

Nico F. Declercq  
Kortrijk, Belgium

# The Desclergues of la Villa Ducal de Montblanc

First edition



A GENEALOGICAL, GENETIC AND HERALDIC  
JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY





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First Edition

Nico F. Declercq  
*Kortrijk, Belgium*

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This manuscript is written in comprehensible English to accommodate the international community. The author, Prof. Dr. Nico F. Declercq, is affiliated with The Georgia Institute of Technology, G. W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, 801 Ferst Drive, NW, Atlanta, GA 30332-0405, USA. His professional research on ultrasonics belongs to the International Research Laboratory IRL 2958 Georgia Tech - CNRS, George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, at Georgia Tech Europe<sup>1</sup>, 2 rue Marconi, 57070 Metz, France. Historical research forms the Humanities part of the author's research and is done outside the realm of his Engineering and Physics Research activities as Georgia Tech Professor. The family tree covered by this work is presented on MacFamilyTree®<sup>2</sup>, Geneanet®<sup>3</sup> and Ancestry®<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Georgia Tech Europe is also known as Georgia Tech Lorraine

<sup>2</sup><https://www.macfamilytree.com/NicoFDeclercq1975/> The password is DesclerguesMontblanc

<sup>3</sup><https://gw.geneanet.org/ndeclercq3>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/178462636/>

The author's multidisciplinary and international journey through history is specially dedicated to the talented student H. R. H. the Princess Leonor of Asturias and Gerona, the Duchess of Montblanc, and is humbly extended to H.M. King Felipe IV and his charming family.



**Figure 1:** *Sus Majestades los Reyes junto a Sus hijas Sus Altezas Reales la Princesa de Asturias y la Infanta Doña Sofía, © Casa de S.M. el Rey. / Estella de Castro (with permission, July 1st, 2020, La Casa de S. M. El Rey, Palacio de La Zarzuela, Madrid)*

*Il y a quelque chose de plus fort que la mort, c'est la présence des absents, dans la mémoire des vivants.*

Jean d'Ormesson at the Académie française, on June 6, 1974.



*As we look for new answers in the modern age, I for one prefer the tried and tested recipes, like speaking well of each other and respecting different points of view; coming together to seek out the common ground; and never losing sight of the bigger picture, Even with the most deeply held differences, treating the other person with respect and as a fellow human being is always a good first step towards greater understanding,*

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, January 24, 2019, and December 24 2018, respectively.

*Hablo latín con Dios, italiano con los músicos, castellano con las damas, francés en la corte, alemán con los lacayos e inglés con mis caballos,*

Emperor Charles V.

*Warning*

Every person is responsible for his achievements, mistakes and blessings. Our ancestors should be respected and understood. However, they should not be referred to as 'we', but as 'they' because their achievements, mistakes and blessings are theirs, not ours. Nevertheless, genetics and ancestry can tell us more about our inherited qualities. We often act in such a way as our ancestors had they encountered the same situations as ours. We are all valuable individuals, and we are blood-related to everyone on this planet. Even without a known ancestry, we all descend from the earliest inhabitants. A person's value is his own. We are all blessed with one chance to know and to become who we are. The chance is called 'life'. This book focuses, as much as possible, on individuals and facts, not glory. If any of the descendants of individuals described in this book wants to harvest treasure, he should mow his own, not his ancestor's. Likewise, the reader should not transfer blame nor glory from any person in this manuscript to descendants.

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*Der Wahrheit zu Theil ward, der nur ein kurzes Siegesfest beschieden ist, zwischen den beiden langen Zeiträumen, wo sie als paradox verdammt und als trivial geringgeschätzt wird.,*

Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung - Arthur Schopenhauer (Gdansk 1788 - Frankfurt 1860).





**Figure 2:** The Coat of Arms of Nico F. Declercq and his descendants. Artwork by Björn Fridén, Swedish Heraldic Artist. (Nico F. Declercq, © 2020, all rights reserved)



# Foreword

## 0.1 About this manuscript

An executive summary is provided in Part VIII on page 1201. This book is the result of years of curiosity. Many would label genealogy as a hobby, but it is never experienced that way for the author. Natural curiosity and the passionate search for truth and understanding reality is not a hobby but a way of life. The pursuit ended when sufficient insight was gained. Now, time can be made for other spare-time activities. The author's search for the true nature of the past and the different family lines that ultimately led to his birth was fiercely fueled after the arrival of his children. It is instructive for them to learn who their ancestors were. Beautiful trees have deep roots, and the author hopes that this book will contribute to the making of lovely people. However, knowing their ancestors is not enough. In life, one has to work hard to become who one can potentially become. A tree can only become beautiful and mature after many years of development. Therefore, it is appropriate always to hold the necessary modesty because no matter how special the path travelled, the road ahead is consistently steep and challenging. The realization of this book has only been possible through the temporary

discard of hobbies and other private activities close to the author's heart. However, it was necessary to complete this work. Thanks to this work, the author hopes that his children and his later descendants will be supported in searching for their identity. The age at which they will read this work will depend on the circumstances and their interests. But, whether it be in their youth or old age, they will appreciate it one day. The author wishes them, and anyone who takes the trouble to read the book, a warm welcome and invites them to embark on this long journey through time. It is essential always to remember that this is a book about people. Every ancestor is equally crucial. If one of them had never been born, we wouldn't have been here. Genealogy sometimes gives the impression that human life is limited to birth, marriage, having children and death. That's because we don't always have enough resources to reconstruct their lives. It is appropriate always to remember that every person in this book has walked a life path of happiness and misfortune, with success and adversity, joy and sorrow, in dark and happy times.

## 0.2 A few words about the author

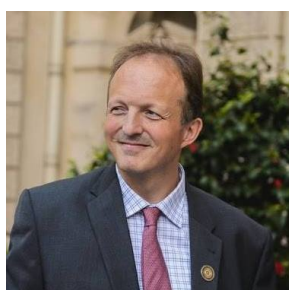
The author's professional achievements are summarized in chapter 66, at the end of this book. He is married with three children, born between 1999 and 2011. His roots are primarily Belgian, from the Flemish region, with a paternal bloodline originating in Spain, mainly in the Catalonia region, with ancient roots in France's Brittany region. His wife's roots are Sri

Lankan, with partial origins in Goa in India and Iberia. It's the author's belief that it would be inappropriate to gain money for a description of ancestors who have made their eternal journey a long time ago. Their life stories are theirs, and if anything we can do to remunerated them, it's merely by paying respect only.

## 0.3 The Author's Academic Background

None of this work has been sponsored, and none is of such nature that it is patentable and neither does it contain any material subject to export control. The work connects openly available knowledge, mainly in the public domain. For this reason, the contents of this work are made available free of charge, although the manuscript itself is subject to copyright and Authors'rights. The work was done in the author's free time, primarily in the weekend, but also late evenings as a convenient and interesting way to spend time after a hard day's work in hard science. The author is a professor in Mechanical Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology and has an academic background in Engineering Physics, General Physics and Astrophysics. Before going to college, he received a firm education in Belgium on many subjects, including history. Self-education followed for many years and continues. His Catholic University of Leuven Master's thesis in astrophysics contained several historical passages which he has investigated. During his Ghent University PhD, the author, who was working on ultrasonics for the nondestructive testing of fibre-reinforced composite materials, decided to combine his private interest in history with archaeo-acoustics as a part of his work.

Hence, he solved the mystery of sound interaction with the El Castillo pyramid's staircase in Chichen Itza in Mexico. Later, as a Georgia Tech faculty, he combined his interest in Greek history with the acoustics of the theatre of Epidauros and explained how the arrangement of the seat rows was the ultimate cause of the splendid acoustics of the construction. Meanwhile, as a hobbyist, the author investigated the history of Europe and, in particular, researched his family's past. When the author decided to bundle his reports to be preserved for his descendants, he decided to attempt scientific research that he had never tried before: ultraviolet fluorescence and infrared thermography. Therefore, without anticipation, his hobby became again entangled with his profession. To his surprise, science revealed the signature of his ancestor Antoni Desclergue on art made around 1639 AD. The work is found in chapter 59. Interest in art, religion, history, philosophy and science form merely facets of one inseparable person. For this reason, the author decided to publish this entire work without leaving out the scientific discoveries so that scientists, students, his friends and family and anyone interested in the described topics, can enjoy. The author equally uses the book to



**Figure 3:** The author. The picture was taken at the Travellers Club, 25 Av. des Champs-Élysées, Paris, France, in 2016.





**Figure 4:** When Georgia Tech had just hired the author in July 2006, he brought back some Yellow Jackets items for his children, a tradition which he has always respected upon each visit. (Declercq de Silva Archive)



**Figure 5:** Trees must have roots. To American students and foreigners studying in America, it's essential to understand the country's history in all its aspects. This picture was taken at Pigeon Forge in Tennessee, in 2006. (Declercq de Silva Archive)

express his profound appreciation for his fabulous students and will continue to open their minds and horizons by teaching them science and technology framed in a historical and global context. Creating future engineers is a real honour, and a contribution to their holistic personality is a pleasure.

The ideals of The Georgia Institute of Technology, and those of the United Nations, agree with the book's scope. Indeed, sustainability begins with an appreciation of what is and what has been. To preserve our planet, we must also protect and appreciate our history, diversity and culture. As a global institute, Georgia Tech stands for a community of intelligent, global-minded scientists and engineers who strive for integrity in a sustainable world. Therefore, apart from offering the best technical education globally, the Institute also offers international programs that focus on typical engineering and culture, language, history, and the world's geography.

Whether they take acoustics classes, thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, or signal analysis, the author's students frequently express appreciation for the historical anecdotes that appear from time to time during lessons.

We, therefore, believe that apart from some scientific content in this book and apart from some very specific micro-history related to the author's ancestors, the reader will appreciate the global historical contents as well and may use this work as yet another angle from which history can be observed and studied. It should enrich not only the minds of the author's children but of anyone reading this work.

Few investigators work simultaneously on science as a job and history as a hobby. Even fewer ever combine both. One exception is the first person who, in modern times, investigated the Desclergues from Montblanc. Indeed, Prof. José Sánchez Real was a professor in Chemistry and became well-known as an Archaeologist too. The author was utterly surprised when he learned about it from his curriculum in 2020. Indeed, it feels good to know that we are not alone.

The decision to publish this work fits into Georgia Tech's 2040 goals for deliberate innovation and lifetime education, particularly 'Whole-Person Education', 'A Distributed Worldwide Presence', 'Bridging Organizational Silos', to name a few. The contents of this work also agree with Georgia Tech's core values such as 'Celebrate an Inclusive, Diverse Community and Culture' and commitments, such as 'The Georgia Tech Commitment to a Lifetime Education', 'A Distributed Worldwide Presence', while striving for 'skilled individuals who can think and master complexities of a changing socio-economic climate and future workplace demands for future skills'. The deliberate innovation lifetime education report in April 2018 also makes the definitive statement that 'Future Georgia Tech learners will be much more heterogeneous. Cookie-cutter templates will be harder to come by as students mix and match course content, credentials, and

brand value to prepare themselves for jobs in industries that do not necessarily align well with stable disciplinary boundaries or recognizable curricula'. Of the 'whole person education qualities' identified by Georgia Tech, we can mention, in the context of this book, critical thinking, reasoning/argumentation, interpretation, integrity, appreciation for diversity, intellectual interest and curiosity, continuous learning, artistic and cultural appreciation, self-direction, communication, citizenship, self-preservation, collaboration, and teamwork.

Regarding Georgia Tech's Strategic Plan 2020-2030, this highly multidisciplinary work fits into the Impact Amplification section, in particular, the commitment to Infuse STEM disciplines with arts, humanities, and social sciences; strengthen the curriculum in areas that support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and create new multidisciplinary curricular pathways. Simultaneously, it also fits into the Global Connection strategy, in particular in the effort to strengthen our role as a convener of worldwide collaboration and build a global learning network to expand our reach and amplify our impact, and the intention of Preparing all Georgia Tech students to be cross-culturally competent, globally-minded leaders by embedding cross-cultural and global learning opportunities in all programs. We believe that all these excellent intentions begin with each individual member and will then further develop across our community.

This book is not a mainstream standard textbook that can be appreciated using the same weights and measures as other works. It forms a unique combination of insights and disciplines coagulated around one theme. The multidisciplinary of this work, in an effort to establish a complete history of the Desclergues of Montblanc, is therefore a consequence of a balanced combination of the following disciplines, with the book's title as the main storyline: Engineering, Palaeography, Genealogy, Belgian History, Spanish History, History of Education, French History, History of the Americas, Portuguese History, History of India, Metallurgy, Agriculture, Textile, Local History, Religion, Architecture, Art, Acoustics, Optics, Thermodynamics, Military History, Astronomy, Chemistry, Archival Research, Austrian History, Hungarian History, Spanish literature, French literature, Dutch literature, English literature, Latin literature, Portuguese literature, Colonialism, Sinhalese literature, Sri Lankan History, History of Navigation, Italian History, Genetics, Medicine, Chemistry, Maya script, Old French French, Modern French, Flemish, Dutch, old Latin, Ecclesiastic Latin, English, Old Castilian, Modern Spanish, Old Portuguese, Catalan, History of the arts, Economic History, Political History, History of Science, Women's History, World History, Medieval History, Modern History, Geography, Mineralogy, Ethnicity, Study of Law, Legal history, Fluid Mechanics, Oceanography, Heraldry, Taxation, Politics, Governance, Mathematics, Standards, Biology.





**Figure 6:** 2009, the author's children Anna-Laura and Benjamin at Georgia Tech. (Declercq de Silva Archive)



**Figure 7:** In the Spring of 2003, on this terrace, in Mack and Lou Breazeale's garden, Oxford MS, USA, the author expressed his desire to become a professor in the United States. Atlanta, the most prominent city nearby, was a natural choice, although there was also interest elsewhere. Lou insisted on Oxford because she thought of her beautiful town as the centre of the Universe. In the summer of 2006, he was hired by the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. The author took the nostalgic picture in 2012 at the end of Lou's life and three years after Mack had died. They considered themselves as the author's American grandparents, a mutual feeling. (Declercq de Silva Archive)

## 0.4 Pròleg

La família Desclergue és una dinastia de notaris de Barcelona i Montblanc. Aquest llibre tracta dels 'Desclergues' de Montblanc que van ser els responsables de la construcció de la famosa casa a la plaça Major de Montblanc i que porta el seu nom. Hem trobat proves rellevants, incloses les investigacions genètiques, que aquesta branca de la família Desclergue és descendent de Bertrand Du Guesclin (Beltran Claquin). Mereixen una especial atenció els tres fills de la família Desclergue que van marxar a Flandes (Bèlgica) cap a l'any 1600 com a soldats de l'exèrcit espanyol de Flandes. L'autor és descendent d'un d'aquests fills, Jeroni Desclergue. El seu fill Antoni Desclergue va ser el responsable de la construcció d'una capella a Deerlijk, on encara es pot trobar una imatge de la plaça Major de Montblanc. A més de les nombroses referències a la literatura i en documents històrics, aquest llibre també presta atenció a la investigació de l'ADN. Els resultats

d'aquesta investigació són coherents amb la resta de proves. El llibre li dóna molta rellevància al context històric en què van viure els Desclergues. També mostra com aquesta família catalana, juntament amb ciutadans espanyols d'altres regions, van participar en l'expansió per la resta del món de l'imperi espanyol, especialment al sud dels Països Baixos. El lector del llibre també fa un ampli recorregut per la història de Flandes i Bèlgica. Hi descriu tota l'evolució des dels Països Baixos de Borgonya fins a la Segona Guerra Mundial. L'autor es va sentir particularment honrat quan se li va permetre signar el llibre d'or de la vila, a l'Ajuntament de Montblanc. Uns 430 anys després que Jeroni Desclergue, avantpassat de l'autor, abandonés la Vila, aquesta acollida cordial va ser especialment reconfortant. L'autor se sent molt proper a les seves arrels montblanquines.

## 0.5 Prólogo

Este libro es el resultado de décadas de investigación histórica y genealógica sobre la familia Desclergue, procedente de Montblanc (provincia de Tarragona), la cual se ha visto recientemente enriquecida gracias a los estudios de ADN. El foco principal del análisis son los tres hijos de Bonaventura Desclergue, notario de la ciudad, quienes en torno al año 1600 partieron hacia Bélgica con el ejército Español de Flandes. En este libro se describen tanto sus paraderos en Flandes y las batallas en las que lucharon, como sus descendientes hasta la actualidad. Varios registros parroquiales y civiles muestran claramente cómo el apellido 'Desclergue' evolucionó a 'Declercq' en pocas generaciones. Se convirtió así en una familia flamenca, en un país donde el apellido Declercq lo llevan varios clanes no relacionados entre sí. El autor, descendiente directo de Jeroni Desclergue, hijo de Bonaventura, describe en detalle cómo la familia se mezcló con varios linajes locales de interés, tales como el de Charles Philippe de Patin, autor del libro Mare Liberum, en el cual se reclama el derecho austro-belga de acceso a alta mar en 1726. El libro también incluye testimonios históricos y científicos que prueban el hecho de que Antoni Desclergue, hijo de Jeroni, construyó hacia 1639 una capilla española en Deerlijk - un pequeño pueblo en Flandes Occidental, en Bélgica - con el objetivo de honrar a su padre, muerto en 1604 al final del Asedio de Oostende. Hoy en día todavía se puede admirar en dicha capilla una escultura barroca en

madera que representa la hermosa Plaza Mayor de Montblanc, en la cual se ven la célebre 'Casa Desclergue', al fondo, la iglesia de San Miguel. Entremezclados con la historia de Bélgica y acompañados de numerosas ilustraciones, se describen las alianzas de la familia, sus profesiones, contactos con escritores locales y mucho más. Esta historia demuestra los estrechos lazos entre la gente de España y Bélgica, los cuales siempre habían existido por motivos comerciales. Estos lazos se oficializaron en 1496 con el matrimonio de Felipe de Habsburgo, (llamado el Hermoso), Duque de Borgoña y nacido en Brujas; y Juana de Castilla, de la familia Trastámara. Varios capítulos de este libro se centran en la historia de la familia 'de Silva', a la que pertenece la esposa del autor, cuyo padre descendía de colonos hispanos asentados en Sri Lanka. Estos llegaron a la isla a través de Goa en India y establecieron el pueblo fortificado conocido como Uduwara, en el río Kalu Ganga, cerca de Kalutara. Investigaciones arqueológicas realizadas en Sri Lanka y Goa, junto a análisis de ADN, revelaron los orígenes de esta familia, ilustrando así la presencia global de españoles y portugueses a lo largo y ancho del globo. El texto original se ha escrito en inglés, con el objetivo de alcanzar a un público lo más amplio e internacional posible. Este trabajo, producido sin ánimo de lucro, describe un muy interesante pasado que se ofrece como regalo a jóvenes y futuras generaciones.

## 0.6 Voorwoord

Het 'Nederlands College Heraldiek'schreef, bij de registratie van het familiewapen van Nico F. Declercq en na onderzoek van de geleverde stamreeks: *Hij stamt af van Don Jeroni Desclergue*

*y Cortés, geboren in Montblanc in Spanje en overleden te Oostende in 1604, zoon van Don Bonaventura Desclergue y Cortés. Hij kwam als militair naar de Nederlanden in 1587. Hij huwde*

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