

Clarifications on the Genealogies Silveira and Casmaca

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Religious persons started to register baptisms, marriages and deaths between 1558 and 1676 in Bruges. Dates which are mentioned in the XVth century thus are estimations. Exceptionally earlier precise dates can be found in historical documents.

The dates mentioned for baptisms, marriages and deaths on the Azores for the same period also are estimations. The chroniclers and the first genealogists trusted on these data, among others on the family names during the end of the XVIth till the beginning of the XVIIth century.

An emigrant from Bruges, who emigrated to the Azores in 1470 was up to now known as Willem Vander Haeghen / Guilherme da Silveira.

His real name was Willem de Kersemackere, born around 1430, in Portuguese Guilherme Casmaca. He was mentioned in document number 104 of April 2nd 1470 of the civil sentences of the archives of Bruges.

• Willem de Kersemackere poorters kinne, georghen in det voer
van vander haeghen al ouer den voerlanden van portugal
als land aronfe ghedien by hem
van oer portugalien inden handen van latorp der faete fime
aan. y. f. of om by alzo dat het lighen in voer portugalien
ghedienft wordt dat of in te fime faete voer fime
de andere metenades de werthelike rofey ditte vt supra

van alme de romme voerlanden van portugal becofen
van der waegon de voer becofen gme rofelen
alme dem ind fadtwon r handen vand voer
compe pime becofen dit in om de mende
ant hem fime ghedien hedy als de vanden
humeren mende pime alen zover te van y. f. of
wzad alme als vanden werthelike rofey en
duffie anclenim mch ditum vt supra

Doort de voer voerlanden rommevanden dat de voer Willem
kersemackere van den voer ghedien georghen behouden zullen
in haren land honden fime van fime vand fime
dat by lighen ghedien ghedien hedy faete hedy dit vand
voer aronfe vand becofen ditte voer ghedien gme
voer hedy ditum vt supra

Civiele Sententiën Nr 104 van 02.04.1470 written in Medieval French and Flemish

“Willem De Kersmakere et Jan Colve de Jonghe se portent cautions des marchands de Portugal (João Álvares ‘de Comines’, João de Aragão, Álvaro Dinis, Lopo Mendes, António Fernandes, Henrique Mendes et João Álvares) dans l’arrêt fait par João Vaz. Ces marchands certifient que leurs cautions ne subiront pas de dommages;

Willem De Kersmakere en Jan Colve de Jonghe, poorters, bleven boorghen ende elk voor al over den coopliden van Portugale, als vanden arreeste ghedaen bij Jan Vas, ooc portugalois, inden handen van Jacop dHeere tooter somme van .ijc. £ gr, omme bij alzo dat yet jeghen den voors. Portugaloisen ghewijst worde daer of in te stane, tooners voors.. somme ende der ondere metgaders de wettelijke kosten. Actum ut supra (den andren dach van april anno lxxix voor Paesschen).

De coopliden van Portugale beloofden de voors. boorghen quite, costeloos ende scadeloos te houdene vanden voors. boorchtucht die zij over hemlieden ghedaen hadden, alzo wel vanden principalen arreeste van .ijc. £ gr. als vanden wetteliken kosten ende diesser ancleven mach Actum ut supra.

Voort de voors. coopliden consenteirden coonsenteirden dat die voors. Willem De Kersmakere ende Jan Colve, haerlider boorghen, behouden zullen in haerlieder handen tpayement van Sinxene vanden fruite dat zij jeghen hemlieden ghecocht hadden, tooter tijd dat vanden voors. arreeste vander boorchtucht daer up gedaen quite wesen zullen”.

His name was Willem De Kersemakere in Bruges, but how to explain the name Vander Haeghen/da Silveira on the Açores?

The only possible explanation is that, as he already had seven children, he must have been married in Bruges first to a lady named Vander Haeghen, unknown first name, born around 1432, date of marriage unknown, date of death before 1469 (her last child, a girl named Maria, was born around 1468).

Willem’s second marriage with Margarida Sabuia/Sabuya in Bruges or in the Azores took place between 1469 and 1473. The date of her birth is unknown. Willem died around 1507 or 1509. **His second wife referred to her husband as Guilherme Casmaca in her will of September 14th 1510.**

Starting from the introduction of family names in the 13th century, **in Flanders all children only have the family name of the father, never the name of the mother.** I establish that it is very difficult to have the unique family name of the Western Europe countries accepted by the Portuguese, who are used to another system of identification of persons.

It is only among the nobility that changes in family names exist. For instance: Jácomo de Bruges, governor of the Isle of Terceira, was the elder son of Jean de Bruges, who built the Gruythuse palace in Bruges. The youngest brother of Jácomo, Lodewijk, changed his family name 'de Bruges' in 'de Gruythuse', when he moved into the palace. For the common citizen, eg Claeys, the name remains from centuries ago to the end of times, with variations such as Claes and Clais.

Out of these 2 marriages Guilherme had 8 children all with the family name De Kersemackere/Casmaca:

First marriage De Kersemackere-Vander Haeghen:

1. Margarida Casmaca, born in Bruges around 1452
2. João Casmaca, born around 1456 in Bruges, died in 1481 on the Azores, married to Guiomar Borges Abarca
3. Jorge Casmava, born in Bruges around 1458, No other data available
4. Catharina Casmaca, born in Bruges around 1462. Married around 1484
5. Luzia Casmaca, born in Bruges around 1464, Married around 1485
6. Ana Casmaca, born in Bruges around 1466
7. Maria Casmaca, born in Bruges around 1468, died in 1545

Second marriage De Kersemackere-Margarida Sabuia/Sabuya:

8. Francisco Casmaca, born around 1474 at Faial. Marriage at Faial around 1524.

So, the 7 first named children had a half-brother.

Willem's children from the first marriage, e.g. when they married after 1510, must have chosen for the name of their mother Vander Haeghen/da Silveira, as is the old Portuguese habit, but then without the second family name of their father Casmaca, as the Portuguese do.

The youngest son, Francisco Casmaca, has always kept the family name of his father, as the Flemish do. To prove it, I found on the web the following names:

Casmaca, António Da Cunha Marques, ca 05.03.1662 Brazil.

Casmaca, João Machado, ca 1669 Brazil. Marcelo Casmaca, Brazil.

The chroniclers and genealogists based their writings on the documents of the XVI th and XVIIth centuries, several generations after the above mentioned facts between 1510 and 1548. I do not believe that the change Casmaca-Silveira took place during the first or second generation after Willem. At last there was a large confusion of family names: Casmaca, De Kersemakere, Vandraga, Vander Haeghen and there were already a lot of Silveiras.

The genealogists decided to maintain the name Silveira for all the children of the first marriage, even for their father Willem, but that was a step too far. You

never give a man his wife's family name, not in Portugal and not in Flanders. There was never a Willem Vander Haeghen on the islands.

Francisco Casmaca took the name of his father, Guilhelmus Casmaca, not his mother's family name Sabuia/Sabuya and certainly not this of an imaginary Willem Vander Haeghen or the family name of his father's first wife, a Vander Haeghen, who died in Bruges years before Francisco was born.

That's why we looked up in vain a Willem Vander Haeghen in the archives in Bruges. To know finally what was wrong, is a relief both for the Flemish and the 10.000 Silveira spread all over the world, who know they can keep their family name, as long as they are not descendants of Francisco Casmaca, the youngest son of Guilherme Casmaca. Both the Casmaca and the Silveira can be proud of their father, as all the Flemish are, for what he and his companions, Portuguese and Flemish together, have realized on the Azoren, in difficult conditions, more the 500 years ago.

I hope that one day, a new generation Portuguese genealogists will list up the Casmaca genealogy. It is very likely that among the 17 branches da Silveira, which I mentioned in the volume Azores III, many so called Silveira might in fact be Casmaca, descendants of Willem Casmaca's son Francisco Casmaca.

If the Casmaca, spread around the entire world, in continental Portugal, Madeira, Azores, Brazil, North America etc... accept to communicate their data on the family Casmaca, I am ready to do the research for them.

I need your full name, birthdate and birthplace, the same for marriage, the same for your partners, the same for your children and their descendants, the same for your parents, grand-parents etc... also the the date and place of death.

If you already have a partial genealogy of your Casmaca family, please send it to me. I will find out whether I can add it in the Casmaca genealogy, as I have described it in the book Azores III.

Pass this message to the members of your family, who do not have e-mail. This call for help is urgent. Your participation is indispensable. My e-mail address is: claeys.maertens@sapo.pt