

# Carnival Place Nicknames Alluding to Those of a Neighboring Town: *Strienestad, Strienedurpke* and the Like<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

For a long time, neighboring settlements have attributed insulting inhabitant nicknames to each other. From the end of 19th century onward, however, these names lost their aggressive nature. Many of them developed into honorary nicknames which formed the basis for self-attributed *place nicknames*, used during the Dutch carnival. For example, *Ganzemelkers* ('goose herds') resulted in the place nickname *Ganzegat* ('geese hamlet').

The Dutch carnival is a typically local feast: outsiders are not welcome. Carnival place nicknames, being in-group nicknames, can thus be supposed to reflect the spatial unit with which the inhabitants concerned identify themselves the most. Attention will be paid to a special category of in-group nicknames: those of neighboring towns which share name elements with each other and thus show a certain degree of similarity, obviously because the name of one of them alludes to or is inspired by the name of the neighbor. For example, the nickname *Strienedurpke* ('tiny village on the Striene') for a hamlet alludes to *Strienestad* ('city on the Striene river') for Steenberg. How were such alluding names formed and which differences between the neighbors do they express?

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## Introduction

Since at least the 15th century, neighboring settlements in the Netherlands have attributed insulting inhabitant nicknames to each other. From the second half of 19th century onward, however, these names have lost much of their aggressive nature or passed into oblivion. Insofar as they have survived, many of them have developed into honorary nicknames which, in turn, have formed the basis for in-group-attributed *place nicknames* traditionally used during the Dutch carnival season. For example, *Ganzemelkers* ('goose herds') resulted in the carnival place nickname *Ganzegat* ('geese hamlet').

The paper is based on the assumption that the Dutch carnival is a typically local feast: outsiders are not welcome (WIJERS 1996). Carnival place nicknames, being in-group nicknames, can thus be supposed to reflect the spatial unit the inhabitants concerned identify themselves with most.

Attention will be paid to a special category of in-group names: those of neighboring towns which share name elements with each other and thus show a certain degree of similarity, obviously because one name alludes to or is inspired by the name of the neighbor. For example, the nickname *Strienedurpke* ('tiny village on the Striene') for a hamlet alludes to *Strienestad* ('city on the Striene river'), for Steenberg.

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## Problem

This paper explores (1) how such alluding names were formed from a linguistic point of view, (2) what differences between the neighbors are expressed.

## Method

Firstly, a list was made containing a special category of inhabitant nicknames: compounds which share one or more word elements, and therefore might be related to each other. From this list, sets of *adjoining* settlements have been selected. From the latter list, settlements were selected whose self-attributed place nicknames equally share one or more word elements. Finally, an attempt was made to reconstruct the chronology of each cluster.

## Results

Six name sets were found, and fourteen nicknames. Table 1 demonstrates that the clusters differ in size: 4 clusters each consist of 2 items, 1 consists of 3 items, and 1 of 6 items.<sup>2</sup>

Cluster	In-group- attributed carnival place-nickname  Earliest attestation	Official name  Population  Administrative background	In-group-attributed inhabitants' carnival nickname which forms the basis of the place nickname	Out-group-attributed inhabitants' nickname which has developed into the honorary nickname on which the place nickname has been based
1	't Kleigat ('hole in clay ground, filled with water')  1999	Fijnaart (NBr)  5,500  until 1997 part of mun. Fijnaart en Heijningen  since 1997 part of mun. Zevenbergen  1998 name change: mun. Zevenbergen > mun. Moerdijk	CS De Kleibatsers, since 1966	
	Kleiknoestenstad ('clay knots city')  1996	Oudemolen (NBr)  300  until 1997 part of mun. Fijnaart en Heijningen  since 1997 part of mun. Zevenbergen  1998 name change: mun. Zevenbergen > mun. Moerdijk		

<sup>2</sup> The name pair *Dringersgat* (for Gilze) and *Wringersgat* (Rijen) has been disregarded because the two names are more or less synonymous and were often interchanged for a long time, even before they became honorary nicknames. Neither name can therefore be interpreted as an allusion to the other. See also Reinsma (2011).

2	<b>Lampegat</b> ('hamlet of lamps') 1962 <sup>3</sup>	Eindhoven (NBr) 200,000 mun. Eindhoven		
	<b>Lappegat</b> ('hamlet of rags') 1996	Geldrop (NBr) 28,000 until 2004 mun. Geldrop since 2004 part of mun. Geldrop-Mierlo		
3	<b>Oeteldonk</b> ( <i>donk</i> = sandy hill; <i>oetel</i> alludes to a C 19 bishop who obstructed carnival celebration) 1882	's-Hertogenbosch (NBr) 140,000 mun. 's-Hertogenbosch	Oeteldonkers, since 1924	
	<b>Oetelhoazendam</b> ( <i>hoazen</i> = hares; <i>dam</i> = dam) 1994	Hintham (NBr) 6,500 until 1996 part of mun. Rosmalen since 1996 part of mun. 's-Hertogenbosch	CV De Oetelhazen, since 1958	
	<b>Zandhazendurp</b> ('village of sand hares') 1994	Rosmalen (NBr) 30,000 until 1996 mun. Rosmalen since 1996 part of mun. 's-Hertogenbosch		Zandhazen (Cornelissen 1930, VI, 168)
	<b>Waoterhazen</b> ('water hares')	Kruisstraat (NBr) 500 until 1996 part of mun. Rosmalen since 1996 part of mun. 's-Hertogenbosch		
	<b>Waoterrijk</b> ('water empire') 1997	Nuland (NBr) 4,000 until 1993 mun. Nuland since 1993 part of mun. Maasdonk		
	<b>Rottenrijk</b> ( <i>rotten</i> refers to some neighborhoods Geffen consists of) <sup>4</sup> 1963	Geffen (NBr) 4,500 until 1993 mun. Geffen since 1993 mun. Maasdonk	CS Rottenrijk, since 1963	

<sup>3</sup> See Van der Sommen (2004: 70).

<sup>4</sup> The local carnival organization is called CS Rottenrijk, since 1963 (see Stichting Rottenrijk 2016). According to Wikipedia.nl (2015) (s.v. 'Geffen (plaats)'), the name Rottenrijk was first attested in 1965. Six neighborhood

<b>4</b>	<b>Peelleuterrijk</b> ( <i>leut</i> = fun, pleasure)  1975	Landhorst (NBr)  700  mun. Sint Anthonis	CV De Peelleuters, since 1975	
	<b>Peeltuterland</b> , <sup>5</sup> <b>Peeltuutersrijk</b> <sup>6</sup> ( <i>tuters</i> = golden plovers) <sup>7</sup>  1962	Venhorst (NBr)  1,500  part of mun. Gemert-Bakel	CV De Peeltuters, since 1962	
	<b>Peelvroutersrijk</b> (the Peel is a region; <i>vrouters</i> = rooters)  1964 ?	Elsendorp (NBr)  1,000  part of mun. Gemert-Bakel	CV De Peelvrouters, since 1964	
<b>5</b>	Strienestad (town on the [former] Striene river)  1960 ?	Steenbergen (NBr)  12,000  mun. Steenbergen		
	Striened <b>urpke</b> ('small village on the Striene river')	De Heen (NBr)  500  mun. Steenbergen		
<b>6</b>	Windbuulstad (windbuul = windbag, boaster)  1950 ?	Hengelo (O)  80,000  mun. Hengelo	H.C.V. De Windbuuln, since 1/1/1950	Wind (Navorscher 1859: 240)
	<b>Melbuul</b> 'ndorp (melbuul = flour bag; many farmers used to cultivate buckwheat)	Borne (O)  20,000  mun. Borne	CV Melbuulen, at least before 1964 (De Telegraaf 20-11-1982); relaunched in 1977 as <i>Melbuulkes</i> .	Mèèlbulen (Cornelissen 1929-'33, III, 9)

Table 7. Clusters of related nicknames and their official counterparts

The names are mentioned in order of age; the first name being the one which is alluded to, etc.

Shared name elements are rendered in bold letters.

The abbreviations *CS* or *CV* refer to carnival organizations.

Province abbreviations: NBr = Noord-Brabant; O = Overijssel.

names in Geffen contain the element *rot*: Papendijkrot, Broekrot, Bergoyenrot, Runsrot, Kerkrot, Hengstrot (Geffen 1998: 9). Geffen is not unique, however, in having been organized in 'rotten'. According to *WNT* s.v. *Rot* (II), neighboring villages in this region, the Meierij, were also organized in 'rotten'. Moreover, the term has also been in use in other parts of the country, for example in Gemert (Van der Elsen 2008) and Gelderland and Overijssel (Gallée 1895). I have not been able to determine to what extent the adjoining settlements (Nuland, Oss, Lithoijen and Vinkel) have comparable neighborhood names.

<sup>5</sup> See C.V. De Peelteuters (n.d.)

<sup>6</sup> See Hutsturm (n.d.).

<sup>7</sup> Hens (1926: 137) mentions the dialect variant *tüiter* for Venray and its surroundings (Peel region), referring to *Pluvialis apricarius oreophilus* Meinertzh.

The basic principle in these name clusters is that one word element in a given name is repeated (or – in the case of Lappegat – almost repeated) in another name, while one or more remaining elements are replaced by new ones. Sometimes the initial element is repeated while the final element is replaced (clusters no. 1 and 2; clusters 4-6; also items 1 and 2 within cluster 3). Sometimes the central part is repeated (item 3 in cluster 3), or the final element (item 5 in cluster 3; see also below). The initial as well as the final part are repeated in item 5 in cluster 3. Partial repetition has taken place in cluster 2: the alluding name Lappegat containing a pun: *lampe* ‘lamps’ > *lappe* ‘rags’; see also below.

In many cases, the chronological order is evident, one name being considerably older than another, as in the case of Lampegat (1974) and Lappegat (1996).<sup>8</sup> In cluster no. 3 (Oeteldonk) the chronological order is, however, somewhat problematic. Obviously, *Oetelhoazendam* alludes to *Oeteldonk*; and Zandhazendurp, for its part alludes at first sight to *Oetelhoazendam* (*hoazen* is a dialectal equivalent of *hazen*). The problem is, however, that *Zandhazendurp* is based on an out-group inhabitants’ nickname (first attested in 1930) and therefore cannot be considered as an allusion to *Oetelhoazendam* (first attested in 1994): carnival place nicknames are, as mentioned above, in-group names. We have thus to assume that *Oetelhoazendam* alludes both to *Oeteldonk* and *Zandhazendurp*.<sup>9</sup>

The second problem is in the sequence Waoterrijk – Rottenrijk. The nickname *Rottenrijk* dates from as early as 1963 and is thus considerably older than *Waoterrijk* (1994). The latter name must therefore allude to *two* neighbors (just like *Oetelhoazendam*), namely to *Waoterhazen* and *Rottenrijk*.

Some nicknames whose initial common word element is *Peel* (cluster no. 4) are a somewhat dubious case. *De Peel* is the name of a vast region alongside the province boundary between North Brabant and Limburg, which until about 1850 was an almost uninhabited peat moor. Living conditions were extremely bad; in Landhorst, for example, people lived as late as 1900 in turf huts. Six towns all over this region share the *Peel* prefix, which seems to prove that they experience a shared identity to some extent. Only three of them, however, have been mentioned in the table; the remaining three towns cannot be considered as each other’s neighbors, separated as they are by long distances.

Within the Peel cluster the chronological order is not quite certain. Obviously, *Peelleuterrijk* is the oldest nickname, but the remaining two names hardly differ in age. Anyway, it is clear that rhyme was the connecting element: *Peeltuterland* (or *Peeltuutersrijk*) having been inspired by *Peelvrutersrijk* (or maybe the reverse way). In the two names the vowel of the middle syllable has the same pronunciation.

What naming motives can be discerned in these alluding nicknames? Most allusions indicate various kinds of differences between the settlements concerned:

<sup>8</sup> Another interpretation might be that the *Lappegat* does not allude to *Lampegat*, but to the out-group nickname *Wevers* (‘weavers’) for the Geldrop inhabitants (cf. Van der Heide 1998: 155). This name refers to the numerous home weavers who used to work for local textile factories. I prefer, however, the rhyming interpretation.

<sup>9</sup> The idea that *Oetelhoazendam* (Hintham) is a ‘hinge nickname’, alluding to two neighbors at one time, is supported by the feeling of the Hintham inhabitants, expressed in Wikipedia.nl (2012), s.v. ‘Oetelhoazendam’, that their town forms a ‘bridge’ between ’s-Hertogenbosch and Rosmalen.

- Geological condition. In the case of *Waoterhazen* ('water hares') the condition of the soil (wet land) has been the naming motive, as opposed to *Zandhaozendurp* (sand, dry land).
- The nature of wildlife has been decisive in the case of *Peeltuuters* (golden plovers).
- The name *Rottenrijk* alludes to the administrative organization within this town.
- Type of industry. *Lappegat* (*lap* = 'piece of clothing'), alluding to the well-known lamp fabrication in adjoining Eindhoven (*Lampegat*).
- Hard living conditions were the motive in the case of *Peelvroutersrijk*.
- Contrast between a hamlet and its larger neighbor. In *Strienedurpke* this contrast has been emphasized by the diminutive *-ke* (thus: 'small village').

A huge dose of irony can be observed in the names of the hamlet '*t Kleigat* ('clay hamlet', for Fijnaart, positioned on clay soil) and *Kleiknoestenstad* ('clay knots city', for Oudemolen). Considering that Fijnaart (5,500 inhabitants) is the larger of the two settlements (Oudemolen has fewer than 300 inhabitants), these names are surprising. The division of roles is, however, understandable if one considers that the Fijnaart nickname is the oldest, and that *-gat* ('hamlet') is traditionally a very common final word element in carnival place nicknames which (more or less ironically) refer to agriculture and countryside; even large cities can carry this word element (cf. the abovementioned *Lampegat*). Thus, in the case of Fijnaart and Oudemolen the proportions were jokingly transposed: the Fijnaart name (*Kleigat*) 'asking' for an ironic allusion: *Kleiknoestenstad*.

Some names do not, however, allude to local differences. Carnival pleasures are the name motive in *Peelleuters* (*leut* means 'fun'). And due to the lack of any geographical or other striking differences between Nuland (*Waoterrijk*) and Kruisstraat (*Waoterhazen*), both lying near the river Maas, the Nuland people had to rely on language play, resulting in the combination *Waoterrijk* ('water empire').

A somewhat complicated relationship can be seen in the nicknames referring to Hengelo and Borne (see Table 2). The out-group-attributed nicknames, attributed by Borne to Hengelo and vice versa, long before the carnival nickname era, were not related at all: *Wind* ('boaster', for the Hengelo people) and *Melbuuln* ('flour bags', for Borne). In the carnival era, after the relationship between the two towns had turned into a friendlier one, each of these nicknames changed into an honorary nickname. Subsequently, Hengelo adapted this honorary inhabitants' nickname, *Wind*, so much that it alluded to the Borne inhabitants' nickname: *Windbuuln*. Later on, however, when the *place* nicknames came into being, the reverse happened: the Borne place nickname *Melbuul'ndorp* alludes to *Windbuulnstad* (Hengelo).

	Out-group attributed INHABITANTS nickname	Honorary inhabitants nickname	In-group attributed PLACE nickname
Hengelo	<i>Wind</i>	<i>Windbuuln</i>	<i>Windbuulnstad</i>
Borne	<i>Melbuuln</i>	<i>Melbuuln</i>	<i>Melbuulndorp</i>

Table 2. Nickname changes in the Hengelo/Borne area

Hengelo and Borne are a good example of ameliorated relationships, within, as well as beyond the carnival context. In the guestbook of one of Borne's carnival organizations a 'visitor' from Hengelo announced a Hengelo carnival meeting on 11 November 2012, therefore probably implying that Borne carnival celebrants were also welcome (C.V. De Toet'n Bloazers 2015). On the official administrative level, too, rustic strife is over: today, Borne, Hengelo and some other towns in the area are working together in Twente Netwerkstad, a regional cooperative body.

Three cases make clear that municipal boundaries do not necessarily put up barriers. Firstly, Geldrop has never been part of Eindhoven; nevertheless, its nickname alludes to the large neighbor. The second case concerns Kruisland, Nuland and Geffen. None of the three has ever been part of the same municipality as any of the others. Thirdly, all of the three Peel towns are part of different municipalities.

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