

A Tale of Two Families: DNA Investigation of the Families Van Tuyl and Van Tuyll van Serooskerken

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Summary

Most people named *Van Tuyl* in North America and The Netherlands trace their name's root to the village of Tuil (formerly Tuyl) on the north bank of the river Waal in the Dutch province of Gelderland. Their earliest known ancestor was *Heer Ghijsbrecht van Tuyl*, a 14th century knight and vassal of the Duke of Gelre.^{1,2} A significant number of Van Tuyls reside today in or near the village of Gameren on the south bank of the Waal, across from Tuil. They share a common ancestor – Ott van Tuyl (17th c.) – with most Van Tuyls in the United States, who are descendants of a single emigrant couple who left Gameren in 1662 and arrived in Nieuw Netherland in 1663.

As recently as the late 20th century, there was reason to think the family van Tuyl might be related to the family van Tuyll van Serooskerken, a distinguished noble lineage which has figured prominently in Dutch history. As explained by Jan

Groenendijk,³ this notion was rooted in several 19th century genealogies which claimed a connection between the two families dating back to the 13th century. But these genealogies cited no primary references and are today considered to be untrustworthy sources.^{4,5,6}

Nevertheless, the possibility of some relationship between the Van Tuyl and Van Tuyll van Serooskerken families – though highly doubtful - could not be completely rejected.

DNA Testing

Certain scientific discoveries of the late 20th century led to the availability, starting in 2000, of direct-to-consumer testing of the Y-chromosome, the packet of DNA passed directly from father to son. Though it is passed essentially unchanged in each generation, various mutations occur infrequently as the genetic code is imperfectly transmitted. Certain of these mutations,

¹ Van Tuyl, Rochus D., and J. N. A. Groenendijk, "A Dutch Van Tuyl Genealogy," in *A Van Tuyl Chronicle – 650 Years in the History of a Dutch American Family*, 1996. All genealogical information about the Van Tuyl family cited in this article is from this reference.

² For a family summary see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Tuyl

³ *A Van Tuyl Chronicle* pp. 475-479.

⁴ Polvliet, C. J., "Genealogie van het geslacht Van Tuyl van Serooskerken en van de overige uitgestorven taken van het geslacht Van Tuyll," Oisterwijk, Genealogisch-Heraldisch Archief, 1894.

⁵ Rietsap, J.B., "Wapenboek van den Nederlandschen Adel," vol. II, Groningen, 1887, pg. 230 ff.

⁶ Van Spaen, W.A., "Oordeelkundige Inleiding tot de Geschiedenis van Gelderland" [considered by Groenendijk to be a highly unreliable source].

called *Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms* [SNPs] have occurred but once in human history, are essentially irreversible, and have been carried forward for thousands of years by all descendants of the original mutant. In fact, most European men are descended from a single male ancestor and share his combination of SNPs – designated *haplotype R1b* – that distinguishes them from men in other continents, but not from one another. Certain groups of R1b descendants – in what are called *subclades* – have added more SNPs to their genomes, and the patterns of their SNPs can be used to distinguish between lines of descent dating back thousands of years. In Western Europe, two subclades dominate: those with a series of SNPs ending in SNP-P312 and those ending in SNP-U106.

More frequently-occurring mutations, called *Short Tandem Repeats* [Y-STRs] change value with a frequency measured in hundreds of years, and can be used to distinguish between families within genealogical times [hundreds of years]. By combining SNPs and Y-STRs, it can be determined with a high degree of certainty whether or not any two men share a common ancestor within tens of generations. This turns out to be a useful tool for genealogists seeking to prove or disprove common ancestry between men.

The VAN_TUYL DNA Project

Using the services of *Family Tree DNA* [FTDNA], and with the cooperation of three Van Tuyl males [1VT, 2VT, 3VT] and three Van Tuyl van Serooskerken males [1VTVS, 2VTVS, 3VTVS], I organized the VAN_TUYL Surname Project in 2011. Testing of Y-STRs showed the Van Tuyl men to be definitely related to one another with as many as 11

generations elapsed since the common ancestor – Ott van Tuyl (17th century). Similarly, the three VTVS men were definitely related to one another with 6 generations elapsed since the common ancestor - Frederik Christiaan Hendrik *baron* van Tuyl van Serooskerken (1742 – 1805).⁷

But it turns out that the family van Tuyl belongs to the R1b-P312 subclade, and the family van Tuyl van Serooskerken to the R1b-U106 subclade. This is definite proof that the two families are not related within genealogical times.

For both families, the Y-STR data revealed strongly selective signature patterns that can determine whether a man is, or is not, a descendant of the VT or VTVS common ancestor. Change from the ancestral haplotype, called R1b1a2a1a1, has occurred over the last 4000 years resulting in a pattern unique to the family. The following tables list the family haplotypes for the Van Tuyls and Van Tuyl van Serooskerkens:

Van Tuyl Family Haplotype: Terminal SNP = P312

Locus	R1b1a2a1a1 Haplotype		Van Tuyl Haplotype
HT Mode			
DYS-393	13	>>>>>>>	12
DYS-438	12	>>>>>>>	13
DYS-448	19	>>>>>>>	20
DYS-449	29	>>>>>>>	28
DYS-570	17	>>>>>>>	18
DYS-439	12	>>>>>>>	11
CDYa	37	>>>>>>>	38

⁷ All genealogical information on the family Van Tuyl van Serooskerken is from *Nederland's Adelsboek 2010*.

**Van Tuyl van Serooskerken Family Haplotype:
Terminal SNP = U106**

Locus	R1b1a2a1a1 Haplotype		VTVS Haplotype
HT Mode			
DYS-439	12	>>>>>>>	14
DYS-393	13	>>>>>>>	14
DYS-385b	14	>>>>>>>	16
DYS-447	25	>>>>>>>	26
CDY-2	37	>>>>>>>	41
DYS-460	11	>>>>>>>	10
DYS-458	17	>>>>>>>	16

Any future candidates seeking to establish membership in these families would need to match the family haplotypes shown in these tables for most of the markers shown.

A family tree showing the relationships between members of each family and between the two families is shown in Fig. 1. In the 130±35 generations since the common ancestor of the two families (~4000 years ago), different SNPs have emerged and different patterns of Y-STRs have developed in the two lines of descent, resulting in 14 to 16 Y-STR differences from the common ancestor for each of the descendants. But in both cases (VT & VTVS) the family haplotype listed in the above tables clearly identifies the three men of each family as being related to one another.

Why Do the Families Share a Name and Coat-of-Arms?

The previously-cited genealogies offer two theories:

1. Gijsbert van Tuyll, son of Hugo was born in 1259 (location not mentioned). Five generations later, his descendant Pieter van Tuyll (b. 1430), knight, Lord of Welland, bought in 1483 the Estate *Serooskerke*, dropped the name van Tuyll in favor of “van Serooskerke” at the same time he adopted the van Tuyl *wapen* (coat-of-arms) [!]. In 1600 his descendants resumed the use of the original family name, styling themselves *Van Tuyll van Serooskerke* [later *Serooskerken*].⁴
2. In 1369, Reiner van Tuyll, a descendant of Gysbert van Tuyll, knight of Gelre (d. 1343), left Gelre for Steenberg in North-Brabant. His descendant Pieter, knight and lord of Welland, was appointed minister to the English court of Edward IV and in 1482 purchased the manor of *Serooskerke* on the island of Schouwen in Zeeland. He thereupon dropped the name *van Tuyll*, styling himself *van Serooskerke*. About 1600, his descendants decided to resume the original name, and thereafter called themselves *Van Tuyll van Serooskerke*. This was later transmuted to *Serooskerken*.⁵

These claims were made by 19th century genealogists without any references to primary sources of documentation. Both proposed that the name *van Tuyl* was first dropped in favor of *van Serooskerke*, then re-adopted over 100 years later for reasons not apparent. *Both these theories implied a likely male-line relationship between the family van Tuyll van Serooskerken and the family van Tuyl*. Such a relationship has now been ruled out by DNA evidence.

Not mentioned by either of these sources was a document dated 1603, found in the archives of Slot Zuylen.⁸ This document was a written agreement between Willem van Tuyl van Bulckstein and Hendrik van Tuyll van Serooskerken (1574-1627) declaring they both had the same common ancestor, and therefore shared the family name and coat-of-arms. In 1995 dr. J. G. Smit proposed that this strange agreement involved a transaction, probably for money, between the Bulckstein and Serooskerken families.⁹ *This scenario therefore precludes a blood relationship between the families van Tuyl and van Tuyll van Serooskerken, a theory now supported – for the first time – by DNA evidence.*

The Smit theory is diagrammed in Fig. 2. It is bolstered by the official lineage for Van Tuyll van Serooskerken as published in Nederland's Adelsboek, 2010.¹⁰ The true founder of the VTVS family was Pieter Hugen Reinersz (d. 1492), the man who purchased the manor of Serooskerke and adopted its name as his own. His descendants were extremely successful in the 16th century. By 1603, Pieter's descendant [5 generations removed], Hendrik van Serooskerke, landed a prestigious position as diplomatic representative of Zeeland to the English court of James I. Such a position would benefit greatly from – and might even require – a family coat-of-arms. The family Van Tuyl van Bulckstein, resident in far-away Gelderland, was facing possible extinction of its male line in 1603, and undertook to sell the rights to use its *wapen* to the diplomat

from Zeeland. Both parties would have benefitted from this transaction.

The family Van Tuyl van Bulckstein may not actually have been related to the Van Tuyl patriarch, Ghijsbrecht van Tuyl of Deil. But it is very likely the two families, who shared members named Willem and who lived in the same village and used the same *wapen*, shared a common ancestor in Deil, where Bulckstein was located. So there may well be a tenuous connection – though not in modern bloodlines – between the family van Tuyl and the family van Tuyll van Serooskerken. We now know their common ancestor lived some 4000 years ago and the two families are no more related than any two European families selected at random.

Acknowledgements

The DNA project would not have been possible without the willing cooperation of the six men who provided samples for Y-chromosome testing. The records-based genealogies quoted for VTVS were from Nederland's Adelsboek 2010, a copy of which was provided by Hans-Willem van Tuyll. An electronically scanned version is available from the author upon request. And finally, the detective work of the late Jan van Tuyl, Rochus D. van Tuyl and Jan N. A. Groenendijk enabled us to understand not only the history of the family van Tuyl of Gelderland, but also revealed the findings of modern-day genealogists regarding the adoption of the Van Tuyl[1] name by the family Van Tuyll van Serooskerken.

⁸ Rijksarchief Utrecht (RAU), Huisarchief Zuylen (HAZ), nr. 890.

⁹ *A Van Tuyl Chronicle* pg. 478.

¹⁰ Thanks to Hand-Willem van Tuyll for the loan of the Adelsboek.

Phylogenetic Tree for *Van Tuyl* & *Van Tuyll van Serooskerken*

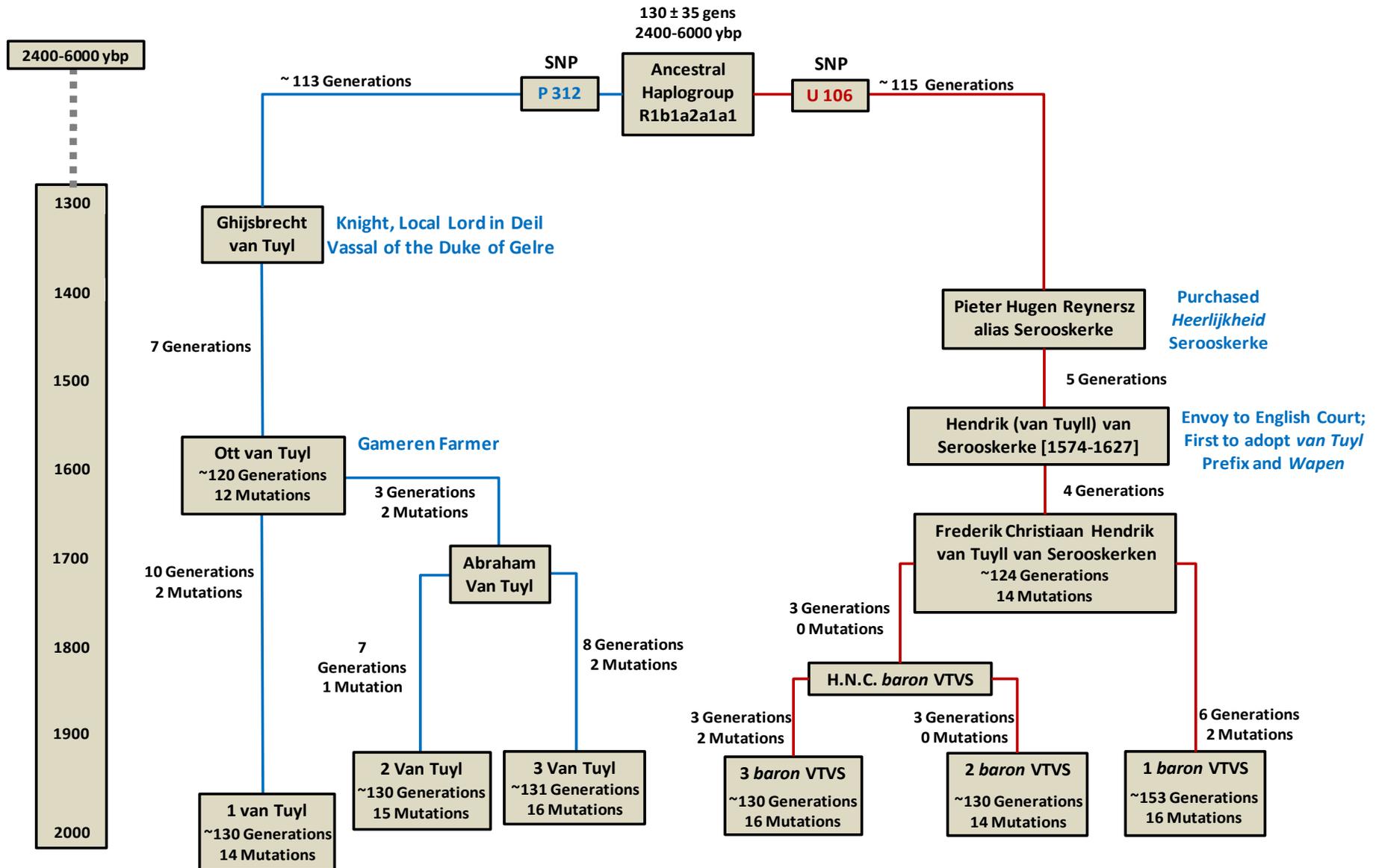


Figure 1: Phylogenetic Tree for the two families *van Tuyl*, showing the number of generations and Y-STR mutations for each branch. The two families are no more related than randomly-selected European men, sharing a common ancestor approximately 4000 years ago.

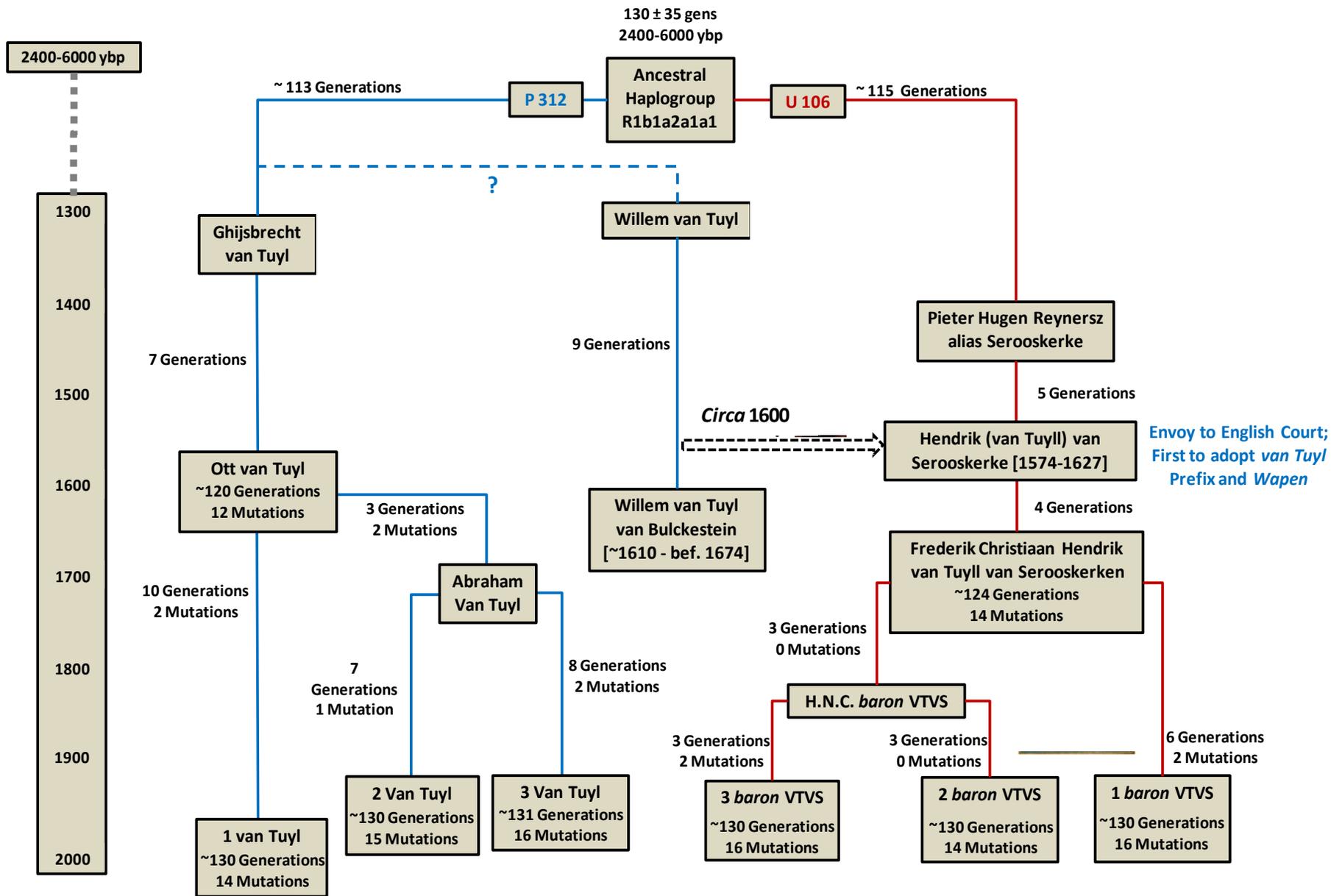


Figure 2: Phylogenetic Tree for the two families *van Tuyl*, with the addition of the extinct line *Van Tuyl van Bulckstein*. The connection between *van Tuyl* and *van Bulckstein* is not proven, but is likely. *Huis Bulckstein* was a stone house near Deil. It was demolished in 1788. Current theory is that Hendrik van Serooskerke purchased the *Van Tuyl Wapen* and name from Willem van Tuyl van Bulckstein around 1600.

Evolution of the Three-Hound *Wapen*

Van Tuyl



The original *Wapen* depicted three long-necked beagles with tongues hanging out emblazoned on a silver shield. It was used by various Van Tuyls in the 14th – 17th centuries.

Reference: Footnotes [11,12]

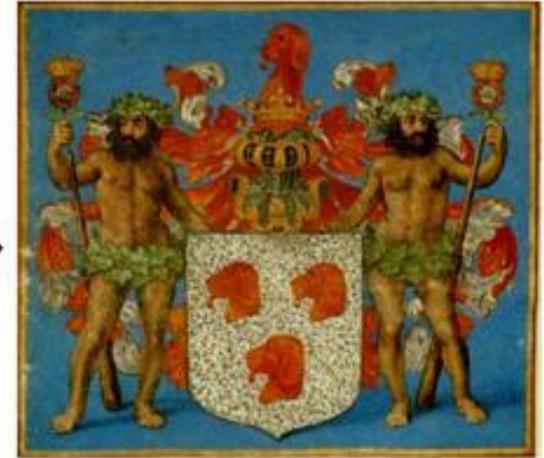
Van Tuyl van Serooskerken



In the 18th century, the *wapen* was embellished as shown in this 1781 example of the *Wapen* belonging to Willem Rene van Tuyl van Serooskerken, heer van Zuijlen.

Footnote [13]

Van Tuyl van Serooskerken



In 1814, after the VTVS family was first ennobled, the two “wild men” shield holders were added, signifying nobility, along with additional decoration.

Footnote [14]

¹¹ This image from a display in the Hervormde Kerk van Tuil, 1993

¹² Early use records discovered by W.H. Dingemans, as cited by Groenendijk and van Tuyl, “Een Amerikaanse Piraat van Gamerense Origine” in *Tussen de Voorn en Loevestein*, Dec. 1989, pg. 88, note 36.

¹³ Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Genootschap voor Geslacht- en Wapenkunde http://www.knggw.nl/Nieuw/dl_toon_index.php

¹⁴ From the records of Slot Zuylen:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wapen.jpg>

Also: Nederland’s Adelboek 2010, (Ta-Tw), pg. 406.