

De Kersemakere/Casmaca

In 2010 I found out in the archives of the city of Bruges that the real identity of the emigrant on the Acores, known there as Willem Vander Haeghen, in fact is Willem De Kersemakere. The name Willem Vander Haeghen must have been copied from old Portuguese sources in Flemish literature.

Many Vander Haeghen do live in Flanders, but **never** has there been a Willem Vander Haeghen as emigrant on the Acores.

Portuguese chroniclers from the 16th century as well mention the name Vandraga as the name Casmaca. In Portugal after the Christian name first comes the name of the mother, then the father's name and sometimes a few more family names of ancestors.

Vandraga is an onomatopoeia of Vander Haeghen. Casmaca is an onomatopoeia of Kersemakere. In the use of both these family names Portuguese genealogists must not have doubted, because this is common in their country.

On the contrary, in Flanders every person only has **one family name**, except very exceptionally in some noble families as for example Janssens de Bisthoven.

The only possible logical explanation of these two familynames is the following:

Willem De Kersemakere first must have been married in Bruges with a Vander Haeghen. I had noticed before that most Flemish emigrants leaving for the Acores either were single or recently married. This was not the case with Willem. Seven of his children were already between 6 and 14 years old in 1470. The last one, Francisco, was born around 1474 in Faial. Willem's first wife must have died in Bruges.

He must have remarried a certain Margarida Sabuia, either in Flanders, or on the Acores.

The elder children will have taken, in the Portuguese way, the name of their mother, thus Vander Haeghen.

The second mother and her children called themselves Casmaca. One year before the death of Margarida, she had a will made up by her son-in-law. In this will she gave the name Casmaca for her passed away husband. This and the fact that in Bruges the name Willem Kersemakere appeared, is for me the absolute proof that we speak about the family De Kersemakere and not Vander Haeghen.

The established Portuguese name da Silveira will always remain, but their ancestor for certain is Willem de Kersemakere and not Willem Vander Haeghen. In this way a historic mistake is corrected.

Two months after this study was published in a limited edition, I looked for and found to my amazement on the internet persons named Casmaca in Portugal. These last years I had never searched for this family name, nor encountered it in a genealogical study.

This confirms my presumption that, at least the youngest son Francisco, born from Margarida, must have had descendants with the name Casmaca and that as a consequence their ancestor was indeed Willem De Kersmakere.

Portugese people, used to their system of several family names, must have difficulties in judging our one-name-system, which is much easier, but less colourful, melodious or elegant.

In short, the Casmaca and the da Silveira do have the same ancestor, Willem de Kersemaker.