

# ‘Viking’ blood at the Cape?



DNA evidence confirms European paternity of  
**Christoffel Snijman van der Caep**  
and debunks theory he was the son of Anthonij Jansz van Bengale

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My thanks to  
**Kornelius Snyman**  
for allowing me to use his Y-DNA analysis and his direct patrilineal descent from  
**Christoffel Snijman**

## **Christoffel Snijman → Kornelius Snyman patrilineal descent**

Christoffel Snijman 1669-1706



Philippus Snyman ca.1701-ca.1733



Jacobus Snyman ca. 1732-?



Philippus Snyman ca. 1757-1808



Johannes Hendrik Snyman 1796-1865



Petrus Jacobus Snyman 1854-1938



Sarel Daniel Snyman 1885-1941



Ds. Phillippus Snyman 1924-2012



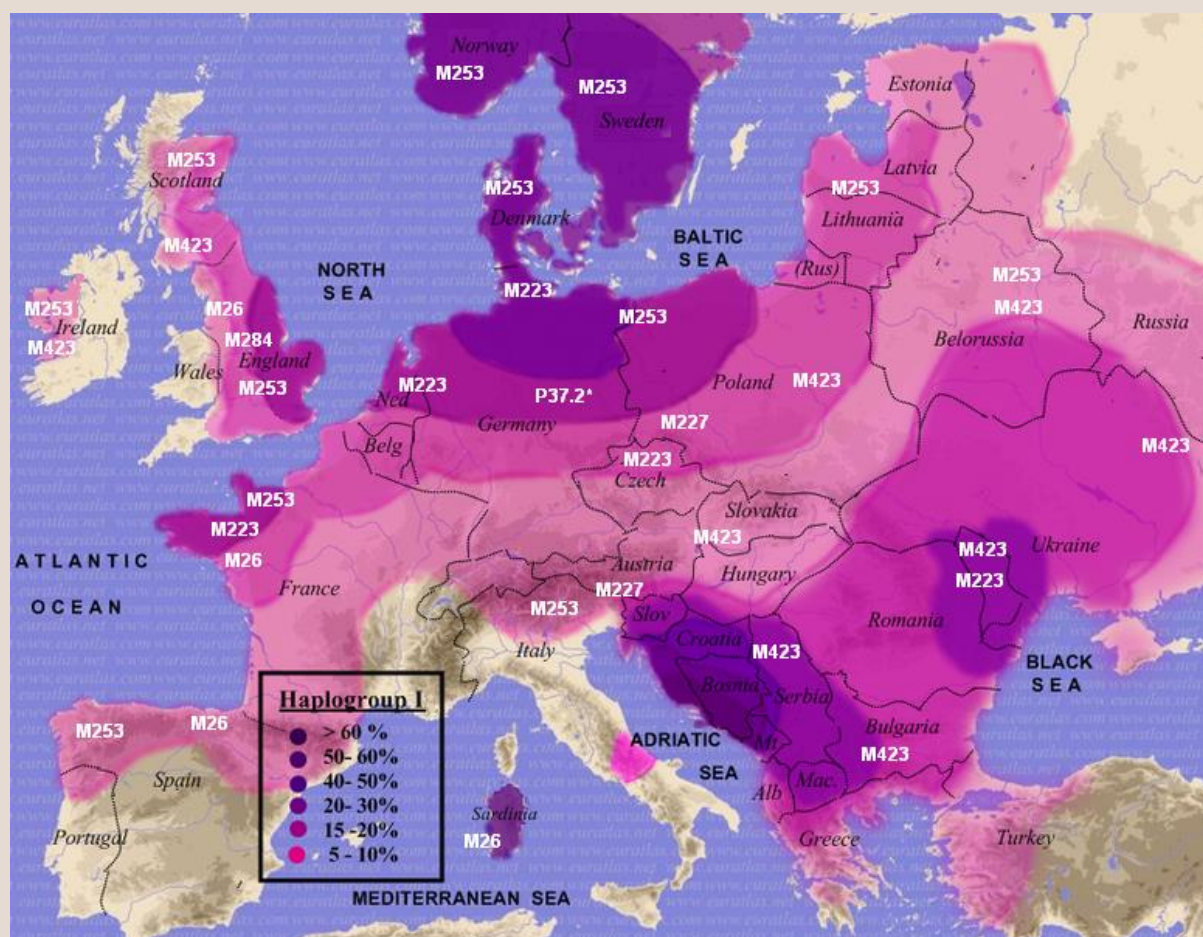
Kornelius Snyman

# ‘Viking’ blood at the Cape?<sup>1</sup>

In April 2014 **Kornelius Snyman** learned that his Y-DNA haplogroup is I-M253 (formerly categorized as I1) and that in addition he tested positive for the rare Z60 subclade (formerly I1a2a).

**Snyman** is a direct patrilineal descendant of **Christoffel Snijman** (his signature) who is also recorded as **Christoffel Snyman van de Caep**, **Christoffel Sniman**, **Crhijstoffel Snijman**, **Christoffle Sçirinaan**, **Christoffle C’nayman**, **Christoffle Senayment**, **Christoffle Senaimant** and **Christoffle Senaiman**.<sup>2</sup>

I-M253 is the ancient paternal lineage of the Nordic countries and is popularly known as the ‘Viking’ haplogroup. Forty percent of Fins and 38% of Swedes are from this haplogroup. It also commonly occurs in Norway, Denmark, northern Germany, and other north European countries. It is found in northern Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom.



Frequency and Distribution of Y-DNA Haplogroup I, including M253 (Wikipedia)

<sup>1</sup> This article should be read in conjunction with ‘Cape Mothers’ by Mansell Upham ([www.e-family.co.za/ffy/RemarkableWriting/CapeMothers.pdf](http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/RemarkableWriting/CapeMothers.pdf))

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g5/p5115.htm>

The Y-DNA haplogroup I is the oldest in Europe and arose between 40,000 to 30,000 years ago. From it descends I1 which evolved between 10,000 and 8,000 years ago which is followed by M253.

It is useful to understand how the Y-DNA haplogroup I spread throughout Europe and to this end I recommend the Eupedia.com article found here:<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.eupedia.com/europe/Haplogroup\\_I1\\_Y-DNA.shtml](http://www.eupedia.com/europe/Haplogroup_I1_Y-DNA.shtml)

**Kornelius Snyman** did the Geno 2.0 test from the National Geographic's Genographic Project. This test examines 150,000 DNA genetic markers and Dr. Kenneth Nordtvedt, a genetic researcher and head of a genetics group at FamilyTreeDNA did additional analysis.

M253 arose in Europe 5,000 – 26,000 thousand years ago from haplogroup I-M170 and it is a subclade of Y-DNA haplogroup I. Its defining SNP's (single nucleotide polymorphism) are M253, M307, P30 and P40.<sup>4,5</sup>

**Kornelius Snyman's** Z60 SNP is the most recent in his DNA. According to Dr. Nordtvedt it is at present a generic SNP. Z60's origins are about 4,500 years old and from a single founder. He believes the founder lived in northwest Germany, possibly in lower Saxony. I1 haplogroup males then spread to Scandinavia from which they branched further afield.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, it would offer greater certainty to have Y-DNA tests from more than one direct patrilineal descendant of **Christoffel Snijman** and hopefully those will come in time.

But in the meantime, it is uncanny how this result ties in with the primary research recorded by **Mansell Upham** in his articles "Cape Mothers" published on this site; and in 1997 in *Capensis*.<sup>7</sup>

### **Christoffel Snijman's mother**

**Christoffel Snijman** was baptised on 9 March 1669 as the son of the then enslaved *bandiet* or convict, **Catharina van Paliacatta** popularly known as *Groote Catrijn* with the witness being her good friend **Angila van Bengale**:

*[1669]; [de]n 9 Maert een soontje van Groote Catrijn wiert genaemt Christoffel tot getuyge stont Angila*

It is important to note that there is no other baptism in that period of a child named Christoffel. Furthermore, had his father been an African or Asian slave, or an indigene, he could not have been baptised. At the time, it was only slave children with a white

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<sup>3</sup> My thanks to Christo van Rensburg for drawing my attention to this article

<sup>4</sup> Snyman, Kornelius: Snyman Paternal (Y-Chromosome) Genetic Test Results

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haplogroup\\_I-M253](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haplogroup_I-M253)

<sup>6</sup> Snyman, Kornelius: Snyman Paternal (Y-Chromosome) Genetic Test Results

<sup>7</sup> Upham, Mansell G.: "In hevigen woede... Groote Catrijn: Earliest recorded female bandiet at the Cape of Good Hope – a study in upward mobility"



parent (in practice father) who were entitled to baptism. It was only in 1677 that children of Asian or Asian/African parents became entitled to baptism and this policy was only fully implemented in 1685.<sup>8</sup>

His baptism comes just eleven months after the dual adult baptisms of his mother and god-mother.

*[1668] den 29 April zijn gedoopt na gedaen belydenisse twee bejaerde personen, waer van de een genaemt wiert Angila de andere Catharien*

The friends were recorded as communicants at the Cape church from 1668 onwards. *Groote Catrijn's* duty-shirking lover is recorded as a communicant in 1666 with the name **Hans Christoffel Snijman**; and, her future husband is also a communicant here following his baptism:

*[1670] Den 12 Sept. een bejaart persoon wiert genaamt Anthonij van Bengale*

It is also highly significant that Christoffel himself later asserts himself as the son and heir of his mother *Groote Catrijn* and of his step-father **Athonij Jansz van Bengale**.<sup>9</sup>

There is therefore no doubt at all about his mother.

### **Christoffel Snijman's biological father**

The question of Christoffel's paternity is less clear. For many years some researchers have insisted that his father was **Anthonij Jansz van Bengale**. This, despite the fact that if this was correct, Christoffel would not have been eligible for baptism.

For now we can say that **Hans Christoffel Snijman / Hans Christoff Schneider / Hans Christoffel Snijder** is the putative father of Christoffel Snijman.

He first appears in the record in 1665, being convicted three times that year – first for assault, then as part of a group desertion involving a hostage taking, and finally for brawling.<sup>10</sup>

In 1666 he appears as a communicant at the Cape church and is recorded as **Hans Christoffel Snijman**. In the same year he is recorded in the muster roll as **Hans Christoffel Snijder van Heydelberg soldaat**.<sup>11</sup>

We next hear of him the following year recorded as **Hans Christoffel Snijman** and as **Hans Christoff Schneider** when he is hauled before the courts and on 30 July 1667 is convicted of abandoning his duties as sentry in the *Kasteel* to sleep with the company

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<sup>8</sup> Upham, Mansell G.: "What can't be cured, must be endured... Cape of Good Hope – first marriages & baptisms (1652-1665)

<sup>9</sup> Upham, Mansell: Cape Mothers *Groote Catrijn van Paliacatta* (c. 1631-1683), her slave Maria van Bengale & her daughter-in-law Marguerite-Thérèse de Savoye (1673-1742)

<sup>10</sup> Upham, Mansell: Cape Mothers

<sup>11</sup> Upham, Mansell: Cape Mothers

washer woman – none other than *Groote Catrijn*.<sup>12</sup> He is flogged, forfeits two months' pay and is banished for two years to Robben Island where he is enumerated in the 1668 muster roll. He thereafter disappears from the record at the Cape.

It is important to emphasise that there is no other individual at the Cape during this period with a similar name to cloud the issue.

**Christoffel Snijman** throughout his life asserts he is the son of **Hans Christoffel Snijman / Schneider / Snijder** by using his name.

Sometimes it is forgotten that names, both given and used, at the Cape in that period were rarely randomly chosen. First names generally followed naming patterns with some exceptions. Used in a similar way to what we now term surnames, matronyms (Lodge slaves), patronyms and toponyms were chosen to assert provenance, s/he/I is/am the child of this 'mother/father', s/he/I is/am from or was born at 'this place'.<sup>13</sup> Whether this was officially required or an entrenched practice is not clear. Slave owners, including officials of the VOC, also chose names to humiliate or typify individual slaves in certain ways.<sup>14</sup>

But in the case of **Christoffel**, his mother points very clearly to his paternity when she baptises him **Christoffel** – also with the tacit assent of the authorities – and he is always identified in the record as **Christoffel Snijman** (spelled variously).<sup>15</sup>

On a receipt in the estate of his adoptive father, **Anthonij Jansz van Bengale**, he even flamboyantly signs himself thus:<sup>16</sup>



## Y-DNA test results

Y-DNA is passed only from father to son and is extremely stable throughout many, many generations and not changing from one generation to the next. This is true also in the case of mtDNA passed from mother to child, excepting that it stops in the case of male children, whereas it continues from mother to daughter down the generations.

Once tested and categorized as a particular haplogroup, this will not change with further testing. What may change as the science advances is that Y-DNA (and mtDNA) haplogroups are further and further refined making the definition of an individual's haplogroup and subclade ever more precise.

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<sup>12</sup> Upham, Mansell: Cape Mothers

<sup>13</sup> This is evident throughout the records, whether baptisms, official records including court records, wills and related documents, etc. See also Shell, Robert C-H: Children of Bondage, p.230

<sup>14</sup> Shell, Robert C-H: Children of Bondage, pp.240-246

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffv/g5/p5115.htm>

<sup>16</sup> Upham, Mansell G.: Cape Mothers

For example a male once broadly identified as Y-DNA haplogroup R1b could now have a further refined identification as haplogroup R-L23. There has been no change – there is simply greater knowledge about that particular Y-DNA haplogroup, i.e. more and more SNPs are being identified and defined.

**Kornelius Snyman's** direct patrilineal descent from **Christoffel Snijman** identifies the latter as Y-DNA haplogroup I-M253 with the rare sub-clade Z60. This rules out any possibility of an Asian (or African) father for **Christoffel Snijman**.

**Christoffel Snijman's** father was European and this together all the available recorded information, combined with the fact there is no other known candidate, overwhelmingly points to this father being none other than **Hans Christoffel Snijman / Schneider / Snijder**. He is therefore identified as **Christoffel Snijman's** putative father in the First Fifty Years project.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffv/g5/p5115.htm>