maria, lady and Jungfern remind of the christianised goddess-cult. The Swedish name *jungfru Maries Nyckelpiga* reminds us of the legends about the white woman with the keys to the other world. Instead of *onzelievevrouwebeestje*, after the Reformation, the Holland name *lieveheersbeestje* has come. The Italian name ‘midwife’ reminds of the prototype of the goddess. Less clear at first sight are the denominations with cow and calf for the ladybird. They also appear in nursery rhymes concerning this insect:

<i>Vlieg over naar engeland toe, daar is een boer die melkt een koe.</i>	<i>Fly over to England, there is a farmer who milks a cow.¹⁸</i>
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Engeland is as we saw the subterranean meadow of *Frau Holle*, the goddess of the fertility and the realm of the dead. In and around Delfzijl (prov. Groningen) a rhyme concerns the christianised form of the realm of the dead, but the cow is still present:

<i>Vlieg naor den hemel tou, naor de bontekou.</i>	<i>Fly towards the heaven, towards the spotted cow.</i>
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In prehistoric Europe and in the Egyptian antiquity the cow had, as well as still now in India, a sacred meaning and in the later folk-belief all kinds of traces of this can be found back. In Germany the cows in the stable are supposed to give red milk when the farmer kills a *Marienkäfer*, the animal consecrated to the goddess.

In a number of myths the cow is presented as the arch-mother. Aditi, the Indian mother of the gods, was both a cow and the earth. Persian myths tell about the creation of the world from an arch-bull. [Etc.] On the basis of all this it is possible that the components cow and calf in the names of the ladybird are connected with Mother Earth, the mother of all living.¹⁹

The ‘Pommerland-song’ is also part of an article about the Turk image in songs and nursery-rhymes in the German language by Otto Holzapfel and Ali Osman Öztürk from 2008.²⁰ The writers would like to voice through this article the urgency of overcoming prejudices reflecting the subconscious of the society. Stereotypes and prejudices mean isolation; the goal must be of overcoming borders. Paragraph 3, ‘Der Kindervers “Türkenmännchen flieg soll...”²¹, starts with the remark that it is nowadays a principle of the science of folklore which occupies itself with the literary folk tradition to make no (undated) recording older than the context in which it has been transmitted. Especially the science of folklore of previous generations was not afraid of often quite adventurous dating. Most of the times the age of a recording out of the oral tradition was (and is) grossly over-estimated. Now there is a nursery-rhyme, originating in its first recording

¹⁸ This looks suspiciously like a rain-formula, which has the lines: ‘Vaar over, Naar Engeland; Daar woont een man, Die heeft een koe, En heeft er geen drupje water toe (Sail over, to England; There lives a man, Who has a cow, And has not a little drop of water for it.)’ In *Volkskunde* 46, 1944/45, 291, Ferdi van de Vijver transmitted this song with the confusing introduction: ‘Of major importance for the little children, who play outside, is of course that the weather is nice; so they seek to avert the rain. They let the ladybird fly in the air to unlock the gate of heaven for the solar beams or use charms like: ‘Buiskoolblad, Maak mij niet nat, Vaar over’, etc. A ‘buiskoolblad’ is the leaf of a large kind of cabbage that can be used as umbrella. The rhyme is from Groningen and in the collection Boekenogen there are two versions, one as above from Beerta in dialect, and with only one *l* in Engeland, the second *l* is an amendment of Boekenogen, who published this rhyme without dialect in his much quoted article *Onze Rijmen* (1893; 1949, 109), the second version from Finsterwolde has an introduction about the children holding a large leaf above their heads when it rain and then sing: ‘Schoel (take shelter) regenblad (rain-leaf), Maak mij niet nat (Don’t make me wet), Trek over naar Engeland [only one *l*], etc. So the rain has to go to England because there lives a man with a cow desperately in need of water. So as a(n anti-)rain-formula there is no connection with the ladybird.

¹⁹ Gilst 2001, 108-110.

²⁰ Holzapfel, Otto & Ali Osman Öztürk, ‘Zum Türkensbild in deutschsprachigen Liedern und Kinderversen’, in: *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica*, 53, 2008, 361-380.

²¹ This is a strange title: ‘soll’ should be ‘hinweg’, or just blank.

from the undated collection in the estate of Rudolf Baier, Stralsund, that is with its use in the ‘Wunderhorn’ dateable to ‘before 1806/08’. Baier got the recording sent to him from Bad Kreuznach in the Pfalz with the notation: ‘Es wird dies May Käferlied in der Noh-Gegend [at the river Nahe, now in Rheinland-Pfalz] gesungen’:

*Türkenmän[n]chen flieg hinweg, flieg hinweg.
Die Weiber kommen mit Stangen
wollen dich umpfangen.
Die Männer kommen mit Spießen
wollen dich tod schießen.
Flieg in den Himmel,
schau ins Getümmel,
bring mir'n Sack voll Kümmel.*

There were further remarks: ‘*Türkenweibchen* when it has small antennae. *Türkenmännchen* are male maybugs with red shield and large antennae.’

This nursery-rhyme belongs to the large and very extensively transmitted song-type ‘Maikäfer flieg...’ with many subtypes and numerous variants. The context is understood when we remember that children (in the past) collected with passion the brown maybug (nowadays they are rare). They were proud when having exceptionally large ones which received special names (a ‘tailor’, a ‘miller’ and such). Here the male beetle with mighty antennae is called a ‘Turk’. Why is not clear; but behind it the child will hardly associate something negative. Secondly, the children hold the ladybird or the maybug on the hand and blow against it to make it fly. When it flies it was in the past sent off with wishes; the child’s own wishes that the beetle should help to fulfil. And in the wish-formulation laid a part future prediction.

In the recording from the collection Baier someone, we don’t know who but it must have been around 1806/08, has ‘corrected’ *flieg* into *flieh* [Engl. flee]. With that the meaning of the verse is changed, fitting to the in the war ‘fleeing Turks’ and to the dangers of *Stangen* and *Spießen* (poles and pikes). The *Getümmel* (uproar) becomes war events, and a booty in the battle might be ‘ein Sack voll kümmel’. The authors point to the famous version of the maybug-song with the line ‘Pommerland ist abgebrannt’ which is related to the Swedish and the Thirty Year war (1618–1648), thus also reminds of a war. But as long as we cannot explain why a beetle is called ‘Turk’ we cannot maintain that this verse relates to the war with the Turks.

Now follows the version from *Wunderhorn* which is Mannhardt n°21, except for the line ‘*bring mirn Sack voll Kümmel*’ instead of *Kringel*, but both are forms of bread, the first little buns with cumin, the last are well known as *pretzels*.

We now come to paragraph 4: ‘Turk experience in children’s song-texts from Transylvania’. Gottlieb Brandsch has published in 1931 the *Siebenbürgisch-deutschen Volklieder* after the collections of the 19th century from Friedrich Wilhelm Schuster. Here we find the nursery-rhyme of the type ‘Maikäfer flieg...’ in various variants: ‘*Tschuka, Maruka...*’ (p. 220f; with melody and in recordings around 1880, partly printed 1894). The beetle has amongst others to fly upon the birch-tree and ‘*seg, won de Tirke kun*’ (see [CH: say], when the Turks come), respectively ‘*siu mer, won de Tatren kun*’ (tell me when the Tatars come). In further variants there come ‘the Turks with the long poles’ and ‘the Tatars with the long poles’ (*Stangen*; both in Transylvanian dialect). In the same edition by Brandsch (p. 217) there are similar verses on the maybug and the ladybird (in manuscript 1867, orally also 1902), in which also the Turks and Tatars come ‘with poles’. Now F. W. Schuster has a remark to that, which reflects the contemporary idea: ‘... Tatars and Turks have come without doubt directly in the nursery rhymes in those days [...] the fearful terror of those country pests’. Then Brandsch refers to the nursery-rhyme also in Böhme’s

collection of the type ‘*Hermann, sla[g] Lärman*’, which was connected then with an eye on Hermann / Arminius with the Roman-Germanic confrontations (Battle in the Teutoburger Wald) respectively even on the Germanic ‘god Irmin’ (so Jacob Grimm) and with that adventurous dating was proposed. To that there is also quite a long remark in Böhme (1897) after n°864, which shows the boundless exaggerated and totally untenable Germanic-believe of these times (‘The maybug was with the Germanic people a joyfully welcomed harbinger of spring ... These songs are clearly related to the World Conflagration, to Wodan’s last battle...’). Children’s traditions may reflect older circumstances, but the authors stick to the principle of ‘Kontext-Einbettung’ with the first notation and with that in this case of memories of dangers from the Turks in the nursery rhymes around 1867 and of the same concerning the Tatars.

The verses that belong together have to be searched together on several places in Böhme’s *Deutsches Kinderlied*: n°429 (*Mischka, Mischka...*), n°747 (*Tschuka! Maruka!...*), n°850 (*Hergotischen [ladybird] flieg in den Himmel...*; here Böhme refers at the ‘Tatern’ to Gypsies), n°851 (*Tipesken [maybug]...*; here Böhme refers at the ‘Tatern’ to Tatars), n°864 (*Türkenmännchen, flieg hinweg...*; after *Wunderhorn*). One could further point to n°412 with the line ‘*Türken, Türken... dort oben steht ein Türkenstein...*’ from a children’s game. All this indicates that ‘Turks’ lived on as an important element in the children’s tradition, partly also with ideas that one should watch out for them, but in no way so circumscribed that they as terror image document a stereotyped negative Turk image.²²

In the article ‘Maikäfer flieg’ of Wikipedia it is said: Wilhelm Mannhardt, a representative of the mythological school of folklore interpretation, collected in his dissertation *Germanische Mythen: Forschungen* (1858) 26 different versions of the ladybird song, among them three in the English language, from which he concluded that the burning house from the songs means the world-fire of the Norse-Germanic mythology. Other folklorists like Franz Magnus Böhme agreed with him. Modern folklorists like Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann point out that with such interpretations one has to be careful; Emily Gerstner-Hirzel is of the opinion that the mythological school ‘by their rash handling have brought the belief in pagan relicts in nursery rhymes in discredit.’

About the ‘Pommerland’-song: Often the origin of the nowadays known song is dated to the Thirty Years War, which according to the historian Hans Medick has not been proven and is even quite unlikely, for the projected image of the father going off to war as soldier and the family staying at home is not according to the contemporary tradition; instead the family with all their possessions went in train behind the army and formed roaming mobile communities. Thus is a dating of the text to this time to be valued as an afterward construction of later centuries.²³

²² 851 = Mannhardt n°24; 850, cf. Mannhardt n°26. Further see chapter 3: *Siebenbürgisch-Sächsisches Wörterbuch*.

²³ Zechlin führt in seinem Beitrag „Der Neustettiner Kreis“ in Baltische Studien von 1886 den Ursprung des Liedes „Maikäfer fliege, ...“ auf die über Jahrhunderte andauernde Furcht der pommerschen Bevölkerung vor den Einfällen der Polen in ihr Land zurück.