

# Reading Between the Lines Part 1

**Philip did not come from Hamburg**

**They did not want to be found**

**Philip's d.o.b unknown**

**Our Stamvader was Philip Hendrik Morkel and his father Philip**

**When did Philip arrive at the Cape**

**Philip and Maria Biebouw had a second child, Willem**

**Philip and Maria were friends with the Pasman sisters**

**Philip probably suffered hearing loss**

Sometimes, in compiling the family history, it made sense to read between the lines and make plausible inferences about what actually happened. They are spread in articles on our website<sup>1</sup> and in our book<sup>2</sup> and are collected together in four parts. A plausibility index is assigned, giving the confidence I have about my inference.

I also list errors I have found in source documents.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://family.morkel.net>

<sup>2</sup> André Theron Morkel, 2015. MORKEL. A Remarkable South African Family. Published by Future Managers

### **Philip did not come from Hamburg** (*Index 3*)

VOC Archives at The Hague, Netherlands, list both *Stamvader a1* Philip Morkel and his bother *a2* Willem coming from Hamburg, Germany. Philip's will drawn up in the 1730's also has him as born there.

As described in our article<sup>3</sup>, research by a Hamburg archivist found no trace of them or any Morkels in Hamburg at that time. However, I did find Morkels in Germany. Using telephone directories, I located about 40 Morkel families, with hotspots in Hessen, north (Butzbach) and east (Brachttal) of Frankfurt. I made contact with Carsten Morkel of Butzbach who had researched his family line back to the 17th century. DNA tests show that Carsten are very closely related to myself and other South African Morkels. While we could not form a direct family tree link, it is plausible that Philip and Willem came from Hessen.

### **They did not want to be found**<sup>4</sup> (*Index 3*)

Why did Philip and his brother Willem list Hamburg as place of their birth? It is possible that we could not find Philip (and Willem) because they did not want to be found. Trained as a gunner, Philip would have served as a soldier for a feudal lord and it is unlikely that permission to resign and travel would be granted. His only way out would be to 'disappear'. The VOC was the biggest employer in Europe at that time and had a recruitment office in Hamburg. I suspect few if any questions were asked in recruiting. Thus perhaps Philip (and later Willem) found their way to Hamburg and signed up up to sail to distant lands. To cover his tracks he gave Hamburg as his place of birth, a town not controlled by a feudal lord. His actions were more likely to escape an oppressive system, rather than being criminal.

---

<sup>3</sup> Searching for Philip Morkel in 17th century Germany, Website and From Germany to the Cape Book p3

<sup>4</sup> Book, p7-8

### **Philip's d.o.b unknown** (*Index 4*)

The GISA<sup>5</sup> Genealogy lists Philips date of birth as date of birth 27 Feb 1677, unreferenced. There are also other d.o.b. dates for Philip on the internet: The International Genealogical Index and Rootsweb show several birthdates for Philip Morkel – 1683, “about 1684” and “about 1685”. These databases are inclusive. Contributions are accepted while sources are not checked and verified. The 1683 birth date was submitted in 1964 and my attempt to contact the submitter was not successful.

In contrast, dates for the Morkels in our Genealogy are from South African church and government registers and can be checked. We only know that Philip and Willem were born in Germany but not the town. Thus birth registers could not be checked. Until solid evidence becomes available, his d.o.b is unknown. The 1677 date seems to fit and until we obtain the actual d.o.b. we will use this date, but with a question mark attached.

### **Our Stamvader was Philip Hendrik Morkel and his father Philip** (*Index 2*)

All documents, except one, list our *Stamvader* simply as Philip Morkel. The standout is the *Liefdekrans*, where he is Philip Hendrik Morkel. It is likely that this was indeed his full name but in daily life he was simply Philip Morkel. His oldest grandson was named Philip Hendrik Morkel, supporting our conjecture.

With the mystery surrounding Philip and Willem's origins, we do not know the name of their father. I originally suspected that it would be Wilhelm, assuming that he called his oldest son (Philip) after his father<sup>6</sup>, however, it does not seem so. Lists of ships crews are available in the VOC archives. In one entry<sup>7</sup> Willem is recorded as being Willem

---

<sup>5</sup> South African Genealogies, 1999. GISA (Genealogical Institute of South Africa). p677

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.rieproots.com/pages/Names/customs.htm> for naming traditions in old Germany. The oldest son would be named after the paternal grandfather.

<sup>7</sup>

Philipsz Morkel. The 'sz' in the middle name is significant because it indicates that he was the son of Philip Morkel, thus revealing their father's name. The use of 'sz' is a Dutch practice<sup>8</sup>, not German, therefore, it was not handed down from earlier German ancestors. Thus, while we retain a question mark, it is very likely that their father was indeed Philip<sup>9</sup>.

### **When did Philip arrive at the Cape** <sup>10</sup> (*Index 5*)

The arrival date in 1708 for *Stamvader* Philip Morkel is well documented. However there are reports in articles and websites about the family that he arrived at the Cape much earlier — in or before 1691.

This comes from the 1894 genealogy of old Cape families<sup>11</sup> by C.C. de Villiers:

*'The Stamvader of this family was Philip Morkel, of Hamburg, in 1691 citizen of Stellenbosch, married to Maria Bibon, widow of Hercules Verdeau, and remarried 17 September 1713 to Catharina Pasman.'*

Historian George McCall Theal<sup>12</sup> states:

*'According to the census of 1691, corrected by entries in the church registers, the most notable burghers in the Cape district were: (a long list including) 'Morkel, Philip, with wife.'*

Thus both de Villiers and Theal wrongly place Philip as already established at the Cape in 1691. Apart from the date error, de Villiers and Theal also incorrectly have Maria Biebouw (there are several spellings of her name, including Bibon) as the widow of Hercules Verdeau. Hercules was married to Maria Huibeaux, a similar sounding name, but a different person.

---

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sz\\_\(digraph\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sz_(digraph))

<sup>9</sup> Morkel book p3.

<sup>10</sup> Morkel Book p 10

<sup>11</sup> C.C. de Villiers, 1894, *Die Geslacht Registers de Oude Kaapsche Familien*. p98.

<sup>12</sup> Theal, George McCall *History of South Africa under the Administration of the Dutch East India*

It is generally accepted that Philip arrived at the Cape in 1708, when he first appears in documents. However he actually visited the Cape earlier, when his ship called in on way to Batavia. It is a matter of judgment whether to record his arrival as 1705, 1708 or 1709<sup>13</sup>. He was *constapel* on the *Oosterstein* arriving at the Cape on 7.3.1705. He departed a month later to Batavia and returned to the Cape on 30 1.1708. While at the Cape Philip decided to stay at the Cape and married Maria Biebouw. He returned to Holland for his discharge and arrived at the Cape with the *Noordbeek* on 2.6.1709.

### **Philip and Maria Biebouw had a second child, Willem** (*Index 5*)

All the Morkel genealogies list only one child Elisabeth, for Philip Morkel and Maria Biebouw. The church register as below, shows a second child, *b2* Willem, baptised in 1712. It is likely that the pioneering *Geslachtregisters* of C.C. de Villiers<sup>14</sup> missed this entry and subsequent genealogies perpetuated the error. Baby *b2* Willem did not live long and it is likely that he died together with his mother Maria in the small pox epidemic of 1713. Philip's daughter Elizabeth and son Willem with Catharina Pasman, his second wife, are thus *b3* and *b4* respectively, instead of *b2* and *b3*.

Willem Morkel	
South Africa, Dutch Reformed Church Registers (Cape Town Archives)	
Name	<b>Willem Morkel</b>
Event Type	Baptism
Event Date	03 Jul 1712
Event Place	Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, South Africa
Father's Name	Philip Morkel
Mother's Name	Maria Bibout

#### **South Africa, Dutch Reformed Church Registers (Cape Town Archives), 1660-1970**

GS Film number 2214107  
 Digital Folder Number 4322620  
 Image Number 00088

#### **Citing this Record**

"South Africa, Dutch Reformed Church Registers (Cape Town Archives), 1660-1970," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VRL9-X7B> : 4 December 2014), Willem Morkel, 03 Jul 1712, Baptism; citing p. , Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, State Archives, Cape Province; FHL microfilm 2,214,107.

<sup>13</sup> Huygens VOC archives: <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das/vvoyages?>

<sup>14</sup> C.C. de Villiers, 1894, *Die Geslacht Registers de Oude Kaapsche Familien*. p98.

### **Philip and Maria were friends with the Pasman sisters** (*Index 5*)

Philip Morkel married Catharina Pasman within months of the death in 1713, of his first wife Maria Biebouw. While this might appear unseemly hasty, a wife for a widower with a small child was almost a necessity. The question was rather, how did Philip manage to find a wife so quickly, in a community where males outnumbered females by a considerable margin.

Baptism records<sup>15</sup> show that Philip and Maria knew the Pasman sisters quite well. The oldest Margaretha, was witness in 1710 for the baptism of their first child Elisabeth, while the youngest sister, Sibella, was witness in 1712 for the baptism of their second child, Willem. It is likely that Maria and the Pasman daughters were childhood friends in the small community of Stellenbosch. Maria Biebouw and Catharina Pasman were baptised within a year of each other and most likely played together as children.

### **Philip probably suffered hearing loss** (*Index 4*)

As gunner aboard the ship Philip would have discharged cannons quite regularly. Probably more for signalling than in combat. After his service on the ships, he worked as gunner for the VOC at the Castle at the Cape. Wherever a ship arrived or departed cannons were often ceremonially fired, and it was also used for communicating. No ear plugs or earmuffs were worn and it is most likely that his hearing was affected by the cannon discharges. Philip was likely hard-of hearing for the remainder of his life.

---

<sup>15</sup> Familysearch