

# When Congo Wants To Go To School - The Subject Matter



Group photo of pupils in Bamanya, 1930. From MSC Archives

In the previous chapters, what was actually happening during lessons became dimly visible here and there. In this chapter this will be examined more closely. Learning in a class situation can be approached in many different ways. I assume in any case that a combination of various points of view is needed to achieve a picture of 'reality'. What was taught? This can be deduced from the content of curricula tested by the commentary in inspection reports. It can also be partially deduced from the subject matter in the textbooks used. How was this taught? This is actually a question of the pedagogical principles the missionaries adhered to: did they talk about this? Did these principles even exist?

## *What was in the curriculum?*

The curricula for subsidised missionary education have already been discussed in chapter two. By and large the period in question can be divided as follows, using the applicable curriculum guides: the period from 1929 to 1949, under the first curriculum (the *Brochure Jaune*), from 1949 to just after half-way through the 1950s, under the second (and third) curriculum and the second half of the 1950s, in which *métropolisation* was imposed (and, in principle, the Belgian syllabus should have been implemented). Apart from the fact that the transition between the different periods, especially between the second and third, is not very strictly defined, the first curriculum was noticeably enforced for the majority of the colonial period (taking the previously discussed proposal of 1938 into account). It

did not seem worthwhile to analyse the changes in lesson content between the curricula of 1929 and 1948 in detail. After all it is almost certain that there is no general and direct concordance between what was required in the curriculum guides and what was actually taught. The curriculum guides only gave minimal norms, general guidelines and guiding principles. Obviously, it did not include the detailed contents of lessons. The third and final reason was that the curriculum was fragmented in the guide of 1948 through the introduction of the distinction between the normal and 'selected' second grade. This made an orderly comparison more difficult. The evolution of the two curricula in the area of subject content will only be touched upon very briefly.

However, it did seem worthwhile to make a summary comparison of colonial and Belgian curricula, especially to try to counter a certain representation. Otherwise it might be assumed too easily that the education in Belgian Congo was no more than a kind of occupational therapy. The researcher and the reader are faced here with a very subtle balancing exercise. On the one hand, the intention is to discover the reality, or at least to try: the 'how' and 'what' of school reality in the past. On the other hand, it is necessary to articulate what almost everyone will be thinking automatically when reading a story of the period: namely that 'it wasn't the way it is now' and that the attitudes of a number of protagonists, namely the missionaries, were fairly 'old-fashioned', even 'primitive' or 'backward'.

Of course such an opinion seems suspiciously similar to remarks made by the missionaries themselves about the Congolese (which partly causes them) but this does not mean they should not be mentioned. Nor should they necessarily be attacked with moral judgements but, on the other hand, they should be interpreted. In the first instance it is of course only human to distance oneself in one way or another from events that happened in other places at other times. We must, of course, avoid falling into an a-historical position but the reaction itself is not an historical aberration, in the sense of 'very wrong at the time'. After all, in the same way the ideas of the missionaries are not to be considered as thoughts that 'should not really have been thought' and should have given rise to moral indignation. The foundations of the stance assumed in the colonial context are, after all, to be found in structures, positions and reactions in the home context of the colonisers. This can also be shown clearly in the context of the curricula.

The foundation for the colonial school curriculum must, after all, have come from somewhere. Intuitively, but also considering what was said before, it must be

clear that no curriculum was designed *ex nihilo* and it was certainly not based on African precedents. The seeds were brought from Belgium. A first, even diagonal reading of the *Brochure Jaune* of 1929 makes this very clear. Considering that the preparation for that curriculum had already started in the first half of the 1920s, it is interesting to make the comparison with the Belgian curriculum guide for primary schools dating from 1922. With this we can also refer to the societal context in which the Belgian curriculum of 1922 was situated. As Depaepe et alii have already remarked, moral and civil education were perceived by the authors of this curriculum guide as the core tasks of a primary school. The quote referred to in this context is particularly relevant and recognisable from the colonial educational situation: *“Primary school finds in itself its raison d’être; it is not created with the studies the pupils will do after that or the professions they could take up in mind; its aim is the same for all children entrusted to it: to prepare them as completely as possible for their destinies as man and citizen.”*[i]

The colonial translation of this was even more straightforward and stripped of the enlightened ideals that were included in the Belgian version. The remark cited above, made in the curriculum guide for the second grade, made this clear: *“Despite the selection which had been used during admission, not all pupils will go to special schools; thus they need to receive a training which is autodidactic and which educates men that are useful for their native environments.”* Or, as it would later be worded, in the curriculum of 1948, as one of the three essential goals of primary education: *“Provide an education which prepares all natives to live according to their proper genius, either in the ancestral environment or outside this environment.”*[ii]

### *1.1. The Brochure Jaune and the 1922 curriculum guide*

Primary school in the Congo comprised of five school years (2+3). A number of subjects were taught from the first to the fifth year. In the first place these were the basic subjects of religious education, reading, native language, arithmetic and geometric systems. Furthermore, hygiene, singing, drawing and gymnastics were taught in every year. For girls’ school, five years of sewing was added to this. French was optional in the first year. And finally there were three rather specific descriptions in the *Brochure*: the *intuition lessons*, *general causeries/conversations* and *manual work*. Geography was only taught in the second year. The course on theoretical agriculture only started in the third year. Finally, the curriculum of the second grade also prescribed handwriting or

calligraphy and in the last year of the second grade girls received a course on childcare.

The explanation of the content of these courses varied in length and detail. The *Brochure Jaune* contained only the briefest information on religious education as this was left entirely to the religious authorities. But other subjects were also dealt with very summarily, like handicrafts for example. Often a kind of minimum curriculum was stipulated with this for the first year, which was systematically referred to for the following years, with the remark that the curriculum needed further elaboration. Whether or not this caused, in theory at any rate, the basic curriculum to differ fundamentally from that of the Belgian primary school is the question. For example, the Belgian curriculum guide of 1922 also referred to the religious authorities for the concrete elaboration of religion and morality lessons. Language education, on the other hand, was described much more extensively and with more detail and surrounded with conditions. Rather than making a long and elaborate comparison of the two complete curricula, it is perhaps more worthwhile to highlight a few parts: first a main subject, mathematics and then a 'subsidiary subject', geography.

#### *1.1.1. Main subjects*

There are quite a number of parallels between the Belgian and the Congolese mathematics curricula of 1922 and 1929, respectively. In the Belgian curriculum, the pupils started by learning numbers from one to twenty. In the Belgian Congo, they only did this in the second year but the way in which the material was developed subsequently was similar. Similar systems were also used for teaching units of measurement. The basic principle here, as with mathematics, was apparently that the Congolese needed the first year to get used to the subject matter and would subsequently be able to assimilate more material at the same pace, year after year. Of course this meant that in the Congo education was stopped at the level reached in the fourth year in Belgium. As an illustration, a brief comparison is included of the subject matter as found in the *Brochure Jaune* and in the Belgian curriculum guide of 1922. It is clear that the Congolese mathematics curriculum was less extensive than the Western one, understanding that the limitation was largely due to a shorter period of primary education in general.

Congo:	Belgium:
1. Notion of and calculations with numbers from 1 to 5 and subsequently from 5 to 10. The four operations with these numbers. Small verbal problems.	1. Forming, naming and intuitive and numerical rendering of the numbers from 1 to 20. The four operations, combined, on these numbers. Applications and problems.
2. Study of numbers from 1 to 20. The four operations. The dozen. Small verbal problems. Roman numerals.	2. The same study of the numbers from 20 to 300. Multiplication tables and dividing the numbers from 10 to 100 by the first 10 numbers.
3. Repetition of the first 20 numbers. Study of numbers from 20 to 100. Multiplication tables and division of the numbers up to 200 by numbers from 1 to 10. From a tenth to a hundredth.	3. Repetition of the material covered. Forming, naming and rendering of the numbers from 100 to 1000. Tens, hundreds and thousands. The four main operations. Fractions.
4. The numbers up to 1000 and the four operations with them. Calculating 273, 348, etc. Calculating thousands. Verbal and written problems. The notion of purchase, sale, profit and loss.	4. Practical knowledge of whole and decimal numbers. The four main operations on these numbers. Ordinary fractions.
5. The four operations on the whole and decimal numbers to 10 000. The simple rule of three. Interest calculation.	5. Calculations with whole and decimal numbers. Exact quotients to the tenth, hundredth, thousandth. Divisibility by 2 and 5; by 4 and 25; by 8 and 125; by 9 and 3. Elementary theory of ordinary fractions. Converting fractions into decimal numbers. Rule of three. Profit and loss in percentages. Simple interest calculation.
	6. Revision of material. Multiplication and division of fractions. Calculation of an average. Concept of a savings and pension fund.
	7 and 8. Revision of material. Roman numerals. Algebra.

## Comparison of the mathematics curriculum in the Brochure Jaune and the 1922 Belgian curriculum guide.

Is mathematics a measure for the other subjects? It seems logical to assert that mathematics has a somewhat more objective basis for comparison than other subjects. With this I mean that as far as mathematics is concerned there was not likely to be any pupil's foreknowledge that differed from what was to be taught (which was the case for a language course, for example), though it must be noted that education experts in the 1950s had objections to this. For example, it was remarked in 1955 in the *Revue Pédagogique Congolaise* that young Congolese found it harder than the Belgians to grasp geometric forms.[iii] They grew up in a very different environment, after all, and in their early years they had only been confronted with flowing lines, while the straight lines of geometric figures were totally alien to them. This is in contrast to the Belgian child that grew up in an environment full of straight-lined figures and abstract concepts.[iv] "So, the European child is introduced at all times to the mathematical and geometric universe of the West. He hears people talking about numbers, hours, minutes, right and left. About countless objects with various shapes which have a set place in him." According to the authors, the result of these things (including other areas and subjects) was a discontinuity between the natural first experiences and the subject matter taught at school.

The solution, however, lay in the systematic implementation of the Western

education system through the further development of nursery education. On the opposite side we have the testimonial of Vertenten, who was already writing about the mathematical ability of his students in 1928: *"If they come to the higher course they need to be good at mathematics and writing and for mathematics they need to know the four main operations well with whole numbers. That is the basis. From that I have, in a fairly short time, been able to teach them the following:*

Can the same mechanisms be found in the other subjects? The other main subject, native language, is harder to study in a comparative perspective. The Congolese curriculum guide itself stipulated explicitly that the education should not be too literary, especially not in rural schools (the first grade of the curriculum). One result of this was that the curriculum stayed on the sober side on this point. After a somewhat more extensive explanation for the first year, in the division *lecture* the text was largely limited to the designation "*lecture courante*", from the fourth year "*lecture expressive*". Handwriting was only taught in the second grade, as mentioned above. A comparison with the Belgian curriculum guide is impossible here because the native language took a very central role and was the most extensively covered of all subjects. It was divided in various subdivisions like grammar, composition, pronunciation, etc.

### *1.1.2. Other subjects*

However, the cited mechanisms did apply to other (subsidiary) subjects. Geography was only taught in the second grade according to the *Brochure Jaune*, whereas in Belgium it was provided for in the curriculum guide from the first year onwards. In the first grade however, it only consisted of an initiation into geographic observation. This comprised very simple lessons about the most important geographical information, taught very concretely and without definitions. The curriculum guide further stipulated that this material would, in the first year, be part of the exercises in rhetoric during the native language lessons (about which no further details can be found in the paragraphs concerned). Of course, in the Congolese curriculum nothing was mentioned about this because geography was not taught in the first grade.



Cover and first three pages of Etsify'okili: geography textbook from 1957, compiled by the MSC Frans Maes. This textbook was written for use at the mission school in Flandria. Honoré Vinck, Lovenjoel.

In the *causeries*, for example, in the second year the *accidents géographiques de la region* had to be discussed as well as natural phenomena like night and day, wind, rain, thunder and lightning. In practice it also happened that geographical concepts were discussed in the reading lessons.[vi] The subject matter for the second year was more parallel in the curriculum. As in the Congo, the emphasis in Belgium was also placed on simple concepts, starting from the pupil's concrete living environment. One would leave the classroom and go and explore the world outside in increasingly larger 'circles': the school, the village, the town, the region, etc. As appears from the example reproduced here (figure 1), this was also put into practice by the MSC. The world opened up for the boys through their own classroom, the school building, the football field and... the church.

The worldview that the young Congolese retained from their geography lessons finally did remain more limited than that of their Belgian counterparts. While in Belgium the borders were crossed to neighbouring countries in the second year, for the Congolese the world outside the Congo was limited to Belgium.[vii] Of

course this was not to be considered a foreign country. Some parallels between both curricula can be taken fairly literally. In the fourth year in the Congo, for example “*A few big trips on the sphere*” were studied. This was also to be found literally in the Belgian curriculum guide for the second year. However, there it was specified which voyages of discovery were meant exactly, something for which there was no place in the Congolese curriculum. ‘Belgium’ was covered but only in the second year. The history of the occupation of Congo was on the curriculum in the fourth year. Further geographical concepts concerning the ‘motherland’ were only covered in the last year but it was a very selective approach: “*Situation, some cities, rivers, railways (length), some information about the richness and the activities of the Belgian population, the Belgian royal family.*”[viii] In other subjects the issue of ‘Belgium’ was not covered *a priori*.

### 1.1.3. *Causeries*

The Congolese curriculum further contained the subject *causeries*. These were lessons during which the teacher had to tell educational or edifying stories. It was more or less an extension of what was called “Moral and citizen formation” in Belgium. However, the formulation of the content of the *causeries* in the 1929 brochure is revealing in itself and contains in itself a colonial curriculum. In the five years of primary school the following were to be covered in succession:

Attitude in the classroom, in church, in the street, in the village, relationship with fellow students, school rules, people, things and scenes from their own environment; first notions of politeness.

1. Politeness: respect towards civil and ecclesiastical authority; aiding elders or the weak; tenderness towards animals; geographic layout of the region and natural phenomena.
2. Role of Europeans in the country; habits and practices of the country; politeness.
3. Habits and practices of the country: superstition, bad influence of magicians; natural phenomena: lightning, hail, earthquakes, eclipses, the dangers of alcohol consumption, the use of hemp and other narcotic plants.
4. The most important stipulations from the decree on the *chefferies*;<sup>[ix]</sup> obligations of the population concerning censuses, taxes, militia; most important legal stipulations concerning firearms, hunting, alcohol, hemp and gambling.



In comparison: the Belgian curriculum guide of 1922 summed up in a number of points the various 'obligations' that the students had to be taught. In the first and second years this mainly related to individual and generally altruistic virtues, such as cleanliness, caution, order, regularity, moderation, dignity (individual) and respect, goodness, servitude, friendliness (altruistic). In the third and fourth years so-called "national" education was taught, as well as professional obligations: "*The work considered in the company; the solidarity of workers. Requires conscientious work. The employment contract: obligations of employers and workers. Mutual support in the professions.*" The principles and values touched upon in both curricula were thus not very different, often they even corresponded remarkably well. Yet there was a difference: in the case of the Congolese it seems as though fewer words have been wasted, the tone is slightly firmer and the content was more geared to the acceptance of authority. Finally, the inclusion of a number of issues like "superstition" and "hemp use" were certainly dictated by local circumstances.

### *1.2. The position of girls*

Finally the explanation about moral and civil formation in the Belgian brochure of 1922 also contained a number of extra paragraphs with considerations about girls and women, under the heading "*Observations*". The moral education in girls' schools should be aimed at aspects of home and family life. This concerned the role of young women in their family and the relationship with other family members (parents-in-law); how to become a good housewife; the qualities of the young woman in the household: politeness, foresight, charm, simplicity, equanimity, goodness and devotion. And the most important fault to be avoided: nosiness! Further, marriage had to be considered, its preparation and, of course, the manner in which a woman should function in a marriage. Finally, children also had to be considered, as well as everything involved therewith.

There was not really a specific section devoted to girls' education in the *Brochure Jaune*. Girls' schools would only be treated separately from the first year onwards in the 1938 curriculum. The brochure did however devote some attention to the domestic science school and in that context female concerns or subject matter were of course specifically covered. In the 1929 curriculum, the domestic science school was still a rural economics school, which in itself is revealing as to the social position of woman in the eyes of the colonisers. This education would last three years. The only classes of general education during the time were French

(optional) and *Arithmetic and Metric systems*, in which subject matter from primary school was mainly repeated and how to keep small household accounts was taught. The course *Hygiene* also consisted of material already covered, with additional classes in childcare. Besides this, agriculture, housekeeping and *conversation* were provided as subjects. The last two received considerably more attention than the other subjects in the brochure. Of course, a wide variety of practical activities and abilities were covered in housekeeping. In the *Causeries* the following topics were to be treated: “*The role of the woman in the family; to insist on financial matters and the foresight she will have to show; thoroughly combating the blacks’ tendency to excessive eating and drinking when abundantly available, of having big parties in order to display their resources; to combat the customs, the harmful practice of religion, customs and practices to which, in general, women are more attached than men; to be responsible for caring for and educating children.*”[x] To this it was only added that these lessons should be played out as much as possible in the field, on the farm, in the kitchen and in the workshop. The teaching method suggested in the curriculum was that the pupils would afterwards return to the classroom and, under guidance from the teacher, write down what they had just learned.

One conclusion is evident: women were clearly treated differently, both in Belgium and in the colony. In both cases they had to fulfil a specific role and needed preparing for it. In both cases they had to fulfil extensive domestic tasks. Apparently, their roles had to be described far better and more precisely than those of men. Typically this was worded with far less circumlocution in the colonial context. In Belgium, an extensive description was used to express that other things were expected from women, although there was no underlying image of equality. In the *Brochure Jaune*, on the other hand, it was asserted without too much ado that women were more ‘susceptible’ to certain deficiencies or faults. More generally it can be posited – whether concerning boys’ or girls’ schools – that from the outset the curriculum of the colonial primary school corresponded to the image of a small lapdog being dragged on a lead by its owner: it follows in the same direction but can never keep up, let alone catch up with its owner.

### 1.3. The 1948 curriculum

The reform implemented in the 1948 curriculum has already been discussed in the first chapter. One consequence of the increasing contribution of the administration in the organisation of the education was, among others, that

organisation and subject content were discussed in separate brochures from then on. Despite this, subject content was left relatively undisturbed, even though twenty years had passed since the implementation of the previous curriculum. This was certainly the case for the first grade and the ordinary second grade. There were not really any new subjects. The curriculum guide did now include an "*observation exercises* " section but this simply seems to have been a new name for what was previously called "intuition lessons". The French lessons were described in more detail but it was emphasised that it should be "very simple teaching".

In the 'selected' second grade, the subject content was further elaborated and other priorities were imposed. French lessons were given a prominent place, immediately after religion and the native language. Fairly detailed guidelines were given, more than for any other subject, while it remained a subject as any other in the normal second grade. The theoretical agriculture lessons underwent the opposite fate: they were completely central in the normal second grade and were abandoned in the selected second grade. A section on "manual work" was kept but formulated very concisely. The same trend extended into the second and third year. A "*professional*" subject, with a practical impact, existed for the normal second grade. The biggest difference, of course, was in the fact that the selected second grade was a year longer than the normal one. In the last year, as was the custom, a great deal was repeated but a large portion of new material was also added.

### *The curriculum in practice*

How much of the curriculum was actually implemented in the classroom? There are two ways of finding out more about the content of the lessons. Both ways give a kind of 'side-view' and must for that reason be used in a complementary way. On the one hand there are the inspection reports, which have already been dealt with extensively. On the other hand there are the colonial schoolbooks. The colonial schoolbooks offer insight into the selection made by the teachers. The schoolbook, like the curricula, does not of course represent reality. They both mainly say how things should be. Even so, we can employ these types of sources here because the books are also the product of a specific context. Thus they can present parts of the atmosphere and intellectual reality. To that I wish to attach the educational convictions of the missionaries, inasmuch as they existed and were expressed.

### 2.1. Inspections

In the earliest inspection reports only scarce information is to be found on the subject matter. Of course, this is linked to the absence of binding rules concerning subject matter, curriculum and inspection. The earliest official documents I found date from 1927. In addition, there cannot have been any inspections much earlier because the missionaries were only there from 1925. The first curriculum proposal also dates from then. But reports from before the implementation of the curriculum of 1929 do exist. In a report from 1927 about the girls' school in Coquilhatville, it was pointed out that the school was only in its first year. The girls had never previously received any school education. The Sister herself remarked rather optimistically: *"Over the 1 year the school has been open, we have already noted real progress."* What exactly was happening at this time was not so important but it is certain that sewing was done and the garden was worked in. Besides this no real intellectual activity can be detected. It was reported that the children had not yet been able to sit exams and further that *"In order to obtain discipline we first applied exercises of order and discipline, while marching to rhythmic songs."*[xi] The Daughters of Charity insisted on discipline. They considered that the morality of their girls had deteriorated under the influence of their environment and they attached by far the greatest importance to discipline and zest for work. The following school year they also reported, after listing all the problems, that: *"Meanwhile, despite the problems, we noted great progress amongst the children as far as discipline is concerned as well as work."*[xii] Oddly enough the report does refer to an *official curriculum* that was supposedly being followed. Jardon, the travelling inspector, also frequently referred to an official curriculum.

In the reports about the mission activity in this period, it is clear that the education was not yet bound to a structured curriculum. On Sunday afternoon, the Sisters 'welcomed' all the children: *"We welcomed all the children, both the young and older ones, that came to us. We used our time for different exercises: prayers, songs, games."* A few years later this already produced some results because the report of 1930 informs us that a choir had developed from the Sunday meetings and that learning new songs was much easier, since most of the children could now read. As well as the actual school activity, which was only discussed very briefly, a *"tailoring school"* was also referred to. This meant that four out of five days, the pupils were occupied with sewing for two hours. They covered needlework, crocheting, knitting and making clothes. The clothes they

made themselves were given back to them at the prize draw. The children at the nursery school made plaits with raffia.[xiii]

In the report about the schools at the various mission posts which Vertenten provided for the state inspector in 1929, he only deals with a number of subjects briefly. Mostly he mentioned handiwork, sewing, mathematics and religion. Nothing was said about the content of these subjects; indeed, there was not enough space on the pre-printed forms for this.[xiv] In a report about the second grade of the boys' school in Bamanya, from 1929 or 1930, he referred to the *Brochure Jaune* for the first time. The lessons had been 'inspired' by the curriculum brochure. It appears that here the official instructions were not experienced as particularly obligatory either. It is not too clear what guidelines were used exactly. Probably they were from the organisational project of 1925, even though this was not an official, legally binding text. The *project* fitted into the framework of agreements made between the mission congregations and the government from 1925-1926. Via this detour, the text was probably seen to be a legal guideline anyway.

Hulstaert also referred to a curriculum in September 1928. He said that the primary school in Flandria had organised three school years. In the first year, reading and writing were taught. In the two following years mainly mathematics was taught, at various levels. The implementation of the provided curriculum had not worked yet. This would only be possible step by step, according to Hulstaert. The provincial inspector, Jardon, also referred to "*the curriculum*" in two reports from June 1929. In Bokuma, this curriculum was followed meticulously for all subjects. In the report on Wafanya, Jardon gave slightly more information: "*For religious education, reading, writing and the local language, the students have the right level. As far as arithmetic is concerned I notice a rather considerable progress but the fundamental notions are insufficiently known.*"[xv] Moreover, the missionaries did not have enough control over the moniteurs and the main result of this was that the subsidiary subjects were neglected. Presumably, the curriculum of the *Brochure Jaune* was already being referred to here. The definitive text supposedly dates from 1928, though it was only published in 1929. However, the indications in the reports are not really decisive on this point.

In his inspection report of 1930 about the Sisters' school in Coquilhatville, Vertenten concluded that it was not surprising that the pupils stayed below the level of the curriculum. The school, as is clear from the report, was only in the

first stage (the first year) and had to struggle with the low level of the staff and the poor language ability of the Sisters, as well as the material problems mentioned earlier. Vertenten only referred explicitly to language, mathematics and religion and made a very brief reference to geography in the fourth year. The children were learning to read and write French, though this was not the intention. The mathematics lessons also took place in French. The Sisters who taught in the second grade had no command of the local language but even the moniteurs who taught in the first grade – under the supervision of the Sisters – taught mathematics in French. The situation was probably of such a nature that the inspector, who praised the Sisters extensively, was already happy that there was a school that functioned on a regular basis at all.[xvi] In the rural schools, in any case, there was also no mention of complete teaching activities. In the report to the education inspection in 1932 this was worded rather more optimistically: *“One should not lose sight of the fact that in numerous villages Christian education existed where thousands of children received religious education and learned to read, write and do mathematics at the same time.”*[xvii]

In a report about the girls’ school in Bamanya, Sister Auxilia gave a detailed overview of what exactly the curriculum represented at the school. At that time there were 96 girls. A moniteur taught the three first years, the two higher years were taught by a Sister. Sister Auxilia (who was headmistress of the school) gave a whole list of subjects in her report. For each, she indicated what material was taught in which year. It shows clearly where the emphasis lay:

Religious education was taught every day in every class, the Sister wrote: *“1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the minor catechism, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the major catechism.”* A division was made depending on the nature of the lessons: Father Jans explained, the moniteur taught “teaching and explanation” and Sister Auxilia herself taught baptism preparation classes and provided Holy Communion after morning mass. She referred to the catechism pictures as her teaching tool: *“Next year a new series of pictures (for each child separately) will be used. Catechism in pictures with the catechism of HG Cardinal Gasparri.”* And finally: *“In the 3rd, 4th and 5th years, children practice writing questions without mistakes.”* There was also a separate subject “Biblical history”. Here pictures were also used but it was taught completely by moniteurs: *“A great emphasis is placed on the lively but unaffected transmission of lessons. 4th and 5th also take notes on the classes, aided by questions.”*

Writing took place according to the method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In order of class the following was on the curriculum: *“1st: letters with small connections of consonants and vowels (pencil), 2nd: all letters and small words (calligraphy in ink), 3rd: capitals, 4th and 5th: capitals and exercises for fluent and regular writing.”* Apparently there had been dissatisfaction with the results of these lessons in the past (from Hulstaert) and so the Sister pointed to the fact that special attention had been paid to this, with good results.

For reading, Hulstaert's reading method was used. The Sister spoke of “the first and second book”, which refers to the *Buku ea njekola I and II*, the reading books published by Hulstaert in 1933. It is striking that every year was started with the first book. The higher the class, the further one got. In the fifth year the pupils worked through the first book and a part of the second, *“as well as other literature”*. Later, Alma Hosten also described a similar system.[xviii] However, also in the lower classes *“the 1st and 2nd books by the English were used alternately. From the 3rd year onwards attention is paid to reading tone and the natural rendering of the subject matter in their own indigenous manner.”* So English books from Protestant congregations were also used, which Vinck later confirmed.[xix]

The sister was quite brief concerning mathematics: *“1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year: according to the curriculum. 3<sup>rd</sup> idem except for the decimal system. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5th: all calculations up to and including 1000. 5<sup>th</sup> went over 1000 but no particular value was attached to this.”* (...) *“A great emphasis is placed on sums of the metric system, particularly calculations with francs, of which especially also the way of writing was studied.”*

In language education a distinction was made between various parts. It certainly related to Lomongo.

- grammar lessons: *“typed courses by P. Hulstaert.”* (...) *“The higher classes are behind because we have only had the books 1.5 years - and because the material was so unfamiliar both to us and the moniteurs.”*
- dictation: *“for all classes in proportion to their knowledge.”*
- style: *“writing out by heart a song learned, with points of departure for discussing objects, customs, situations, etc.”*
- *“style and conversation lessons or general development classes converge here. Here the children are given the opportunity to explain their own songs, dances or*

*games and so when it comes to learning plays, the children can express their opinion freely and frankly instead of slavishly accepting what we tell them when they don't agree with us in their hearts."*

About gymnastics: *"The same principles are used for gymnastics and dancing. The European way had to yield to the typically indigenous way. The rhythmic movements connected to Congolese conceptions and understandings are the material for beautiful expressive movements. The blacks find their own dances beautiful, really beautiful, but performed as one coherent whole and in order. In this way, with her own singing, her beloved ngomo, gymnastics keeps its appeal for the children and they still receive all the movements of head, hands, feet and torso. Next year we hope to stimulate the children to take part in games, such as rounders, handball, korfbal – also for passing the time on Sunday afternoons."*

Then a few shorter statements follow. French was barely mentioned: *"for the three highest classes, spoken French – very little or nothing is written."* About singing only this was noted: *"melodies by Ghesquiere and Hullebroeck are taught."* Drawing was also only briefly mentioned: *"The children made sketches, without the use of a ruler or compass."* The geography lessons were taught in the two highest classes and were limited to very general concepts: *"General concepts, continents, oceans. The provinces of Congo and their capitals – further the physical division; the Congo river and its side rivers, the lakes, etc. From Tsjyapa, division with prominent places."*

The last item was sewing and this was also treated most elaborately. It was taught in all classes, two afternoons from three to five. Seen relatively, this was rather a lot but the attention devoted to it by the Sister in the report does seem out of proportion. While a total of three pages were devoted to all the other subjects, this subject took up about one whole page, in which a detailed description was given for every year and every object the pupils had sewed, crocheted and knitted.

So sewing was the dominant element on the curriculum. Oddly enough, not a word was said about agriculture in this report. From an inspection report of 1938, five years later, it appears that the same school devoted seven and a half hours a week to "practical agriculture lessons", namely every day from seven until eight in the morning and one afternoon from three thirty until five in the afternoon. Other practical activities became more important depending on how the girls



progressed with their studies. Sewing lessons were taught for two hours in the first year but in the last (fifth) year, it already occupied four and a half hours. "Homework" (housekeeping) went from half an hour to an hour and a half.

According to a document from 1939, the causeries in the first and second year had to cover the following issues: *"Hunting and, in connection with this, the most notable animals and their way of life. Fishing and, in connection with this, the seasons. Swimming, the healthy but also the damaging things for the body. Dancing, the good and bad dances, pointing to the dangers of the latter, the stimulation of folk dances and games. The dead, mourning, the dance, the burial. Drinking, moderate drinking, drunkenness as a scandal, damages the health. Smoking and chewing tobacco, unfitting for girls, damaging to the health, bad for the teeth. Encouraging love for the monarchy through photos, stories, the flags of Belgium, Congo and the Papal flag, the benefit of becoming acquainted with the state in its various workings and institutions. Politeness in general, why we should be polite, politeness in church and at religious ceremonies, courtesy in oneself through order and neatness of dress, taking heed of one's expressions wherever one goes, in all one's doings, while eating, towards parents and elders, etc."*

Father Cobbaut, who inspected the school in 1946, only made a short report and only mentioned in it that, in all classes, all subjects were regularly taught and that they were all generally well known. So there is not too much information to be gained from this. At the domestic science school (which was on a higher level than the primary school) the curriculum was, at that moment, neatly divided into two: in the morning the pupils in groups of two or three carried out all possible sorts of housework in turn. The afternoon was reserved for theoretical instruction. Based on the timetable used in all schools, this of course meant that only a minimal amount of time was devoted to the theoretical education.[xx]

Sister Auxilia again in 1947: *"The morning periods are devoted to housework like mending sheets, tights, socks, sewing and patching children's, women's and boys' clothes, washing, ironing, starching, folding, native and European cuisine, domestic chores, further sewing, tooling tree bark, raffia. This year a new kind of embroidery with raffia was undertaken, namely filet in raffia, very beautiful, if the children become skilled at it. In the theory classes, apart from the revision of the ordinary school subjects and religious studies, the main subjects taught are: hygiene, agriculture and cattle breeding, home economics, childcare, etiquette classes and other development classes, French lessons and drawing paper*

*patterns. 1 x a week the girls worked in their gardens with great diligence.*" Further, every morning the land was worked (probably outside the framework of the lessons). The government inspection thought this was far too little. The inspector actually only had remarks concerned with the time spent on agricultural activity. At the primary school this was better than elsewhere, given that there at least the ordinary portion of morning labour was on the curriculum. Meanwhile, the pupils of the last year of the second grade worked in the kitchen, *"and as a result they did not devote themselves to any rural work."* The domestic science school was a complete disaster: *"Meanwhile at the rural economics school, the timetable is not well balanced and does not leave enough time for agricultural work"*[xxi] Also in a report Hulstaert wrote in 1944, the smallest part of theoretical subjects appeared in the timetable of the domestic science school. According to him only two afternoons a week were filled with other than practical subjects. In this short time religion, mathematics, reading, writing and theoretical revision of the practical work were taught.[xxii]

1 <sup>st</sup> grade 1 <sup>st</sup> year	1 <sup>st</sup> grade 2 <sup>nd</sup> year
catechism 6 x 45 min.	catechism 6 x 45 min.
bible 3 x 15 min.	bible 2 x 15 min.
French reading 6 x 45 min. writing 30 min. declamation 15 min.	French 5 x 45 min. declamation 15 min.
mathematics 6 x 60 min.	mathematics 5 x 45 min.
Lonkundo 3 x 45 min.	Lonkundu grammar 2 x 30 min. reading 4 x 30 min.
hygiene 15 min.	hygiene 15 min.
geography 15 min.	geography 15 min.
	writing 3 x 15 min.
	drawing 45 min.
	gymnastics 30 min.

Timetable for the first grade  
Bamanya boys' school (1944).  
Aequatoria Archive.

Hulstaert also inspected the boys' school in Bamanya in 1944. In the light of what will be said later about the conflicts between Hulstaert and the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who ran this school, it is not surprising that he added the necessary measure of criticism to this. The official curriculum was followed and not that of the *Brochure Jaune*. The extent of the difference in how the timetable was filled is clear from the reproduced summary given by Hulstaert in his report for the first grade. The timetable for the second grade was presented less clearly and could not be reconstructed completely. From the timetable of the first grade

it is clear that the emphasis was on French, not on Lonkundo, which troubled Hulstaert a great deal, of course. The other subjects (hygiene, geography) were taught for a great part in French and so he wrote in the report: *"The courses are almost entirely devoted to French and mathematics."* The *Causeries* also served primarily for practicing French.

There were a few other deviations from the normal curriculum, which Hulstaert had used systematically as his norm, even though the Brothers had in this case chosen to use a different curriculum. *"It is noticeable here that from the first year the curriculum (with respect to mathematics, JB) of the state schools is used, not that of the Catholic schools (however that has not even been changed in the new plan of 1938 in the sense of the official programme). Whatever the reason may be for accepting the state curriculum, I believe that the curriculum is made to be followed and must not be changed on one's own authority."* For example, no intuition classes were taught here, even though according to Hulstaert this was *"one of the most important educational subjects on the curriculum"*. This school also made time available for agricultural activity, but not very much: only an hour and a half or an hour and forty-five minutes a week. Sometimes midday "studies" were devoted to gathering small pieces of firewood or leaves. The pupils needed these to prepare their food. All in all this came down to a *"considerable deviation from the subject and hour divisions proposed by the government brochures"*. [xxiii]

The fact that the guidelines given in the curricula or by the government were not strictly applied is very clearly proved by information in an inspection report written by Gaston Moentjens from the school year 1952, about the primary school and teachers' training college in Bamanya. The extensive report (twelve pages of text) was supplemented with a number of tables in which, for all years, the norm given by the government was compared to the timetables implemented by the missionaries (in Bamanya these were the Brothers). The impression given by these tables is not really surprising. In the first grade, religion was systematically taught more than recommended (4.5 to 5 hours instead of 3). Native language was divided into three subthemes: *reading-writing, copying-dictation* and *recitations*. Far less time than recommended was spent on the first two and far more on the third, just as the component *elocution*. Less time was also spent on mathematics than was actually requested, as was gymnastics. However, drawing, singing and certainly agriculture and traditional activities were taught far more

extensively. So much the more remarkable because, in contrast to the prescribed number of hours, five and a half hours more were taught. This difference was almost entirely caused by religion, agriculture and sewing lessons. Especially in the first grade there were sometimes notable differences. In the normal and selected second grade, the prescribed timetable was followed much more closely. Only singing (much more) and mathematics (much less) retained times that were clearly deviating.[xxiv]

Both the missionary inspector Moentjens and the state inspector Eloye were at that time fairly critical towards the differences between the prescribed and applied time allotment. Moentjens pointed an accusing finger at the *moniteurs*: *"The curricula imposed by the school regulations are, in general, quite well implemented. Moniteurs are well informed to follow the curriculum guide they are given but I don't think that the moniteurs are able to resist their tendency to teach things outside the guide. In any event a more effective control is imposed."*[xxv] In his conclusions, though, he did move the responsibility more to the missionaries themselves: *"Regarding didactic organisation I cannot recommend the headmaster enough to exercise his position as headmaster fully by organising practical and theoretical methods at schools better. This includes drafting good timetables, well defined distribution of subject matter from the different program guides and of all the prescriptions from the educational organisation."*

## 2.2. The subject matter in the schoolbooks

Of course the schoolbooks offer a second possibility to become acquainted in more detail with the subject matter the pupils could receive at school. Honoré Vinck has already done a comprehensive study of a number of the schoolbooks that were published and used by the MSC.[xxvi] In a series of studies he discussed aspects of form and content of primarily MSC reading books. From this it appears all the more that Hulstaert was very active and very influential in this area. Even so, this picture must be looked at with caution. Hulstaert had, as was often the case, his specialisation and his hobbyhorses.

In the first years after their arrival (in 1926) the MSC had to appeal to existing publications due to the absence of their own publications. Thus, they also asked the Brothers of the Christian Schools to bring as many of their own books as possible.[xxvii] A number of publications from the Trappists were also used. Sister Auxilia again, in 1933: *"For arithmetic method the mathematics books of the*

*Brothers of the Christian Schools are followed. These fulfil all the requirements of the curriculum. 1st and 2nd year worked through everything, in the 3rd year we allowed the 10-part fractions, while 4th and 5th year did all the basic operations. For reading method we used the books by the English until August, in September all classes adopted the reading method (3 parts) of Fr. Hulstaert, as well as the 4 parts of his grammar. 4th and 5th studied 1st part in the past months, 2nd and 3rd have also started but have not yet finished the first book."* Use was made of anything to hand, it could even be Protestant. The writing method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was also applied, the Sister added in her report.

In due course, however, more and more of their books were written in the regional language. Vinck stated: *"The range of books in Lomongo for linguistic and religious education is quasi complete. The whole curriculum of primary school and even secondary school has been covered in the local language, Lomongo. This library has been established within a few years, mainly by one man only and according to his rather pedagogic, linguistic and ideological choice in particular."* In the publications by Hulstaert himself and also later in the studies made about him, attention was paid primarily to books on language and reading lessons. For other subjects, for a long time different books were often used, whether or not they were translated into Lomongo: *"The scientific books (often in a provisional state) would come some ten years later. It was a conscious and chosen strategy. Hulstaert has underlined it a lot in contemporary articles."*[xxviii] Vinck, however, did not indicate in which texts this was.

In any case, it also appears from his study that for a great number of years existing books were used for some subjects. It appears however from the first part of this chapter that the weight of a number of subjects was often less important in the curriculum. Also for mathematics, for example, material from the Brothers of the Christian Schools or the Marist Brothers was used for a long time. A number of these books were translated into Lomongo but others were written in Lingala or in French and were also used like that. For geography, publications were only provided in the 1950s, primarily by Frans Maes. Further, a whole series of fairly practically oriented schoolbooks was published in the framework of so-called observation lessons.[xxix] These 'books' (often only a bundle of copied pages) contained a number of texts on the most diverse subjects: descriptions of traditional objects and their use, interactive skills (*politeness*), hygiene, animals. There was an amalgam of subjects, which were sometimes also taken from the

schoolbooks made for other courses. Furthermore, specific books existed for the fields of hygiene, botany and zoology, interactive skills and drawing.

### 2.2.1. History: Ngoi and the whites

From the early 1940s, Hulstaert himself worked on a history textbook, "*un cours d'histoire mongo*". It was based on a number of reading lessons from one of the reading books he had written in the 1930s, *Buku Ea Mbaanda*. The history textbook itself, *Bosako wa Mongo* (History of the Mongo), only appeared in 1957 but several of the texts used in it had previously been published in the periodicals of the MSC, which also appeared in the regional language. They had probably already been used in this way. The logical consequence for the history lessons must have been that only the teacher disposed of textual material.[xxx] A fairly unique text written by Paul Ngoi was included in the publication of this history book. Ngoi was a pupil of the MSC who was rather close to Boelaert and Hulstaert and was involved as an assistant in editing a number of MSC publications in Lomongo, *Le Coq Chante* and *Etsiko*.[xxxii] In 1939 Ngoi, who can probably be considered an *évolué avant la lettre*, wrote the text *Iso la bendele* ("Us and the Whites"). The text was intended to be an entry for a literary competition, organised by the periodical *Africa*, published in London.

Ngoi's text is a surprising account of traditional customs. The concept certainly does not fit in the Western tradition of historiography, as it was used in the schoolbooks. It is not a chronological summary of political events, forms of state and cultural characteristics of particular periods. Instead, Ngoi treated a number of social problems (*sloth, lying, theft*) and mechanisms (*marriage, death, family, jurisprudence, authority*) of the traditional Nkundo society. The difference, for example, from history books as used in secondary education by the Brothers of the Christian Schools is considerable. The texts appear very much to be accounts of contemporary events, but they weren't. They testify to a way of narration, probably typical of cultures that relate their history through the spoken word, which is very close to the way people from those areas still tell stories of their (or 'the') past.[xxxiii]

Indeed, Ngoi points out at the beginning of his article that there is a great lack of respect for the local population on the part of the whites: "*Because, even at present, most of the Whites believe that our ancestors were wild beasts, without any morals and only with mistakes, without any virtue.*"[xxxiiii] The article was almost completely taken up in the schoolbook, which was compiled by Frans

Maes. Ngoi's descriptions seem objective though. There are no real judgements or criticisms, at least not at first sight. A number of statements are surprising on first reading, such as in the chapter on laziness, which starts with the following phrase: *"Here the laziness is innate and gets confirmed with growth."* Which, however, does not mean that later in the text the author actually claimed that the Mongo were naturally lazy people. On the contrary, after a series of examples, he concluded the chapter with: *"This is the least we can say about laziness here. It is different from the concept the Whites have."* The chapter *"Lust"*, about experiences of sexuality *"aux temps des ancêtres"*, was also objective-descriptive. The *antropophagie* ("people-eating") was also treated here in a short paragraph.

As mentioned above, the chapter in question contained a complaint about the bad conditions caused by the arrival of the whites. Armed combat, rubber exploitation, the damage to villages, destruction of local authority, destruction of the family structure, spread of disease and depopulation of the area were examined successively. Further, there were paragraphs on the suppression and loss of local culture and language and on the temptations caused by wealth, luxury and sexual excesses. Each and every charge was levelled against the influence of Western society. In the midst of all this misery, faith was the only ray of hope: *"We don't complain in the same way as we do about the other importations of the Whites."* On the contrary, gratitude was appropriate here: *"We greatly thank the Whites for that."*[xxxiv]

A number of considerations have to be made here. Vinck continually questioned the extent of the originality of this text and whether there was any far-reaching influence from the missionaries when it was written. The fact that Paul Ngoi was, for a very long time, an assistant of Hulstaert, supposedly played a role in this. From the perspective of this chapter, however, the exact answer to this question is irrelevant. After all, the text was used in a schoolbook by the MSC. The missionaries must thus, in any case, have been in agreement with the statements made therein. The schoolbook seems, at first glance, to be an example of how the subject matter, in this case history, became more Africanised, or was at least moved away from a European perspective. A few marginal notes need to be added here. Firstly, the use of this text is situated fairly late in the colonial period and thus its possible influence coincided with decolonisation. Secondly, Vinck remarked that there are a number of internal contradictions in the text. The matters covered in the first descriptive part of the text (and thus of the book)

were not necessarily positively qualified. Vinck also posited that Ngoi himself often criticised the practices he described. But in the last chapter, where the intervention of the whites was covered, the tone changed dramatically.

This text was an example of the often ambiguous stance of the MSC towards the local culture. This, in its turn, was a result of the position they took regarding a number of social issues, both at home and in the colonial context. Its meaning for the content of the lessons and thus for the pupils is in itself just as ambiguous. The tone of the last chapter was very radical and very negative. The question is how this one example should be evaluated in the totality of the subject matter. Firstly, we can assume that the tone of most schoolbooks and subject matter contrasted somewhat with this critical stance. In other history lessons (often parts of schoolbooks for other subjects, such as geography or religion), a very different tone was employed. An example of this is *Bosako w'oyengwa (Histoire Sainte)* from 1935, in which the arrival of the whites is also described. The text of the lesson in question, reproduced here, takes a far more 'traditional' stance. Secondly, the impact of this book can be questioned, given that it was only used in the sixth and seventh year.

### *The Whites in the Congo*

*The kings of Europe had learned the news of the Congo. They found out it was a big country with a big population. But its people are cruel and sin is very distinct in them. They go to war between themselves, they put each other in prison and they shoot lots of people. The Arabs came to the Congo from the East at Tanganika and through the rivers Tsingitini and Lualaba. They defeated the natives; they captured lots of slaves and took them to their own region to sell them there.*

*The kings of Europe were greatly upset by this news. They gave the Belgian King Léopold II authorisation to keep Congo in order to slow down the wars, to chase away the Arabs in order to free the men from slavery and to teach them the intelligence of the Whites and to raise their wealth through trade.*

*Léopold had sent his men to Congo. But the natives did not appreciate the arrival of the Whites and their teaching; they defeated them and plundered their possessions. Then, the Whites campaigned against the natives. They spread throughout all regions of the Congo and they defeated the natives and dominated them. There were a lot of battles amongst the Arabs and certain men, because they were very cruel. But the Whites had weakened their strength. When the wars*



*ended, they freed the slaves and started to embellish the country. [xxxv]*

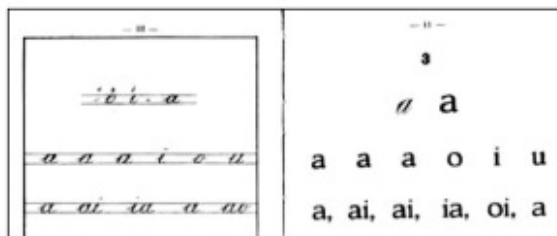
*Extract 3 - Reading lesson on the arrival of the whites in the Congo, from Bosako w'oyengwa III.*

### *2.2.2. The reading books written by Hulstaert*

The reading book, as a specific form of schoolbook, is an interesting object of study in this matter, for several reasons: of all the material, it probably had the greatest distribution; it was used from the first year; the MSC and also Hulstaert in particular, attach quite some importance to it, relatively speaking; this type of book contains a great number of reading lessons, which cover a wide variety of subjects. In this way, they present a good overview of the themes covered during the lessons and of the most important messages the missionaries imparted or wanted to impart to the Congolese youth. In a few recent studies, analyses of reading books published by the MSC were already discussed.[xxxvi] The conclusions of these studies concern didactic, educational and broader ideological aspects of the reading books and their use in the classroom. These aspects are treated separately here, but it is clear that they are correlated.

### *Technically*

The method Hulstaert used to teach the children to learn to read was specifically concerned with writing and forming words and sentences and learning letters. Whether this was all thoroughly thought-out is another matter. Vinck calls Hulstaert's spelling method "*anti-langue-africaine*" but immediately adds that he probably deviated from international standards in this regard because it was too difficult to apply them for learning the language at school.[xxxvii] Further, he did take the characteristics of Lomongo into account, such as grouping certain consonants and vowels and the fact that this language contained seven different vowels. Hulstaert, of course, had written out the majority of Lomongo himself and could thus also determine arrangement and style himself. We can assume that he was very gifted and well grounded in this area and worked with a great deal of insight.



Extract from Buku ea Njekola Eandola I, MSC reading book for the first year.

This does not mean that his method of working was didactically well thought-out, let alone innovative. The didactic guidelines he gave in the reading books *Buku ea Mbaanda* are about the clearest statements he made in this area. Hulstaert wanted to teach the phonetic sounds and subsequently teach the pupils to write the accompanying written letters. In this way, various letters were learned and subsequently placed together, first in meaningless wholes, later in meaningful words. Van Caeyseele calls this an example of a *bottom-up* method. Keeping more with the spirit of the time, I would sooner call it an *analytic* method. This by way of analogy with the analytic-synthetic method as was generally used in the first decades of the 20th century. This method assumed that the letters had to be learned by separating them in a series of 'known' words. The 'new' pedagogy would distance itself more and more from this method to elaborate the 'synthetic' elements within it (more visual, more global, working with meaningful sentences and texts instead of just words, which were not necessarily related).[xxxviii] Hulstaert situated himself even further on the other side. It was typical of his method to treat the letters one by one when learning them. The letters themselves had to be 'deconstructed'. He even wanted to show how letters were actually composed of other letters. A 'u', for example, was an addition of two 'i's. It was also presented in the instructions to the *moniteur* in this way.[xxxix] In part II of the same book there were further instructions for teaching capitals.[xl]

### *Educational-didactical*

The Hulstaert method was a system he had designed quite intuitively, without taking account of (other) educational principles. There is no reference here to a global reading method using the context in which words and letters are found, although this method was known at the time. Vinck and Van Caeyseele refer to Alma Hosten, alias Sister Magda[xli] on this point. Vinck said: "*It seems to me that she had an influence on Hulstaert but it was impossible for me to perceive*

*the exact outline of it.*"[xlii] Van Caeyseele goes even further in her study: *"She was informed of the insights into the new school movement and from these criticised Hulstaert's gradually surpassed method."*[xliii] It is probably exaggerated to speak of real 'criticism' in this context. Indeed, Hulstaert herself published a contribution by Hosten in *Aequatoria*, in which she mentioned reading books.

In this she clearly referred to Hulstaert's method: *"Every reading method for beginners should be illustrated. Illustration captivates! The separation of words into syllables is an unhappy business. It is unmethodical, literally distracts instead of concentrates. I have taken the following test: let a particular group read syllable by syllable, connect those syllables into words and finally achieve fluent reading. Have another group take no account of the divisions between syllables. Group 1 had significantly more trouble than Group 2. It will probably be said: the pupils should not read in separate syllables or parts! But: why place these sections in front of the students and weaken the strength of the reading image then? That is to disturb the literary understanding; when there could be a beautiful harmony between image and speech."* (...) *"Small lessons are far more interesting than separate sentences without a connected content. Those lessons also prepare a suitable base for the style practice. They can also be a great help for a global reading method."*[xliv]

From the correspondence between Hulstaert and Hosten it seems that they got on well with each other and that there was some agreement on Hosten's educational approach. In a letter from April 1942 Hulstaert wrote to Hosten: *"You know that I agree with you completely concerning the purpose and principle methods of teaching."*[xlv] For her part, Hosten complained to Hulstaert about a colleague in Boende, Sister Martha, who she did not feel was cooperating in the implementation of modern teaching methods. For those who read between the lines some envy between the Sisters cannot be discounted.[xlvi] At any rate, Sister Magda boasted that she had qualifications and professionalism as opposed to her colleague.

### *Instructions for the teacher*

The method for teaching reading and writing.

- *Repeat the previous lesson but don't take too much time over it.*

- *Then the new sounds. Pronounce a few words in which these sounds are used. Show the pupils some objects which are meaningful through these words (by fact or by drawing).*
- *The pronunciation of the sound. A few pupils pronounce the sound individually and then all together.*
- *Homework. The pupils think about words which start with the new sound. Then they try to find words in which the sound is located in the middle or at the end of the word. They pronounce it without haste in order to learn how to control the sound in a very clear way. If they don't understand something, or if they hesitate, help them by asking questions.*
- *Writing. Write the letter neatly on the blackboard. Explain the pupils the different parts of the letter. Then teach them the block capitals.*
- *Reading exercise. The pupils read the written letters first and then the letters in block capitals.*
- *Writing exercise. They write the letters on the drawing board with care. After that they correct the mistakes. Then some people write the letters on the blackboard. After that you make them remove what they have written.*
- *Put the new letters up onto the blackboard next to the old ones; (parts of words, the words themselves, then phrases). One by one they read them out loud and then all together.*
- *They read the lesson in the book.*
- *They write the words that are on the blackboard, after that the words that are in the book.*

The method for writing a capital letter:

- *Teach the shape of the letter in italics at the blackboard.*
- *Write your letter in different parts and unite the parts in order to create an entire letter.*
- *Show the pupils the comparison between this letter and some previous letters, or they look themselves.[xlvi]*
- *Some pupils try to write the letter at the blackboard and their friends should look for mistakes and differences between the letter written by the pupil and the one by the teacher.*

- *The pupils copy the letter either onto the drawing board or into their notebooks. After that they correct it.*
- *They imitate the language which is used in the book.*
- *Don't fail to check the force with which the pupils try and the way they hold their pens and the way the notebooks spread out in order to get all things straight.*

Extract 4 – Instructions to the teachers, from the MSC reading book *Buku ea njekola eandola la ekotelo*

### *Ideologically*

Although it is said that Hulstaert pays less attention to the religious in his reading lessons than is traditional, that influence was present nevertheless.[xlvi] From recent research it appeared that this did not follow from the chosen themes so much as from the way in which they were addressed.[xlix] From the analysis of the contents of a few reading lessons, in MSC reading books and those of other congregations, it is apparent that an explicitly religious motif (as the theme of the reading lesson) was not always as clearly present. Where Kita stated in the case of the *Pères Blancs* that 28% of the reading lessons (from reading books published in the 1910s) analysed by him had an explicitly religious theme, Vinck and myself came to only 12% in the case of the MSC's *Mbuku ea Mbaanda* (first published in 1933) studied by us. In a comparable reading book from the 1950s by the Dominicans (working in Uele, North-East Congo) that portion was even lower. Without drawing general conclusions from a rough comparison of three different congregations, I think that the period of publication can explain this difference to some extent. This should be nuanced by stating firstly that the religious theme was part of a broader moralising motif and these were both completely intertwined. When the facts are seen in this light then Pierre Kita's remarks in his study of the reading books of the *Pères Blancs* must be agreed with: "*Religion very clearly occupies a predominant place: not only the themes that are completely dedicated to it, representing around 28% of the total, but also the biggest parts of the texts which are related to social life and even to studies are influenced by religious morals.*"[l] In the study of the MSC and Dominican books the same characteristic came up: "*Regarding this topic you should take note that the two types of handbooks contain many references to God and to his glorification, in all kinds of lesson.*"[li] Secondly, most reading books, whatever the date of publication, had a long life and were often used for several decades. Kita expresses this in the case

of the books by the White Fathers. This was the same for the MSC, as is apparent from correspondence. This is especially informative as to the moralising element remaining imposingly present in the schoolbooks until the end of the colonial period. *Educational ideas: a measure of nothing?*

### 3.1. Influences and allies

In the second year of *Aequatoria* (1939) an article appeared signed with the initials Z.M., standing for 'Zuster Magda' [Sister Magda].<sup>[lii]</sup> This article was unique, for two reasons. As far as known she was the only woman ever to publish a contribution in the original *Aequatoria* series. Apart from this the content was also unusual for the periodical: Hosten wrote a report on the manner in which she had worked with the school curriculum. The subtitle of the article was literally: "*Application of the primary school curriculum*". She treated each subject that was taught in turn and referred to the curriculum brochure. The general conclusion that can be drawn from the article is that the sister certainly did not feel herself bound to the curriculum to the letter. This started with the first subject, native language: "*The education in letters received an ample share, due to its undeniably great educational worth.*" Yet the curriculum made different emphasises. In the *causeries* she said quite determined: "*The useful and formative subjects of the curriculum were covered, the remaining were omitted.*" In the lessons on medicine: "*Apart from the curriculum, special attention was given to illnesses of local importance.*" From the article it was apparent that much attention was given to the development of the language and mathematics lessons. The descriptions of the performances in the lesson 'native language' were very extensive. The sister mentioned the kinds of exercises that were done and which topics the students had mastered. In the case of mathematics it seems special attention was given to fractions. She also described the methods used.

*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere*

*Boende, 16.7.42*

*Very reverend Father Superior,*

*I thank you most warmly for your last letter. I often thought that I had become uninterested in class matters. The judgement of others (...) But when I read your letter, I felt clearly that I was not at all indifferent to your approval or disapproval. And I saw clearly - never before so well - how you are a light and support to me. It is most human I know but I confess it to you most simply.*

*Dearest Father Superior, allow me to speak my heart. As far as Sister Martha is concerned... I think it has been enough. I have nothing against her personally and I do not believe that she has anything against me personally. [It is a] very different case than that of Sister Beatrijs. But she is not the person to be left in education any longer. You remember the fate of earlier moniteurs ... and now hers have had enough. They are good and simple boys... they are exemplary, they are our teachers and have a simple good and loving spirit... it is all I ask.*

*Not long ago 3 of Sister Martha's moniteurs went to Father Henri and said plainly that they could not take it any more with Sister Martha, that they had had enough of it. 1000 proofs, facts, ... Far too many to list. Father Henri told them to continue in their duty, not to criticise anyone and to wait.*

*You can see, good Father Superior, all things allowed, that intervention is needed. Her adjustments to new methods are extremely weak... a continuous stumbling block for me, a brake that slows the system. Lately during a visit to the class with Father Paul I saw that she had dropped the mathematics method, without having asked my good advice or permission, and was ploughing on in her own way. The reading method? As long as it is examined in that way... I cannot bring about anything definite... I could continue to write for a long time in this way.*

*Finally it is the spirit of Boende that she will never be willing or able to accept, for she has never loved the blacks in her heart. She says it is singing that wrenches here and everything would be solved if she could teach singing again... Talk. Her spirit has never been different... The singing has made the mood less sweet and finally unbearable... And if she would only see that she is not the person to teach singing, just because she is not an educator.*

*If only she was just harmful to the teachers like this... I could easily tolerate this for another 20 years... but she is damaging to education and that is as precious to me as the apple of my eye. It is a great pity for education that such people busy themselves with it, even if they finally achieve something. Education must work inwards... and such people have never looked into the child's soul. I do not judge people in any way by saying this... for I have my faults as she does.*

*Dearest Father Superior, it is starting to be hard for me... besides, I do not believe she feels much for education... success - even though it is imagined success, the downsides were far greater than the success - kept her up and so still tolerable in some way. I do realise, very reverend Father Superior that it is hard now to find a solution.*

Extract 5 – Letter from Sister Magda to Gustaaf Hulstaert. Aequatoria Archive.

Hosten was a professionally trained secondary school teacher and this clearly showed from the language she used. She referred several times to “the occasional method” or the “purpose occasional education”. She was apparently very interested in these methods and tried to encourage the *moniteurs* to join her in this. That was not a simple assignment she said: *“This is still a plague to those who naturally adhere to the ‘système des tiroirs’ and who don’t dare or know how to make bridges between the parts of a subject or between the separate subjects.”* From the report it also appears that repetition was a very important element. In the subject ‘mathematics’ each year started from the beginning and then went further according to the ‘excentric method’: *“In which the learning material is treated 1) every year and 2) always more extensively.”* She further clarified that she was not using this excentric method exclusively but intermittently with the concentric method. This meant that the subject matter was always studied in more depth. She did mention that the system was not fully completed yet: *“Yet to teach a subject in this way demands a purposeful division of the subject matter. But we have not been able to do this yet for most subjects, due to lack of time. Because this takes a lot of personal preparation.”*

The meaning of this text should not be underestimated. In the inspection reports that can be found on the schools in this period, educational concepts and ideas were almost never being referred to. The emphasis was far more heavily on facts and material data. Especially the fact that Hulstaert put this section in his periodical has its importance. After all, he published the article because he felt that it described a situation as it should be. *Aequatoria* was not a mission periodical; the propaganda element certainly did not play a part. The article had a more normative function. In other words, it can be supposed that in most other schools things were far less progressive and modern. From the last statement it can be deduced that the lessons given by the *moniteurs* were in many cases not so structured.[liii] This puts the direct importance of this specific text for the image that the contemporary reader forms of the colonial class into perspective. Sister Magda was not representative. More than that, she was an exception. Likely she was even an exception in her own environment, which is also apparent from the letter she wrote to Hulstaert about her colleague, Sister Martha. At that moment she was also a young, ‘fresh’ power. Someone who, for the sake of an educational ideal, worked actively, cared heart and soul for her work, and with a desire to put



her accumulated knowledge into practice.

Hulstaert had an interest in the ideas tested by Hosten and certainly was not opposed to them. His correspondence with her was in a fairly friendly tone; he did not criticise her article. From other articles it is only too clear that he would speak his opinion about other's articles without hesitation if he found it necessary. A good example of this was the publication of the article "*Pédagogie Civilisée et Education Primitive*". The article was written by Vernon Brelsford, a British district commissioner in Nigeria. It was originally published in English in *Oversea Education*. Hulstaert summarised it and translated it into French and published it in 1945 in *Aequatoria*. He added: "*No doubt that this remarkable study will interest our readers. We took the liberty, counting on the well-known British open-mindedness, to add a few considerations as notes.*"[liv] In his article the British functionary strongly emphasised the differences between the two types of education. The comparison between the two was consistently to the advantage of Western education. Hulstaert did not hesitate to add some strong doubts on this opinion in the footnotes of the article. In this he presented himself as critical both of the opinions that the author expressed and of European society. He also put into perspective all the differences that Brelsford had emphasised. In opposition to the Brit he saw no incompatibility between the education systems in Africa and Europe and no supremacy of the European system. He did not see parallels between the new trends in education and African education. That conclusion would show too much interpretation. He did enumerate some characteristics of the African system that were essential to him and stood up for the Africans.[lv]

Hulstaert profiled himself very much as an indigenist and by this he expressly meant to oppose himself to the established authority and to be critical.[lvi] His views were fully revealed in the conflicts with the Brothers of the Christian Schools about the way in which they worked in the schools in Bamanya and Coquilhatville.[lvii] Namely, the use of French as the language of education was a constant bone of contention for Hulstaert. In 1945 he wrote an article for the periodical *Aequatoria* in which he gave a 'seven-point plan' of educational principles. Supposedly the reason for writing this article was to be found in the conflicts he had experienced over the past years with the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In the article he argued for a 'general' education as a counterbalance for the so-called 'modern' education: "*Primary school teaching, as*

*teaching in general, needs resolutely to engage in the path of adaptation.” (...) “This conclusion is a result of certain given facts; the social nature of man, the existence of natural societies which have the right to be respected, just like everything that is good in nature; the principles laid down as a basis for the colonisation by the Government of the Belgian Congo, whose aim is to civilise the natives, to refine them in a harmonious manner in all fields while respecting the native organisation and the traditions.”*

It does appear a little contradictory that he so loyally refers to what was almost a kind of official ideology: the civilising mission of the Belgians in the Congo as a justification of their presence. Yet the content of certain schoolbooks corresponded to this. The whole results in a rather schizophrenic image. In a letter to Sister Magda, which we have already quoted, he made it very clear what “adaptation” meant to him. The students needed an education that would prepare them to continue living in their hometown: *“You are quite right to say that success in Bamanya and Bokuma is not the main goal of our education; education should not even take any account of it, whatever may come of boys who continue studies later. But I do have a certain reservation in the case of Bokuma and this because the education there is in the same spirit as with you. An adaptation has to take place eventually.”*[lviii] Bamanya and Bokuma were the only places at that time where some form of further education could be found. It was to this that Hulstaert alluded. He also emphasised this strongly in his seven-point plan, which he published in *Aequatoria*. At least three of the seven points indicated it. The training that prepared the Congolese to be aides in the service of the Europeans could only be taught in the *écoles spéciales*. Even in the *écoles spéciales* that provided a specific, applied training, the personal nurturing of the student could not be neglected. So it was also clear to Hulstaert which conclusion was right concerning primary education: *“It is absolutely necessary to avoid transforming primary school education into a preparatory course to a technical instruction (in the largest sense of the word). On the contrary, this preparatory course should be based on the primary school education.”*[lix]

In December 1941 he wrote a letter to the head of the missions in Bamanya in which he expressed his anxiety about the state of affairs at the teacher’s training college. In the past there had been a decision from the vicariate that there should be a limit on the amount of pupils allowed. Now that there was a new primary school in Coquilhatville that restriction was removed again so that, in principle,

entrance to the teacher's training college was not limited, at least for the pupils in Bamanya. Hulstaert did not like this idea. It posed a number of fundamental concerns for him. The teacher's training college had to "remain a real teacher's college". By this he meant that the training should not take account of other societal needs and that they should exclusively aim at the training of teachers headed for the rural MSC schools in the interior: *"Instead of changing or adapting ourselves to schools in places of exception we will continue to insist on more adjustment of the teacher's college to the needs of the schools in the interior."* He also clarified what the implications of this would be for the curriculum: *"Considering conditions inland the following are the most pressing topics: general formation classes, language (Lonkundo) and grammar, mathematics. Our teachers inland do not need so much knowledge, but rather a general overview, insight, and development of the intellect and everything that can help with this. Courses like French, however useful for other purposes, are of lesser importance for our teachers."*[lx]

The fact that Hulstaert was occasionally on the same wavelength as the followers of *Education nouvelle* seemed to be mainly a result of his indigenism. This ensured that he wanted attention paid to the concrete living environment of the Congolese. But there were other motives beside the purely educational behind this. In reality his religious conservatism as well as his distrust of the modern world remained alive, including in his writings for school. Vinck already wrote that he never progressed beyond an *"éclectisme limité"* in theoretical educational knowledge. That knowledge was based on the possession (and likely also the reading) of certain conservative Catholic-inspired handbooks: *Didaktik* by Otto Willman and the overviews of Frans De Hovre and Victor D'Espallier (*Nieuwe Banen*). It should be no surprise that he consulted these books in the light of what was said earlier about the influences the MSC candidates experienced. [lxi]

### 3.2. Clashing visions

#### 3.2.1. With the Brothers

The views of the MSC corresponded to a great extent with those of Hulstaert, that much is clear. Yet it would be wrong only to mention Hulstaert here. Though he was a prolific writer and a very active and enthusiastic missionary who left the most traces of all the MSC in the colonial period, there were also 'lesser gods'. From the number of confrontations that Hulstaert and the MSC had with other parties in connection with the teaching material, it can be inferred that although

there was often a united view, this was certainly not always the case. The best-documented examples of this are without a doubt the continuing arguments the MSC had with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, although they were brought to their vicariate by the MSC themselves in the 1920s. In this conflict Hulstaert took the lead. Sometimes he dragged other MSC with him in this, whilst others were much more sceptical about his discord with the Brothers.

That his article of 1945 on general training was also directed to the Brothers of the Christian Schools became visible in his standpoint on the language of education, amongst others: *"We cannot continue along the line of polyglotism within primary school education. The already-mentioned programme of reorganisation provides, in certain circumstances, up to three languages at 2nd level. Primary school education, which in nature is meant to be for the mass population, will not know what to do with the whole linguistic requirement, which overloads the programme and confuses the pupils' minds."* The struggle against French as the language of education would finally be lost but the fight against the Brothers was more than a language struggle.[lxii] It was also a power struggle. From 1939 there was an aim to apply the same curriculum guide across the entire MSC vicariate. It is clear that the MSC had at least partial authority in the local education network. All other congregations working in the region were contractually bound to them. At that point the Brothers of the Christian Schools were an exception. In Bamanya they were working for the MSC but not in Coquilhatville, as they worked in an official school there. The inspection authority in the region was allocated to the 'head congregation' in the area and thus to the MSC. Paul Jans, who was the head missionary at the time, wrote to Hulstaert that he had argued to *"make an independent whole of the primary schools with curricula that are as identical as possible. In all our posts, including Bamanya, among others, I emphasised that much more needs to be done for Nkundo and less for French. After the fifth year a certificate could then be given of completed primary education. Boys who do further studies to be a moniteur, in Bamanya as well as other posts of the mission, are then united in a 6th year, taught by an indigenous Brother, that must be followed as 1<sup>st</sup> year vocational training and where there is plenty of French besides a revision of the primary curriculum."*[lxiii]

In general Jans did not seem to follow in the same line as Hulstaert on the subject of holding back the inland children, he thought that they were certainly welcome

at the Brothers' school in Coquilhatville. He even explicitly accused Hulstaert of sowing seeds of hatred and of unconsciously contributing to an aggressive feeling towards the Brothers among a number of his fellows.[lxiv] He wrote the following about Hulstaert's educational ideas: *"I find your theory about Forcing and Leading very nice but wishing systematically to refuse entrance to Coq where we cannot convince our people inland seems very much like 'volontariat forcé'."* Such statements clearly show that even Hulstaert's contemporaries found his way of dealing with the Congolese to be quite patronising. Apparently Hulstaert wished to have a united curriculum not just for the entire region but especially for all congregations. Jans clearly had problems with his method: *"What I propose for the unification of the primary school curriculum for all mission posts that function normally are thoughts that are at least four years old and for which I already had some unpleasantness in '35. But practically, the cooperation of everyone, also the Brothers, is required for the creation of this curriculum. I do not believe in a monopoly on truth or correct thought or correct insight. With nobody."*

Hulstaert kept pushing and would lock horns with the Brothers on more occasions. He wrote to the higher orders when it appeared that the Brothers were planning to follow the official curriculum in their subsidised school in Coquilhatville, instead of the subsidised missionary education curriculum. The curriculum was mainly based on the Belgian curriculum and therefore much 'harder' than what was taught in most Congolese schools. Reisdorff, the government inspector, answered him in the name of the governor general: *"It goes without saying that the Reverend Brothers of the Christian Schools are allowed to follow curricula of official schools, the pupils subsidised being usually destined to continue their studies at the official school of Coquilhatville."*[lxv] Hulstaert retaliated, saying that the use of the official curriculum would lead to a surplus of graduates all of whom would not be able to find work. This would inevitably lead to abuses, a society of 'unclassified'. However, the governor general did not follow him in his reasoning. In a friendly but decided manner Reisdorff refused Hulstaert's suggestions.[lxvi] He suggested that subsidised schools function under the missionary school curriculum completely independently of the official school system. There would then be a selection of the best students to have finished the first grade who would have the opportunity to go to the official school and eventually to middle school. In his reply Hulstaert agreed to this solution but took the opportunity to describe his ideal once again: the complete separation of primary and secondary school, so that primary school could focus

purely on general education, *“without referring to further studies.”* To make the step to middle school an extra *“preparatory year”* could be provided after the fifth year.

Language use was also discussed. As late as 1943 Hulstaert wrote to the Brother Director in Coquilhatville: *“You know that it is absolutely important to us that Lonkundo is the working language. The moniteurs educated in this language will have no problem here. For the foreign pupils, who don’t know the working language, the moniteurs should provide an adaptation system, which to me seems easy to elaborate.”*[lxvii] The fact that his confidence in the Congolese *moniteurs* was noticeably higher than at other times is striking. Brother Director, who had been confronted with the same demand *ad nauseam*, answered Hulstaert in a rather cynical tone: *“According to your desire, once more expressed, the working language called ‘Congolese’ or regional language is, as you say, Lonkundo. Others will say Lingala, some others Lonkundo-lingala for Coq. However, the language the young people will almost exclusively use in the working environment later is French, wouldn’t it be good to give these elements as soon as possible?”*[lxviii]

But Hulstaert did not let up and answered bluntly that decisions on the organisation of education in the vicariate were up to the vicariate itself, according to canon law. From this he drew the equally definite conclusion: the spoken language at school was Lomongo. The study of French as a subject could only begin in the second grade. Only the students at the official schools would need to speak professional French later, those of the free schools would not. It would not be fair to ‘sacrifice’ the whole population for the sake of a minority elite. The main body had to remain *native*. [lxix] On the subject of the official school Hulstaert took an equally clear position, which he often offered directly: *“At the moment the greatest danger for our school is the official school of Coq and if no intervention is made then all those learned, degenerate blacks, the most immoral, the drinkers, the animals as we know them here, bring it to the point when you will again be obliged to place the Brothers in the central schools inland as teaching personnel.”*[lxx] His resistance was to make no difference. In his inspection report of 1943 he had to establish that the Brothers continued to steer their own course (which was in accordance with the guidelines and ideas of the government): *“It was painful to have to note that the directives I gave through a letter no 1965 of March 2 of this year, regarding the curriculum to be followed, the working language and the teaching of French, had not been executed.”*[lxxi]

There was no agreement among the various MSC about Hulstaert's stance towards the Brothers. We have already pointed to Jans' remarks on the subject. Not everyone had such radical opinions, as is abundantly clear from a letter by the rector of the missionary post in Bamanya, Van der Beken. He was reacting to a letter of Hulstaert's, in which he seems to have been particularly shocked by the attitude of the Brothers. Apparently he did occasionally pictured them as real bad guys who would destroy the Congolese youth. Van der Beken was more positive about the Brothers: *"Most honourable and dear Father Superior, I received your letter of May 1. I believe what you write and yet the Brothers do not neglect their religious education, every morning they must prepare this in particular. Brother Director also gives them special lessons on their responsibility as teachers. They are actually Brothers of the Christian schools, how would they bring down our holy faith? I accept that their teaching is not adjusted to the mentality of the blacks as they do not know that mentality."* So it seemed at first sight that he wished to protect the Brothers and wished to deny Hulstaert's accusations. But that was not the case for the *moniteurs*: *"And yet the Christian life is not felt, not experienced, the teachers feel no responsibility for the community, they are not Catholic as they are not universal in their actions, they are egoistic and that only to the bad because their egoism goes to complete independence. They feel themselves to be lord and master and to be subordinate to none."* There appeared to be a very negative vision of the evolution and the possibilities of the Congolese behind this. The efforts that the missionaries went to did not really make a difference since even the Congolese who were raised by missionaries inland got big ideas: *"With their little learning and their cockiness they are just shameful."*

It appears that Van der Beken felt rather powerless, not equal to the 'great' civilising task that was traditionally attributed to the missionaries: *"Of course I don't claim that school is a necessary evil but I do think that the concept of school may be wrongly understood by many of us. What improvements have not been introduced in Europe and daily more improvements and adjustments to the students are sought. Dear Father Superior, our vicariate is quite new and many of our priests including myself are not well enough grounded or developed for a revolution. I am just a very normal everyday priest, one may say 'made in Japan', I should be more aware of current conditions, should apply myself more to serious literature on the missions, be able to understand better the depth of the Negro soul."*[lxxii] This quote clearly shows, in my estimation, that the world of the average missionary at work was not so straightforward, simple and self-assured,

although that impression was often made in missionary and other propaganda literature.

### 3.2.2. *With the government*

There were not only troubles with the Brothers of the Christian Schools. A number of MSC fell foul of the government. There was often an ideological factor connected to this, which sometimes makes it difficult to interpret the content of certain discussions. A conflict broke out in 1951 concerning the inspection by government inspector Eloye. That year, during his inspection round of the MSC, he found a number of things that he did not feel corresponding to the intentions of the education curriculum. He gave an extensive description of this in his inspection reports, which did not earn him many thanks among the missionaries. Complaints were made to the provincial governor Bruels de Tiecken. The case reached the governor general, who tried to reach a compromise and make peace between the brawlers. He decided to send Jean Ney, chief inspector of colonial education, to check Eloye's inspections and to search for a solution in consultation with the provincial governor and the vicar.

It was in Boende, where father Van Linden was responsible for the school at that time that Eloye had been overcome by criticism. Van Linden had told him that he only considered the inspection reports and other official guidelines to be advice, to which he did not feel bound in any way in cases where they did not correspond to his own vision. He accepted no addendum to the curriculum and would not respond to anything communicated to him in French, out of Flemish-nationalistic convictions. In Ney's version the remarks were already put into perspective: *"The Reverend Father has generalised his opinion on the official communications, confirming that if he were the boss, he would not ask for the subsidy because he doesn't like the official and that in this way he would be the boss in his own school."* Ney acknowledged that Van Linden was very active and devoted to the school but he also had to admit that he had a number of old-fashioned ideas, which did not tally with the image that one should have of a school. He did not communicate what these ideas were exactly but he did report that Van Linden had told him literally: *"The schools do more harm than good."*[lxxiii] Which convictions or considerations could have been at the basis of this statement was not clear to me in the conversation I had with Van Linden.

On his part, Breuls de Tiecken complained to the governor general about the fact that the missionaries positioned themselves so aggressively. He then also



proposed to reconsider subsidies again in cases such as Van Linden's. *"Also, the continuous pressure from the people being inspected by the inspectors, either because of themselves, or because of powerful intermediary people or organisations, would succeed in paralysing the control up to a point where it would become ineffective."* He believed that the treasury should not subsidise a person who openly contradicted generally accepted educational and hygienic principles, who often flatly refused to read official correspondence addressed to him and who considered inspection reports and other guidelines to be nothing but simple advice when they did not tally with his vision.

Mgr. Vermeiren then defended his missionaries to Breuls de Tiecken. He referred to a number of other complaints the inspector had expressed. He maintained that he had done everything possible to sketch as gloomy an image as possible of the mission of the MSC. According to the inspector, the handwork in many rural schools consisted almost entirely of laying roofs in *ndele* or in harvesting palm nuts destined to be sold for the benefit of the missions. Vermeiren said this should be checked. According to him, the fact that catechists were in many cases appointed *moniteurs* was a distortion of reality. Actually, the *moniteurs* had to function as catechists as well. The thorniest question, however, was still that of the language of education. Vermeiren seemed to become rather enraged about this: *"A handful of foreigners, instead of integrating into the environment where they are leading a prosperous life, uses its privileged situation as a European to impose the teaching of a foreign language (Lingala, JB) on millions of natives because all in all they are but Negro and (...) because it is easier for the others."*

On this subject, the MSC clearly closed ranks but they were fairly isolated. The province governor thought the missionaries should teach in Lingala because the majority of the population of the province did not know Lonkundo and everyone tried to speak Lingala. The Brothers of the Christian Schools had sensed this and had adapted themselves in their school in Coquilhatville. *"Judicieusement"*, Breuls de Tiecken thought. To the great surprise and probably also dissatisfaction of the MSC, Father Moentjens found the same in Bamanya: *"To my great surprise I noticed that between moniteurs and pupils Lingala is well spoken and even during the lessons certain moniteurs introduce words and expressions from Lingala into their language. I drew this to the headmaster's attention and asked him kindly to put the entire weight of his power to good use to effectively combat this abuse which does not constitute an imaginary or illusionary danger."*[lxxiv]

### 3.2.3. *With the Congolese*

Conflicts also occasionally erupted with the Congolese. These were even less visible to the outside world because the balance of power was to the advantage of the missionaries and the Congolese were never really given the opportunity to make their problems and demands explicitly known. On some occasions there was nevertheless evidence of serious problems between the missionaries and Congolese students. One striking event, which is still mentioned today in conversation with missionaries and which is to be situated in line with the conflicts mentioned, was the 'uprising' of the seminarians in Bokuma.[lxxv] From 1926 the MSC had tried to start a classics degree in Bokuma, relating to the priestly training. Originally Boelaert, together with Petrus Vertenten, was one of the driving forces behind this project. From 1932, when the area of the MSC was raised to the status of 'real' vicariate, things began to move: the training became more professional and became truly a training in its own right, more than just a result of the primary school. It has to be noted that even in this type of school there was an emphasis on handiwork and its educational value. The curriculum seemed to develop prosperously. In any event, Boelaert himself expressed his satisfaction in a letter at the end of 1934: *"When I arrived here four years ago, I found only six students, and now we are closing the year with six well-formed classes, with regular attendance and the best prospects."* The emphasis was on the study of Latin and the native language.

In 1936, the first seminarian dissatisfaction was observed. According to the Fathers, there were people who wanted to leave to study elsewhere or there were people who were discontented because they had been away from home for a few years. It was not so surprising, at least according to commentaries given by the missionaries themselves about the lives of the seminarians: *"The life at a boarding school and abstaining from contact with family members and people of the opposite sex, the regular enforcement of the regulations, the relatively heavy studies, the constant guarding they are exposed to and the constant effort that is required are all obligations that are far harder for them than we can easily imagine."*

Sanders wrote the following for 1937: *"Expressions of obstinacy and pride. Amongst other things, they will refuse in class to write down a text because it is in Lonkundo: they must have French!"*[lxxvi] A year later a whole class left the *préparatoire* (the preparatory department of the classics degree): *"Bikoro is*

*leaving, but largely because of Lonkundo.*" What this means exactly is unclear. However, it may be assumed that the pupils from the nearby region of Bikoro were being referred to. The seminary of Bokuma had, after all, received the status of 'regional' seminary some years before. Concretely, this meant that students from other vicariates in the Equator province also went to the seminary there. The level of the training was rated very highly by the missionaries. They assumed that only very few candidates were eligible for it.

In any case, problems concerning the language had clearly developed. Something similar also happened in Bamanya after the Second World War. If possible, information about this is even scarcer. Cobbaut did speak about it in his inspection report of 1946: *"Since the beginning of the school year Brother headmaster has had to deal with a number of serious difficulties, probably caused by the bad atmosphere that must have been prevalent from before amongst the moniteurs and the students. Three moniteurs have dropped out because either they left their work illegally or they had to be sent away because of very bad behaviour. All the students of the third normal year have, in a spirit of revolt, left the school, with two exceptions, who filled the vacant positions of the moniteurs in the primary school."* We don't find out in his text what the exact problem was. One of the former students of the teacher training college in Bamanya, Jean Boimbo, reported a similar fact: *"One day, if I can remember well, the Brothers nearly went on strike because they didn't agree with the vision of the MSC. Then they said: 'if it is for those problems, you can come and teach yourself. But we, we have to teach ourselves, that's not it. Well then the children shouldn't waste their time.' That's when they gave up. Yes."* (...) *"And we followed the strike, if we were not taught following the curricula of the teacher training such as ... (sic)"* However, he situated his studies at the teacher training college after 1949. This indicates that the Congolese also noticed the problems between the MSC and the Brothers and that they slowly became aware that they were in a position to make certain demands. We will examine this in more depth in the following chapters.

## *Conclusion*

The subject matter taught to Congolese pupils at primary school shows clear differences from what was taught in Belgium. However, it must be posited that these differences were not in the essence or content of the subject matter as such. At first sight, the list of the material taught looks largely parallel. Above all, Religious Education was taught. Besides this, the same basic subjects were taught

as in Western schools: arithmetic, writing, reading. Though it seems there were many parallels, there was one important exception. The language of teaching, and the learning of French in particular, was always the stumbling block of colonial education. The discussions on this topic dragged on until the end of the colonial period. The stance of the MSC, with Hulstaert as its most outspoken representative, is probably one of the most illustrative examples of this. Their choice for the native language later appeared to be a strategic mistake and primarily caused a great deal of conflict with the local population and from the 1950s on also with certain government officials.

The rest of the education curriculum, which, however, was not put into practice to the same degree always and everywhere, showed a far-reaching takeover of Belgian habits and subjects. The strong emphasis placed on – at least to the Congolese – strange and exotic geography and history of the motherland and the West on the one hand and the forceful emphasis on handwork and practical skills on the other hand always had clearly ‘metropolitan’ roots, though they were not necessarily included in the curriculum for the same reasons. More fundamental, however, is the position that the share of ‘new’, ‘adapted’ or ‘African’ subject contents was as good as non-existent. In this regard the MSC could actually be considered as exceptions, given their relatively broad concern for the conservation of local language and traditions. Whether this was out of emancipatory convictions can however be doubted, if only because of the fact that language and tradition were offered to the students in a ‘Catholic’ package.

At a level of didactic technique, the conclusion seems clear and uniform: even Hulstaert, who was responsible for the production of the majority of new reading books at the MSC, was not an education expert. A remarkable link between his ideological views and education is formed by the fact that he wanted to maintain the individuality of the local culture. Through this he unwittingly placed himself in the same line as the ideas of educational reformers from the first half of the twentieth century. At first sight, his indigenistic principles were linked to the upbringing “*vom Kinde aus*” and the “*Nouvelle Education*” in general and this led to his designation as a ‘didactic progressive’. He considered himself like this: “*What is the best method? Difficult to say, but mine is based on the language and thus adapted, it also improves the functioning of writing and reading instructions.*”[lxxvii] This was no empty statement. Hulstaert had indeed done his best to take the specificity of the local language into account when writing the

reading books.

It must finally be noted that, certainly in this area, it is easy to overestimate the influence of Hulstaert in the historical perspective. After all, he was a person who published a lot and also played a very active role for a long time within his congregation and the mission territory. Put another way: so many other missionaries who were active in the field and who were undoubtedly also influential remained far less visible. However, it can be shown that these opinions were certainly neither shared nor accepted by everyone: Hulstaert had to deal with opposition and conflicts from the missionaries, in his own or other congregations, as well as from the government and from the Congolese themselves. Despite this, it appears that in the field there were not many revolutionary or progressive ideas concerning education and that classroom practice was more a result of traditional conservative Catholic views on the one hand and the more or less automatic application of known basic principles on the other. The foundation of this image is formed by the scarce testimonies about more innovative ideas or initiatives together with the positions and statements expressed in contemporary conversations and correspondence between missionaries.

## NOTES

[i] I base this on the following publication from 1923: *Programme Type des écoles primaires communales*, Bruxelles: Ministère des Sciences et des Arts. p. 116.

[ii] [Original quotation in French] *Organisation de l'enseignement libre subsidié pour indigènes en collaboration avec les sociétés de Missions Chrétiennes*, 1948, p. 8.

[iii] The *Revue Pédagogique Congolaise* was a joint initiative from the recently founded university of Lovanium and the *Centre d'Etudes des problèmes sociaux indigènes* (CEPSI) in Elizabethville. It was published from 1955 as an appendix to the *Bulletin du CEPSI*.

[iv] Verhaegen, P. & Leblanc, M. (1955). Quelques considérations au sujet de l'éducation préprimaire de l'enfant noir. In *Revue Pédagogique Congolaise*, n° 2. p. XVII-XXXII.

[v] "Uit brieven van Z.E.P. Vertenten aan de studenten der apostolische school te Assche". In *Annalen*, 1928, 10, p. 219.

[vi] See Briffaerts, J. (2003). Etude comparative de manuels scolaires au Congo Belge: Cas des Pères Dominicains et des Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur. In

Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H., *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*, Studia Paedagogica 33, Leuven: University Press. p. 167-196.

[vii] Inversely, the study of Belgian Congo was on the Belgian curriculum in the third and fourth years.

[viii] *Organisation de l'enseignement libre subsidié pour indigènes en collaboration avec les sociétés de Missions Nationales*, 1929. p. 19. [Original quotation in French]

[ix] The *chefferies* (translated from the lesser used term “hoofdijsen”) were the first territorial units in the governing system implemented locally by the colonial administration. In the interior (i.e. not in the cities), the population was divided into chefferies that were subsequently grouped in sectors. In the first instance, the colonial administrative authority was active per sector. According to the law, common law remained applicable to a certain degree (within the boundaries stipulated in law). Hence the designation of city areas by the name “centres extra-coutumiers” or “outside common law areas”, at least for the Congolese districts in those cities.

[x] *Organisation ...* 1929, p. 42. [Original text in French]

[xi] Africa Archive Brussels, Missions Collection, no. 647, “inspection scolaire 6”. “Ecole de Filles des Grands Centres. Coquilhatville. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école dirigée par les Filles de la Charité. Année 1927”. Soeur Borsu, Coquilhatville, 1928. [Original quotation in French]

[xii] Africa Archive Brussels, Missions Collection, no. 647, “inspection scolaire 6”. “Ecole de Filles des Grands Centres. Coquilhatville. Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école dirigée par les Filles de la Charité. 1928-1929”. s.n., s.l., s.d. [Original quotation in French]

[xiii] Lazarist Archive Leuven. “Rapport sur les oeuvres des Filles de la Charité de St-Vincent de Paul à Coquilhatville. Exercice 1930”. s.n., Coquilhatville, January 1931.

[xiv] Africa Archive Brussels, Missions Collection, no. 647, “inspection scolaire 6”. “Rapport sur le fonctionnement des écoles primaires du premier degré, mission de Coquilhatville, année 1928”. P. Vertenten, Bamanya, 27 March 1929.

[xv] Africa Archive Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 16.484, documents nr. 36 (Wafanya) and 38 (Bokuma). “Rapport sur le fonctionnement de l'école primaire du premier degré dirigée par les RR. PP. Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur”. G. Jardon, s.l., June 1929. [Original quotation in French]

[xvi] Lazarist Archive Leuven. “Rapport sur l'enseignement des écoles des

Révérèndes Soeurs de Saint Vincent de Paul à Coquilhatville”, P. Vertenten, Coquilhatville, February 1930.

[xvii] Africa Archive Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.490, “schoolinspectieverslagen 1932”.

[xviii] Alma Hosten (1909-1985). Mission sister, Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. She was originally from Leffinge and from 1934 worked in the boys’ school in Boende. Hosten had an education degree for primary schools and was a teacher of sciences (obtained at the H. Hart Institute in Heverlee). With this, she was by far the best-educated person employed there. See Van Caeyseele, L. (2004). *Gustaaf Hulstaert: katholiek en/of indigenist?* Unpublished Master’s thesis, Leuven; Vinck, H. (2002). A l’école au Congo Belge. Les livres de lecture de G. Hulstaert. 1933-1935. In *Annales Aequatoria*, XXIII, p. 53-54; Venard, M. (1992). *De geschiedenis van de belgische provincie der Dochters van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*. Brussel: Dochters van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart; Corman, A. (1935). *Annuaire des missions au Congo Belge*.

[xix] Vinck, H. (2003). Les livres scolaires des MSC. In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H. *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. Leuven: Presses universitaires. p. 133-166.

[xx] AAFE 12.5.1. Inspectie van de meisjesschool te Bamanya, 1946. F. Cobbaut, Bamanya, 28 September 1946.

[xxi] AAFE 11.3.3-7. Rapport d’inspection de l’établissement des Soeurs Missionnaires du Précieux Sang à Bamanya (école primaire mixte pour indigènes et école ménagère). M. Vanmeerbeeck, *inspecteur-adjoint au service provincial de l’enseignement*, Coquilhatville, 8 May 1947. [Original quotation in French]

[xxii] AAFE 12.5.6. Report on the inspection in the girls’ school in Bamanya, 1944. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 17 November 1944.

[xxiii] AAFE 12.5.3-5. Report on the inspection in the primary and teacher schools in Bamanya. 1944. G. Hulstaert, Bamanya, 4 November 1944. [original quotation in Dutch]

[xxiv] AAFE 9.4.2-6. Rapport d’inspection de l’école primaire et de l’école de moniteurs à Bamanya. 1952. G. Moentjens, Coquilhatville, 31 September 1952.

[xxv] Ibidem. [Original quotation in French]

[xxvi] The following paragraphs are also partially based on sources unlocked by him and the studies he made of them. I rely here on the contribution of Vinck, H. (2003). Les manuels scolaires des MSC. In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, M. & Vinck, H., *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. Leuven: Universitaire Pers. p. 133-165; Briffaerts, J. (2003). Etude

comparative de manuels scolaires au Congo Belge. In *Ibidem*. p. 167-196 and Van Caeyseele, L. (2004). *Gustaaf Hulstaert, katholiek en/of indigenist?* Unpublished Master's thesis, Leuven.

[xxvii] AAFE 5.2.6-8. Letter from P. Jans to Frère Visiteur. Bamanya, 8 January 1929.

[xxviii] Vinck, H. (2003) *Les manuels scolaires des MSC*, p. 158. [Original quotation in French]

[xxix] Vinck situates this in an evolution of educational methods but observation, or "intuition", was a part of the syllabus from the beginning, as was already apparent from the curriculum discussions of 1929.

[xxx] Moreover, Vinck says, there were only 50 copies printed of this book. See Vinck, H. o.c., p. 152.

[xxxi] *Le Coq Chante* was a biweekly MSC publication (1936-1948) that originally dealt with mainly religious and literary themes, mainly in Lomongo, partly in French. After 1940 there was a greater variety of topics. "*In serial stories and sometimes in dialogue form whole courses were published: on biology, on geography of the Equator province, on medicine, on childcare*". *Etsiko* (literally "the palaver tree", from 1949 to 1954) and *Lokole* ("signalling drum") *Lokiso* (1955-1962) were successors to *Le Coq*. With this latter edition the intention was to put the editing and edition fully into the hands of the Mongo, at least according to the MSC themselves. The chief editing was done by Paul Ngoi and Augustin Elenga. Elenga (1920-1986) was a student of the MSC. After studying at the *école pour moniteurs* in Bamanya, he taught at the primary school in Boteka. From 1950 he became the personal secretary of Hulstaert. Paul Ngoi (1914-1997) received primary education with the Trappists in Bokuma in the first half of the 1920s. Later he followed the Latin humanities section at the small seminary of the MSC. He taught there himself in the preparatory department from 1931 to 1937. Subsequently he worked as a clerk at the mission printing press of the MSC. See De Rop, A. (1975) *In dienst van de autenticiteit*. In Vereecken, J. (ed.) *Missionarissen van het Heilig Hart. 50 jaar in Zaïre*. Extra-edition of the MSC-circle. Borgerhout: MSC. p. 26-30, and further <http://www.aequatoria.be/> under "Bio-bibliographie de personnes" and [http://www.aequatoria.be/archives\\_project/](http://www.aequatoria.be/archives_project/) under "Edition & analyse".

[xxxii] In the first instance this caused serious problems on the level of the interpretation of the story of one of the Congolese former pupils of the MSC, namely Stephane Boale. About this problem see also chapter 9.

[xxxiii] Vinck, H. (2001). "*Nous et les Blancs*" (*Iso la Bendele*). *Considérations*



(1938) de Paul Ngoi sur la vie traditionnelle des mongo et leur confrontation avec la colonisation belge. Unpublished text. This is a French translation of Ngoi's text, made in 1999 by Charles Lonkama, secretary of the Aequatoria research centre in Mbandaka. The text is destined for publication in the *Annales Aequatoria*. [Original quotation in French]

[xxxiv] Vinck, H. (2001). "*Nous et les Blancs*". [Original text in French]

[xxxv] Bosako w'oyengwa III, edition 1955, p. 225-245, translated in the framework of a translation project led by Bogumil Jewsiewicki, at the University of Laval, Quebec (code J-34). This text is actually taken from a schoolbook of the Marist Brothers from 1928, *Buku Ya Nzambe*, though Hulstaert claims its authorship for himself. The text of this lesson is also reproduced in the anthology by Vinck, H. (1998). *Manuels scolaires coloniaux: un florilège*. In *Annales Aequatoria*, 19. p. 3-166 also published on the Internet [www.abbol.com](http://www.abbol.com) [Original text in French]

[xxxvi] Here I specifically mean Vinck, H. (2002). *A l'école au Congo Belge. Les livres de lecture de G. Hulstaert 1933-1935. Introduction et textes*. In *Annales Aequatoria*, XXIII, p. 21-196, and the two already cited articles by Vinck and myself in *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*.

[xxxvii] Vinck, H. (2003), *Les manuels scolaires des MSC*, p. 51.

[xxxviii] Van Gorp, A. (2004). *Gedragwetenschap in de steigers. Het psychopedagogisch vertoog van Ovide Decroly ontmythologiseerd? (1871-1932)*. Leuven: unpublished doctoral thesis. p. 111-114. An extensive series about the analytic-synthetic method was published in the educational periodical "Zuid en Noord", the forerunner of "L'école moderne".

[xxxix] Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur (1933). *Buku ea njekola eandelo la ekotelo I*, Coquilhatville: MSC.

[xl] Ibidem.

[xli] Sister Magda was Alma Hosten's name in the convent.

[xlii] Vinck, H. (2003). *Les manuels scolaires des MSC*, p. 54. [Original quotation in French]

[xliii] Van Caeyseele, L. (2004). *Gustaaf Hulstaert. Katholiek en/of indigenist?* [original quotation in Dutch]

[xliv] Z.M. [Alma Hosten] (1940). Notes on reading books. In *Aequatoria*, III, 3, p. 61-62. [original quotation in Dutch]

[xlv] AA, Fonds Correspondance Hulstaert, 161, Letter from Gustaaf Hulstaert to Sister Magda, 16 April 1942. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xlvi] See p. 293. Source: Aequatoria Archive, Fonds Correspondance Hulstaert

(microfiche 162).

[xlvii] The translator means “or let them look for it themselves”.

[xlviii] See Van Caeyseele, L. (2004). *Gustaaf Hulstaert*.

[xlix] As published in Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H. (2003). *Manuels et chansons scolaires*.

[l] [Original quotation in French] Kita, P. (2003). Les livrets de lecture des Pères Blancs du Kivu (1910-1950). In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H. *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. p. 83.

[li] [Original quotation in French] Briffaerts, J. (2003). Etude comparative de manuels scolaires au Congo Belge: Cas des Pères Dominicains et des Missionnaires du Sacré Coeur. In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H. *Manuels et chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. p. 182.

[lii] Z.M. (1939). From a school report. In *Aequatoria*, 1939, II, p. 55-58.

[liii] This is developed in more detail in the next chapter.

[liv] Brelsford, V. [translated and commentated by G. Hulstaert] (1944). Pédagogie Civilisée et Pédagogie Primitive. In *Aequatoria*, VII, p.24-27. [Original quotation in French]

[lv] Briffaerts, J. & Vancaeyseele, L. (2004). *Le discours de la nouvelle éducation dans le contexte colonial: le grand malentendu*. Paper presented at the 26th International Standing Conference for the History of Education at Geneva, July 2004.

[lvi] Honoré Vinck also expressed himself in this way in various conversations I had with him, among other things about Hulstaert. He described him as someone who knew how to draw attention to his work and his person, this being one of the reasons that his work has remained far more known than that of Boelaert.

[lvii] Vinck, H. (2004). *Assimilatie of inculturatie. Conflicten tussen de Broeders van de Christelijke Scholen en de Diocesane Onderwijsinspectie in Coquilhatstad.1930-1945*. Lecture for the Belgisch Nederlandse Vereniging voor de Geschiedenis van Opvoeding en Onderwijs (BNVGOO) [Belgian Dutch Association for the History of Education], Amsterdam, 19 March 2004, unpublished.

[lviii] AA, Hulstaert Correspondence Collection, fiche no. 161. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Sister Alma, 16 April 1942. [original quotation in Dutch]

[lix] Hulstaert, G. (1945). Formation générale et école primaire. In *Aequatoria*, VIII, 3, p. 87-91. [Original quotation in French]

[lx] AAFE 1.5.3-4. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Louis Van der Beken, head of Bamanya mission. Coquilhatville, 10 December 1941.

[lxi] See chapter 2, [p. 91 and following].

[lxii] Hulstaert, Boelaert and many others did not have any qualms about speaking French and using it in their daily work.

[lxiii] AAFE 30.1.7. Letter from P. Jans to G. Hulstaert. Coquilhatville, 14 January 1939. [original quotation in Dutch]

[lxiv] AAFE 30.1.8-9. Letter from P. Jans to G. Hulstaert. Coquilhatville, 24 January 1939.

[lxv] AAFE 30.1.10. Letter from the government inspector Reisdorff to G. Hulstaert. Leopoldville, 6 December 1941. [Original quotation in French]

[lxvi] AAFE 30.1.13-14. Letter from Reisdorff to G. Hulstaert. Coquilhatville, 19 January 1942.

[lxvii] AAFE 30.4.2. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Brother Director of the school of the Brothers in Coquilhatville. Coquilhatville, 6 February 1943. [Original quotation in French]

[lxviii] AAFE 30.4.3. Letter from Brother Director to G. Hulstaert. Coquilhatville, 10 February 1943. [Original quotation in French]

[lxix] AAFE 30.4.9-10. Letter from G. Hulstaert to Brother Director. Coquilhatville, 2 March 1943.

[lxx] AAFE 30.5.10. Typed memo from G. Hulstaert, unknown addressee, 14 May 1943. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[lxxi] AAFE 31.1.9. Rapport sur l'inspection de l'école libre subsidiée dirigée par les Révérends Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes à Coquilhatville. G. Hulstaert, Coquilhatville, 27 November 1943. [Original quotation in French]

[lxxii] AAFE 1.1.10-12. Letter from L. Van der Beken to Hulstaert. Bamanya, 11 May 1942. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[lxxiii] Africa Archive Brussels, electronic inventory, no. 12.452, Inspection V.A. Coquilhatville 1949-1953. "Contrôle des inspections faites pendant l'année 1951. Province de l'Equateur.", Jean Ney, *Inspecteur en chef de l'enseignement*, Leopoldville, 11 December 1951. [original quotation in French]

[lxxiv] AAFE 9.4.2-6. Rapport d'inspection de l'école primaire et de l'école de moniteurs à Bamanya. G. Moentjens, Coquilhatville, 31 December 1952. [Original quotation in French]

[lxxv] This information about Bokuma comes from one single source, a report written during the 1960s by one of the MSC, Remi Sanders, entitled "Historiek van het klein seminarie van Bokuma". This is an unpublished, typed text of 36 pages kept in the archive of the MSC in Borgerhout. This study is based on archive pieces originally kept in Bokuma itself. Honoré Vinck himself saw this

archive piece in the Congo. According to him it was never transferred to Belgium. Where the archive pieces in question are situated now is uncertain, only the text of Sanders was recorded on microfile.

[lxxvi] Sanders, R., *Historiek van het klein seminarie van Bokuma*, p. 10.

[lxxvii] Gustaaf Hulstaert in a letter to Paul Jans, 26 June 1929, quoted by Vinck (2002). *A l'école au Congo Belge*, p. 49. [Original quotation in French]