

When Congo Wants To Go To School - Catholic Missions in the Tshuapa Region



Group photo of Sisters of Beveren-Waas, in Bolima, date unknown.
From MSC Archives

To give a more coherent picture of the development of education in the region studied, it is necessary to start with a brief explanation of the development of the church hierarchy in the region and the way in which this was concretized by the religious orders that would become responsible for education. This subject will be covered in this chapter in two parts. The first part handles the evolution of the church hierarchy in a strict sense and the delineation of what would eventually become the mission area of the MSC. The presence and missionary work of the Trappists in the area will be discussed first. Chronologically, this history only begins once this congregation had decided to leave the Congo, but it is useful to consider a number of events from the preceding period in order to understand the activities of the MSC properly. The identity and presence of the other religious orders in the mission region and their involvement in education will then be outlined. Finally, the second part will describe a quantitative development of the schools in the vicariate on the basis of a number of statistical data. This will enable us to give the direct context of the reality in the classroom that will be considered in more detail in the second part.

1. The missionary presence

1.1. How the missionaries of the Sacred Heart obtained a vicariate in the Congo

In the church hierarchy, the area around Mbandaka and the Tshuapa was originally a part of the apostolic vicariate of the Belgian Congo, founded in 1888. It was put under the leadership of the congregation of Scheut, which was the first Belgian congregation to send missionaries to the Congo.[i] Naturally, in subsequent years the evangelisation of the Congo Free State as a whole expanded further, the number of congregations active in the Congo greatly increased and the administrative church structure was repeatedly adapted.

1.1.1. The Trappists of Westmalle on the Equator[ii]

Chronologically, the protestant *Livingstone Inland Mission* was the first to establish itself at the mouth of the Ruki in the Congo River. That was in Wangata in 1883. In the same year and in the same place, Stanley, together with the officers Coquilhat and Vangele,[iii] founded the state post Equateurville, which was clearly separated from the mission that had been set up earlier.[iv] In 1895 the monopoly of the Protestants in the region ended with the arrival of the first Trappists.[v] The original intention of this contemplative order was the establishment of a closed monastic community in Bamanya, about eight kilometres from Equateurville, “*following the example of the monks in the middle ages.*”[vi]

Thanks to its strategic situation at the confluence of two important rivers, Equateurville, renamed Coquilhatville from 1892, developed rather quickly to become a so-called *circonscription urbaine*. [vii] Nevertheless, it would take until 1902 before the Trappists, at the request of the colonial administration, set up the parish of Boloko wa Nsimba, still “*forty minutes away from the state post of Coquilhatville*”.[viii] Meanwhile, the developing state post was abandoned by the Protestants. The post of Wangata was moved to Bolenge (about ten kilometres outside Coquilhatville) and the *Livingstone Inland Mission* was replaced by the *Disciples of Christ Congo Mission*. [ix] Even before the First World War, the Trappists built a church in Coquilhatville and provided evangelical teaching there. Even so, their activities in this urban environment remained very limited. Marchal says in this regard: “*The trappists, simple people from the rural Kempen region, had an aversion to great centres.*”[x] In the twenties the General Chapter in Rome decided that the Trappists of Westmalle had to leave the Congo and return to their monastic way of life, which was considered irreconcilable with the missionary work in the Congo.[xi] In 1926 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Issoudun (hereafter referred to by their official abbreviation “MSC”) took over

their area. At the take-over of the Congo by the Belgian state, the missionary presence in the area consisted of three main posts (Bamanya, Mpaku and Boloko wa Nsimba) and around a dozen smaller posts.[xii] At the time the Trappists left the region, in 1926, they left five large mission posts behind.[xiii] The following posts were founded, in chronological order:[xiv] *Bamanya "St. Joseph"*, about ten kilometres to the east of Coquilhatville, founded in 1895; *Coquilhatville "St. Eugène"* (this was originally the mission post of Boloko wa Nsimba, half an hour upstream of Coquilhatville), founded in 1902; *Bokote "Marie-Immaculée"*, about 350 km from Coquilhatville, on the Busira, founded in 1905 in Bombimba but transferred there in 1910); *Bokuma "Saint-Bernard"*, situated a little to the south on the Ruki (originally founded in Mpaku in 1900 and moved there in 1910);[xv] *Wafanya "Sacré Coeur"*, the most recent and most southerly mission post, founded in 1917, situated the furthest into the bush, on the Luilaka (or Momboye), one of the tributaries of the Ruki, about 300 km to the south-west of Coquilhatville.[xvi]

In the middle of the 1920s, just before the take-over by the MSC, the area had five central boys' schools and one central girls' school. The five central mission posts and 120 auxiliary posts were serviced by twenty or so Trappists and 13 Sisters of the Precious Blood, helped by 300 catechists.[xvii] Jules Marchal had a chapter on the Trappists in his two-part *Missie en Staat in Oud-Kongo*. [xviii] In this he discussed among other things their shrewd manner of working, which could explain the relative success of the congregation in the matter of conversions: convert men by allowing them to have relationships with women of polygamous men, on condition that they enter a Christian marriage with those women.[xix] He added the following evaluation: "*While catechists from other mission congregations were closely watched by the fathers, those of the Trappists could work for evangelisation following their own ideas. In this way, they obtained results that were not approached anywhere else in the Congo, in spite of heavy opposition from Protestants, from European civil servants and from a private company.*" [xx] *This meant that the Trappists, who were not allowed to do missionary work and were closed down in 1924 in the Congo, achieved the best results in evangelisation.*" In this respect, these 'best evangelisation results' must clearly be considered as conversion actions, as education was not a priority for the Trappists.

Honoré Vinck has listed a number of the characteristics of the education by the Trappists in a recent contribution.[xxi] As was explained in the first chapter, the

first official school regulation was only proclaimed in 1929. The only guidelines that already existed at that time were the *Instructions aux missionnaires*, published by the Catholic Church itself and these were very succinct on the subject of education. The emphasis was almost exclusively placed on religious instruction and that would, in any case, hardly change when the official curriculum was introduced. It was still explicitly stated in 1930 that “*It (the religious instruction) will constitute the main part of the curriculum, and the missionaries will always give it the first place in their teachings.*”[xxii] Indeed, as the Trappists themselves reported in their mission periodical, the catechism was learnt first, reading and writing came later.

The emphasis was placed almost completely on proselytism, not only in the articles published in the mission periodical, but also by external commentators. The picture that Marchal gives makes one suspect that the Trappists focused primarily on the development of spiritual life with their civilising work. Again, in a letter of 27 December 1921 the governor of the province, Charles Duchesne, wrote about the Trappists’ mission schools: “*In general, (there are) few pupils, who rarely complete their studies.*”[xxiii] About the Sisters who taught the girls he wrote: “*Admirable for their dedication, that nevertheless achieves little success because the environment in which the girls live and the environment in which they will be called to live are not taken into account.*” He was more explicit about the bush schools: “*Established in villages, where a catechist teacher is supposed to teach*” (...) “*in general he is almost illiterate, limits himself to teaching a few religious ideas to a few children and this no more than intermittently.*”[xxiv] In similar reports it was hinted that the Brothers in Coquilhatville were busy with anything but education. It was not in any respect their strongest point, Paul Jans, MSC, also reported in 1929.[xxv]

Vinck again referred to sources from which it appeared that the Trappists claimed to have been sabotaged by this same Duchesne when setting up their school in Coquilhatville.[xxvi] In a *Notice relative à l’école primaire pour enfants noirs existants à la mission des RR. PP. Trappistes à Coquilhatville* from 1924[xxvii] there was indeed a strong condemnation of the Governor, whose behaviour would have been in sharp contrast to that of his predecessor:[xxviii] “*Governor DUCHENE (sic) having assumed leadership of the Equateur, began a destructive action against our education.*” He was in fact accused of pulling a great number of boys out of school to set them to work in place of (white) planters. After which still more Congolese had left the school to go to work in the service of the

administration or private interests.

It is rather difficult to evaluate the standpoint from which Duchesne wrote this in any case. The contribution that appeared about him in the Colonial Biography does give the following indication: “(...) *during his 6th term of office (...) a friendly climate arose between the directors of the private sector and himself, not excluding some passing storms, but eminently favouring appeal. The same climate moreover arose between the governor and the missions established in his province.*”[xxix] The sixth ‘term’ that is spoken of only began in 1924, at the time that the MSC were already present in the region. In the sequel of the note only the MSC were referred to, never the Trappists. Consequently, it may as easily be suggested that there were personal problems between the Trappists and the colonial administration, or that this was a somewhat exaggerated but not unusual manner of reacting. From a letter of October 1924 it certainly seems that the state of education in Coquilhatville was not particularly positively evaluated by Mgr. Van Goethem, MSC. Van Goethem was at that moment still prefect of the Prefecture of the Tshuapa (and in this sense not yet responsible for the area around Coquilhatville). He said in a letter to Edouard De Jonghe: “*Native labour and the native military force are considerable over there. Nevertheless, as yet the education of the children has not been given sufficient attention. This education should be in the hands of the Catholics*”. This naturally implied that the impact of the Trappists was not very strong, in spite of the presence of large numbers of converted Congolese, which was also noted by Van Goethem. He gave further details of his claims about the state of education and saw two concrete problems: on the one hand the administration hardly intervened at all to support education. On the other hand the Trappists provided only primary schooling, which was quite inadequate in an environment in which there was a great need for trained skilled workers.[xxx]

It therefore seems that Van Goethem considered that the Trappists were right to a certain extent as regards state intervention, though he did not mention sabotage explicitly, even though these opinions are drawn from private correspondence with a ‘friendly’ official. Concerning his remark about the level of education, it must be said that this was at that time applicable to the entire colony and as such cannot be construed as a criticism of the Trappists. In this sense it probably fits in with the missionary pressure on the administrative policies, which increased appreciably, partly under the influence of the three-yearly meetings of the heads of missions in the Congo and which, already in 1919, had led to an

action plan for systematic subsidisation of the Catholic missions' education.[xxxii]



Figure 1 - Canon law organisation in the Belgian Congo. From Corman, *Annuaire des missions catholiques*, 1924.

1.1.2. Take-over of the area by the MSC

As from 1926 the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart received the supervision of the former Trappist mission area and, as has been mentioned, they would build this up to a real vicariate. This coincided with the Trappists moving out of the region. The final mission region of the MSC came into existence *grosso modo* in two important steps. In a first phase a part of the existing vicariate (New Antwerp) was split off and brought under the supervision of the MSC as the *Prefecture of the Tshuapa* (the tributary of the Congo that runs through the southern part of Equatorial province).[xxxii] This occurred in 1924.[xxxiii]

The original intention of the Trappists of Westmalle was to found an enclosed community (an abbey), which would, through its spiritual aura, exercise a civilising influence on the local population. Already before the First World War, it seemed that the superiors in Westmalle and the General Chapter in Rome were inclined against shifting towards 'normal' mission work. This actually happened out of sheer necessity because an enclosed, self-supporting abbey community was apparently unattainable *in terra nova* and they depended too much on the local population to fulfil their own needs. The discussions between supporters and opponents of mission work would be long drawn out and the colonial abbots

managed to somehow or other maintain a large degree of autonomy against the hierarchy. Finally, the hierarchy did succeed in closing down the Trappist mission. Vermeir extensively discusses the long search for a mission congregation that could and would take over from the Trappists.

The Belgian province of the MSC, which was only set up in 1919, started discussions with the Trappists as early as 1921 but it would take until 1924 before they effectively left for the Congo. Though taking over the whole mission had originally been discussed, in the first instance the previously uncultivated area of the Upper Tshuapa (more to the east of the area occupied by the Trappists) was intended as the destination. The first MSC members arrived in Bokote, at that point the only and somewhat westerly situated mission post in the new mission area. The reason why this half-hearted solution was chosen should probably be sought in the fact that a great many of the Trappists who were present in the Congo did not want to go back, and at that time were thinking of becoming 'ex-cloistered' as monks, so as to be able to remain active in mission work. However, there were strong doubts about the new status that they would take. In the meantime, Scheut had already made an offer to take on the 'uncloistered' in their order and there was also the possibility of setting up a new, separate (monastic) order. After weighing up the different interests, most of those concerned did in fact choose to transfer to the congregation of the MSC.[xxxiv]

As a consequence of these changes, the Tshuapa prefecture was expanded in January 1926 with the more westerly situated part including Coquilhatville, which had, until then, remained in the hands of the Trappists. The area now acquired the name *Prefecture of Coquilhatville*. Still in the same year, the prefecture was enlarged towards the south and in the following year there were a number of smaller border corrections. In 1931 the independent mission Bikoro was founded and entrusted to the Lazarist Fathers. As a result, the prefecture of Coquilhatville had to give up territory in the South-west.[xxxv] Finally, in 1932, the prefecture was 'promoted' to a full mission region and gained the title of vicariate, with the 'Apostolic vicar' Van Goethem now at its head.[xxxvi]

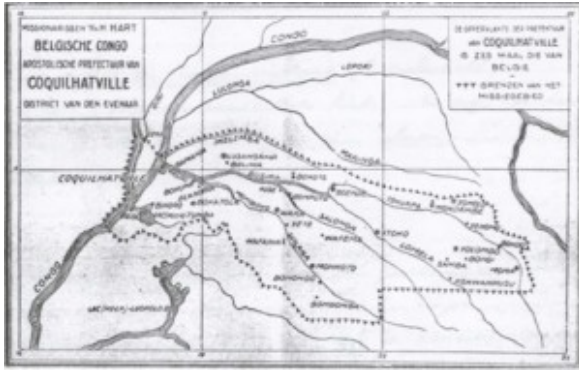


Image 2 - Map of the Prefecture of Coquilhatville. From *Annalen van O.L.V. van het H. Hart*, 1930.

To serve the conversion work the school network was also developed. As time went on the work became more systematic. This happened, certainly in this region, along two separate tracks: on the one hand in central schools, on the other in rural schools. Every central mission post where missionaries were actually placed received a school. This seemed logical, since the logistic provisions had to be concentrated and the number of people who could be brought into action was limited. Because of the extent of the area the local population was also called upon for education. The travelling missionaries went to recruit people in the interior and tried to get them to build schools and allow them to function. Consequently, the teaching was entrusted to Congolese who had received some instruction. This system already existed with the Trappists in an embryonic form but it was now carried through. In principle, in every central mission post at least one travelling father was provided. His task was to comb through the area, to visit the different villages one by one, to settle the *palavers*, to win over the population and to check on the local schoolmasters.

That a two track policy was indeed used is apparent from the fact that the rural or “bush” schools were not only figuratively but also literally much less visible. In official statistics, references are often only found to schools that were situated in more central places. In fact, there was some disagreement between missionaries and administrators concerning rural schools, as is apparent from a report written by Mgr. Van Goethem in 1935. In this he reacted against certain imputations from the educational administration that the missionaries did not do well at all in the rural schools and were not suited for education.[xxxvii]

Under the leadership of the MSC, and with the collaboration of the different congregations which were present in this area, the number of mission posts was

expanded in the course of the years to fifteen or so for the whole vicariate. Boende, Mondombe (both 1925) and Flandria (1926) date from the very early years of the Sacred Heart mission. Later, Imbonga (1940) was added. In the post-war period a third parish was founded in Coquilhatville (Coq II, 1956) and a second in Boende (1956) as well as new posts in Iyonda (1945) and Nkembe (1953). The positions of the different mission posts can clearly be seen on the overview map of the Equatorial district reproduced here.[xxxviii]



Image 4 - Map of the mission region of the MSC, 1975. From MSC-circle anniversary number 1975, 50 years MSC in Congo/Zaire.

1.2. The congregations working in the region

The complete territory of the Belgian Congo was divided into a number of areas for the purpose of Catholic mission work. One particular mission congregation was responsible for each area. Obviously this organisation was partially adapted to historical circumstances. After all, in the first instance Leopold II had asked a number of congregations to go and work in the Belgian Congo. These congregations then called upon other congregations to help them with their mission work. In the case of the MSC in the region of the Tshuapa, one male and four female congregations were involved. The intention here is only to give an overview of these congregations and to briefly consider their foundation and aims, reporting the periods in which they were active in this area and the places where they were working. The source material available on these congregations differed very greatly from case to case, both in quantity and quality. For this reason it seemed appropriate to provide more explanation on this material for each congregation. To avoid interrupting the course of the explanation, this will be done in an extended footnote at the beginning of the paragraph concerned.

1.2.1 *The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul*[xxxix]

The *Daughters of Charity* are of French origin, a relatively old congregation also active outside Europe from 1839.[xl] They were present in the Congo mission of the MSC from 1926. They initially worked in the hospital for whites and the hospital for blacks in Coquilhatville and were quickly brought into education. Most Daughters actually worked in the neighbouring prefecture of Bikoro. The *Daughters of Charity* had close ties with the congregation of the Lazarist Fathers who were working there. This was described as follows by Vermeir:

“The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul went to start a hospital in Coquilhatville and also a few schools. But as these Sisters always needed a Lazarist Father as a Fr. Confessor they could not work in a region where no Lazarists were present. For that reason the Lazarists received a small mission close to Lake Tumba, from which the Fr. Confessor could regularly visit the Sisters in Coquilhatville.”[xli]

This appears to be generally confirmed by the history of the foundation of the Bikoro mission, which appeared in 1939 in the common mission periodical of the Lazarists and Daughters of Charity: *“But they cannot go very far without having a priest from the Mission close by them, entrusted with maintaining the spirit of the Founder with them, the spirit of simplicity, goodness and poverty.”*[xlii] From the same history it also appears that the Lazarists came to an agreement with Scheut about splitting a territory for their ‘independent mission’. In *Coquilhatville* itself the Daughters supervised the primary school and the nursery school.



Sisters Mauritsia and Josepha, Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, with one of their pupils. Bokote, probably in the 1940s. From Archive MSC.

1.2.2 *The Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*[xliii]

The Daughters of the Sacred Heart are actually a sister congregation of the MSC. They belong to the same religious 'family' and were also founded in 1882 in Issoudun (France) by Jules Chevalier and Marie-Louise Hartzler. The Belgian Province was founded in 1931; their Provincial House was situated in Brussels (Schaarbeek).

The sisters had by that time been working in Belgium for several decades. According to their own chronicle writer they were called there as early as 1892, to "*take care of the linen of fathers, brothers, novices and students of the large central training house on the Terloo street in Borgerhout.*" Plans to expand their activities in Belgium to a real apostolate apparently came to nothing. The sisters went back to France after a few years only to return to Belgium a couple of years later, fleeing the antireligious policies of the French government.

Their presence in the mission area of the MSC started in 1925 in *Bokote*. Subsequently, they established themselves similarly in *Boende* (1927), *Mondombe* (1930 to 1960), *Bolima* (from 1934 to 1944), *Bokela* (1938), *Ikela* (1941 to 1960), *Iyonda* (1944, foundation of a leper house and removal of the sisters out of Bolima). After the Second World War they also taught in *Coquilhatville* (1949). Initially that was only in a school for European children, later they also took over the supervision of a girls' school for Congolese in the new parish of Coquilhatville (Coq II, 1957).[xliv]

1.2.3 *The Brothers of the Christian Schools*[xlv]

At the time of colonisation, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were one of the larger religious groups and they still are. As the name implies, they specialized in education. Founded by Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, Canon of Rheims Cathedral in the early eighteenth century, the congregation initially aimed to provide free education for those in need. They were active in the region covering present-day Belgium as from the end of the eighteenth century and established themselves all over the country after Belgian independence. From the second half of the nineteenth century they developed the St. Lucas art schools, which were initially more technical schools. In the early twentieth century their schools had over 25 000 pupils.[xlvi]

In Congo they were active in many places and in different vicariates. Their first establishment was Boma, where they established themselves from 1909. A propaganda brochure of the Brothers from 1946 also reported activities in Matadi, Leopoldville, Tumba and Gombe (a St Lucas school).[xlvii] In 1955,

according to their own chronicler, there were supposed to be 65 different schools of the Brothers existing in the Congo, with over 18 000 pupils in total. About a third of these were in Leopoldville, illustrating the fact that the Brothers clearly concentrated their activities in the centres and towns.[xlvi] Their presence in the region of the MSC was restricted to Bamanian (from 1926) and Coquilhatville (*cité indigène*, from 1929-1930).



Brothers of the Christian Schools, Bamanian 1929. From MSC Archives.

They came to work there at the explicit request of the MSC, who wanted to take on the education of catechists and teachers professionally and assigned a great deal of competence in this to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. At least that is the tenor of what MSC Paul Jans wrote to Brother Véron Ignace at the start of 1929: *“I do not have to tell you the joy with which I received the news of the provisional contract and the coming of your Brothers. During your visit in '27 you were able to see how much Mgr. (Van Goethem, JB) and I hold to your valuable support for placing education at the top and for preparing catechist-teachers capable of providing this education in all the posts depending on the Mission.”*[xlix] In practice, the Brothers would work in the *Groupe Scolaire* in Coquilhatville and in the teacher training college in Bamanian.

1.2.4 The Sisters of the Precious Blood.

The presence of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in the region is specifically associated with that of the Trappists. The congregation was founded in 1885 by François Pfanner, an Austrian Trappist, in Marian Hill (Natal province, South Africa). The missionary history of these Trappists shows similarities with that of the Trappists of Westmalle. The missionary activity of Pfanner gave just as much

occasion for tension with the hierarchy and eventually even led to his removal from his post. The conflicts ultimately led to a secession of Pfanner's followers from the Trappist order, from which the new mission congregation of Marian Hill was formed.

Pfanner, who was working in a new Trappist monastery in Banja Luka (in the present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina, belonging at that time to the Austrian-Hungarian empire), founded the Sister order with the aim of assisting the missionaries in their work. The Sisters finally found a home in Aarle-Rixtel (North-Brabant in the Netherlands), where they established their mother house.



Sister Nivarda,
Superior of the
Sisters of the
Precious Blood in
the Congo, in 1949.
(Archive MSC)

It was the first Catholic order of nuns which was present in the region (and during the first 25 years it was also the only one). They arrived at almost the same time as the Trappists of Westmalle. We can suspect that there was a connection to Westmalle through the founder, who was still working in South Africa at that time.[li] Their presence in the region began in Bamanya (1898), where their work was with the primary school and domestic school. Later they established themselves in Mpaku (1903) but left by 1910 “because of health problems” and transferred to Bokuma. Finally, they also went to work in Flandria (Boteke), where the *Huileries du Congo Belge* (H.C.B.) had an establishment with associated education (1931).[lii]

1.2.5. The Sisters of St Vincent de Paul from Beveren-Waas[liii]

This was the smallest congregation working in the region. These Sisters came from a local religious community in Beveren-Waas, founded there in 1844 by the village priest Cools. They undertook the traditional tasks of a congregation of nuns: teaching and the care of the sick. Right up to the present day they are associated with the village school in Beveren-Waas. They also fulfilled these tasks in the Congo. They came to this area due to the actions of Mgr. Van Goethem, who, just as his successor Hilaire Vermeiren, came from Beveren-Waas and knew the Sisters from his own village. The published sources mainly report one establishment at *Wafanya* (from 1929) but they are supposed also to have worked in *Bolima*, as some of the Sisters reported to me themselves in a conversation, but that was perhaps only the case in the fifties.[liv] *Wafanya* was the most easterly and isolated mission post in the area of the MSC.

2. Quantitative development of education in the region

It is a very difficult task, if not an impossible one, to give a correct picture of the quantitative growth of education in this region. In the first place, it is certain that exact statistics have never existed about the participation of Congolese in education. There was never a real obligation to go to school and never any effective check on the enrolment. The missions were certainly obliged to give certain data in their annual reports but it was very difficult to check the accuracy of these numbers. Besides that, missionaries and officials of the administration had a somewhat tense relationship with each other which discouraged the objective reporting of statistics and numbers.

Secondly, there is the opaque structure of education. In the course of the years, the curriculum was constantly broadened, while the structure itself evolved from a rather organically grown situation to a rather complex patchwork quilt of guidelines, schools, curricula and nomenclature. Consequently, the comparison of statistics from different sources must be handled very cautiously, considering that the same type of school could be called by different terms.[lv] These effects are certainly less important at the level that we wish to study, primary education, but even 'primary education' is not always an unambiguous term. Let us think for example of the problem we have previously discussed: the problems of the different grades.[lvi]

Thirdly the point of departure is the ecclesiastical organisation of the colony (vicariate), which did not correspond to the political divisions.[lvii] That almost makes trusting in the information from the missions themselves obligatory. This

only appears to be an inconvenient element at first sight. After all, the data that the official bodies worked with were also assembled by the missions. Even though the question is not whether the statistics give an honest picture (or can give such a picture), there still remains the enormous problem that it is not always clear which type of school is included in which statistics and which is not. Subsidised and non-subsidised schools could quite often be mingled, for example.

No systematic sets of statistics exist that are valid for the complete period, either in an official source or publication, internal documentation or correspondence of the MSC. The figures brought together here are primarily based on three series of data. Firstly, there are the so-called *Annuaire des missions*, annual reports from missions which we have already referred to and which were considered a sort of reference book about the Catholic missions in the Belgian Congo, often with comprehensive lists of missionaries, places where they were established, information about foundations, and so forth.[lviii] Secondly, a number of (annual) reports of the MSC directed to their superiors were available. The duty of reporting, which was imposed internally, obliged those responsible at the local level to keep the superiors on the home front informed at regular intervals about the developments in the mission. The mission periodicals are the third source used. These regularly contain statistics or trends, even only as a means of propaganda. They are certainly to be read with the necessary degree of caution. Some data come from other documents such as the *Aequatoria Archive*. Finally, here and there data from inspection reports, mostly composed by mission inspectors, have been used.

The statistics are reproduced here in the following manner: Firstly, in a general overview, statistics which apply to the global region are brought together. Subsequently, the quantitative development of education is given, mission post by mission post, always referring to relevant citations and statistics. This is done insofar as possible in chronological order. In this account, the mission posts are ordered according to their date of foundation.

2.1. General

2.1.1. In the Interbellum

A report from 1929, composed by Mgr. Van Goethem and intended for the *Propaganda Fidei* at Rome, reports that there were 10 *Scholae inferiores pro pueris* and 6 *pro puellis*, with pupil numbers of 1 074 and 521 respectively.[lix] An overview that was composed at about the same time by the mission's inspector

Vertenten reports in more detail the differing types of schools (nursery schools, primary schools and the teacher training college).[lx] On the basis of a large number of inspection reports that are available for the year 1929, the data from that overview can be confirmed.[lxi] For the situation five years later we can appeal to the *Annuaire* of Abbé Corman, which has been referred to previously.[lxii] The data for both years are brought together schematically here:[lxiii]

Table 2 - Schematic overview of the congregations present in the MSC mission area

The 1930s were generally considered as the high tide for Catholic missionary activity.[lxiv] The number of central mission posts in the vicariate of Coquilhatville also increased considerably in the second half of the 'thirties: Bolima (1934), a second parish in Coquilhatville (1934), Bokela (1936) and Ikela (1937).[lxv] For these mission posts, however, there are much less statistical data in connection with education.[lxvi] Besides this, the following casual remark in a travel report by one of the MSC members gives a disappointing picture of the state of affairs of that education halfway through the 1930s: *"Still no real education outside the mission posts; teaching of the catechists in the catechism as preparation for baptism, but no more. There are only schools with a real curriculum in the mission posts."*[lxvii] In Mgr. Van Goethem's report about the operational year 1936-37 some more statistics about the rural schools are given: *"Despite the difficulty of regular inspection our rural schools have maintained their activity. I here cite the number of schools and their pupils, for each of our posts."*[lxviii] Table 2- Schematic overview of the congregations present in the MSC mission area

Table 3 - Number of rural schools and pupils in the apostolic vicariate of Coquilhatville, by mission post, 1936 (source: Aequatoria Archives)

These figures are brought together in Table 3. Finally, there are some global figures in a few internal reports on the number of pupils in the primary education of the vicariate at the end of the interbellum: in 1938 there were 118 primary schools with 6 140 boys and 665 girls.[lxix]

2.1.2. After the Second World War

Naturally, there is very little information available for the war years. The *Annals*

published hardly anything about the Congo during the war and only after 1944 can traces be found of the reports from the missions to their superiors. The *Annuaire* from 1949 does give fairly detailed information. Little is added to this by the internal reports and certainly not by the articles in the *Annals*. A general reference work of the calibre of these *Annales* is really no longer available for the last decades of the colonial period. The *Katoliek Jaarboek* (sic) from 1960 does contain some interesting data but is nevertheless less detailed about the schools in the regions and focuses naturally on the end of the colonial period. For the 1950s, therefore, the data from reports of the diocese have to be called upon, if possible supplemented by other information, for example from the *Annals*.

There are, in fact, good reasons to approach this type of source from the 1950s with extra caution. Colonial self-legitimation and thus propaganda was very common in this period. Criticism and interest grew in the homeland and the polarisation between Catholics and free-thinkers would play an important role in Belgium, and to a more limited extent also in the Congo. A good example of this effect is to be found in the annual report of the mission for the school year 1951-52: "*A slight decrease is apparent amongst pupils in the first grade. There were some schools with five or six pupils; the Vicariate could not permit itself the luxury of subsidising the teachers for these schools as the school population was insufficient to be subsidised by the government.*"[lxx] An observation that certainly contradicted the general jingoistic mood and the picture of classrooms overwhelmed by eager-to-learn masses, as it appeared in the periodical of the missionaries more than once. Increasingly positive reports were sent out into the world, particularly about the participation of girls in education: "*A happy conclusion: the girls are starting to attend school better. This is an appreciable success, given the parents apparent unwillingness to send their daughters to the mission posts.*"[lxxi]

In his annual report of 1954 Mgr. Vermeiren gave the following statistics for the whole vicariate: "*The total number of pupils in primary schools of the mission is 11 933 of which 10 567 are boys and 1 363 girls. 540 children from the nursery school should be added to this number.*"[lxxii] In September 1955 he gave the following statistics, which were split up quite differently: "*The number of pupils in the primary school is continually increasing. Thanks to the dedication of our itinerant missionaries the number of bush schools has increased to 29 during the past year. ... The bush fathers currently run 195 schools: nursery and primary schools have 13 693, evening schools 174 pupils. Professional schools, middle,*

teacher training schools and secondary schools, domestic and nursing schools have 546 pupils. A school for educational theory has just opened with 64 pupils."[lxxiii] In 1956 it was stated much shorter: *"The number of pupils in the central and bush schools considerably exceed 15 000."*[lxxiv] The report was also characterised by an aggressive tone, typical for that period, in which the enmity between confessional and 'neutral' education shows through strongly. In the *Annals* from March 1957 the numbers were given in somewhat more detail, in an article based on the annual report of 1 July 1956.[lxxv] On the basis of this, one can indeed conclude that more than 15 000 pupils were involved, of which less than 7% went beyond the level of actual primary education. Broken down the figures are:

Table 4 - Number of schools and pupils in the apostolic vicariate of Coquilhatville, 1956 (source: *Annals MSC*)

A number of elements that have been discussed above are shown in the considerations that the Vicar devoted to education in his annual report for 1958, the last that we have available before independence: *"Let us cast an eye over the education table. The vicariate currently runs 246 central and bush schools. The nursery, primary, teacher training and professional schools house an increasing number of pupils; we are approaching twenty thousand. A happy fact to be observed: as I have already mentioned above, the girls are coming in much greater numbers to the central posts of the mission for their instruction and education. The natives have confidence in our education. In this way in Coquilhatville where the left government has made such efforts to compete with free education, the number of pupils attending the classes run by the Brothers and Sisters totals four thousand. The same is true for the school for European children. The quality of our bush teachers sometimes leaves something to be desired. Nevertheless, we are making every effort to replace them with more and more pupils leaving teacher training colleges each year."*[lxxvi]

Finally a few statistics from just after independence. The *Katoliek Jaarboek* from 1961 only gives a few general numbers. For the diocese of Coquilhatville those are:[lxxvii] one junior seminary with 85 seminarians and 243 primary schools, with 18 120 Catholic boys and 3 624 Catholic girls, besides 5 200 and 3 672 non-Catholics respectively. This publication also gave a list with all the secondary schools in the Congo. From this it seems that the scarce 'secondary education' was mainly concentrated in Coquilhatville and Bamanya and that girls were

almost completely ignored (see the list appended).[lxxviii]

2.2. Situation per mission post

2.2.1. Bamanya (founded in 1895)

Interbellum



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

From the overview of 1929 it is apparent that the MSC had boys' schools in every mission post, except in Bamanya. The Brothers of the Christian Schools had a boys' school there. It was also confirmed in the *Annals* of the MSC that the Brothers, even before they started up the school group in Coquilhatville, were already active in Bamanya: *"Even before they (i.e. the Brothers of the Christian Schools, JB) sent the first teachers to Coquilhatville for the government schools, the first three Brothers came to Bamanya. Straight away they organised the primary school and a teacher training college."*[lxxix] Father Rousseau wrote in 1932 in the *Annals*: *"Since I have been here in Bamanya, they have built a large school for boys and another building of 64m by 50m. Already 200 boys are boarding and the beds for the remainder will soon be ready. The Sisters are now asking for the same beds to be made for the girls, that makes another 100 to 150 of these beds that we have to put together."*[lxxx] This indicates that a girls' school did indeed already exist there at that time.

In 1933 those same *Annals* stated: *"Besides workshops where we teach our black boys a craft, we have just started the first teacher training college under the leadership of a few Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Sisters have opened a similar school for girls."*[lxxx] The girls were taught in Bamanya by the Sisters of the Precious Blood. Precise data is to be found in an anonymous report about the

Sisters for the year 1934-35: "*In Bamanya the Froebel school houses 42 pupils and the primary girls' school 76. These schools are running well.*"[lxxxii]

In the general report about the working of the Vicariate, Van Goethem wrote, again in the same year, about the results of that education: "*The school at the post houses 350 pupils. The teacher training school awarded eighteen diplomas in this year. Of the new pupils with diplomas ten have been placed in central schools, seven in rural schools and one became a clerk.*"[lxxxiii] Most graduates of the teacher training college therefore clearly achieved the positions they were expected to.

After the Second World War

Data for the year 1947 were included in the Annuaire of 1949. According to this data 66 rural schools depended on the mission post of Bamanya. At the mission post itself the primary school of the Brothers now counted 274 pupils. The teacher training college (the only one in the region) had 67 pupils. The Brothers also had a novitiate with 6 novices. Girls' education included the primary school with 79 pupils, a domestic school with 18 pupils and a department of 'cutting and sewing' with 11 pupils. A report from 1946 gave different numbers: the teacher training college still had, according to this source, 300 pupils, somewhat more than given in the Annuaire. Further, there was mention here of a school for 'half-white girls' (in the colonial context one usually spoke of 'mulattos'), also supervised by Sisters of the Precious Blood. The report mentioned, without further details, a hundred or so girls in 'the girls' school', and sixty or so girls and boys in the nursery school.[lxxxiv]

In the 1950s most attention was given in publications and reports to the building of a new school building for 'the teacher training college' which had already been set up in 1951.[lxxxv] The new building opened its doors in 1954.[lxxxvi] Statistics report that at the beginning of the fifties there were more than 50 students in the teacher training college. Later this number dropped to under 30.[lxxxvii] However, this local situation illustrates the complexity of the terminology used. In a document from 1956 it was reported that in Bamanya, as well as a teacher training college, there was a 'school for *moniteurs*' (teaching assistants) and a 'pedagogical school'.[lxxxviii] At that time there were 26 pupils in the *école normale secondaire*, 45 in the 'school for *moniteurs*' and 64 in the 'pedagogical school'.[lxxxix] The only mention of the primary school was that 'new classes' were added.[xc]

2.2.2. Coquilhatville (1902)

Pre-war period

There are few statistics available for Coquilhatville in the pre-war period. From an article in the *Annals* of 1927 it can be inferred that, at that time, there was already a large school with Congolese teachers.[xci] More specific information is not available. In 1937 the activity report of the Vicariate stated: “(native centre): convent for Sisters of Charity, who run the new school for native girls at this place.”[xcii]

After the War

The ‘city’ of Coquilhatville was split into two different mission posts in the *Annuaire* of Van Wing. Six rural schools were dependent on Coquilhatville “Rive” (the original parish founded in 1902). At this time, the school group of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was apparently brought into the new parish, Coquilhatville “Bakusu” (founded in 1934). The new parish apparently corresponded to the *centre ville*. At least, that can be inferred from the fact that all educational activity was situated in that part of the town. According to the data from the *Annuaire* the school group of the Brothers comprised at that time a primary school with 851 pupils and a secondary school (*section moyenne*) with 94 pupils, all boys. The Daughters of Charity led the school for indigenous girls (founded on the 7 October 1938 according to the *Annuaire*), which consisted of a nursery school with 52 pupils, a primary school with 5 classes and 360 pupils, and a domestic school with 3 classes and 38 pupils. Besides this, 2 rural schools were also reported.

In the 1950s Coquilhatville, as administrative headquarters and the only ‘city’ in the region, received by far the most attention. It is certain that the town was expanding enormously and that the Catholic Church tried to keep pace with the population increase. The town, which from its foundation consisted of a black and a white neighbourhood, each with its own parish, would get an additional, third, black parish at the end of the 1950s. In the school year 1950-51 a new primary school opened there with 400 pupils.[xciii] At that time plans were already being made for yet another primary school and this was already established in the next school year. At the same time a vocational school was opened. Apparently this very quickly gained 100 pupils, distributed between departments of woodwork and metalwork.[xciv]

Around 1952, according to the *Annals*, there were supposed to be 2 000 children receiving primary education in the *Centre Extra Coutumier* (C.E.C.), as the

neighbourhood for the indigenous people was officially called.



Playground of the girls' school Sainte Thérèse in Coquilhatville, in the fifties. From the personal collection of Sister Suzanne Carbonnelle (Daughters of Charity), Rochefort.

Of these there were 1 300 boys and 700 girls, a proportion which, coincidentally, differed significantly from that of the rural areas, where the participation by girls was far lower.[xcv] The annual report of the apostolic vicar for 1954 gives more precise statistics that reflect the same order of magnitude: 1 125 pupils with the Brothers and 717 pupils with the Sisters.[xcvi]

From 1955 we also find the new parish in the 'official' reports. The foundation of the parish occurred at the same time as the school conflict in the Congo, which also left its mark. From that time the results of both school networks were compared. Naturally, this always came out in favour of the mission schools. These still seemed to be undergoing an exponential growth. In the report for 1955-56, for example, more than 4 000 pupils were mentioned in primary education, purely in the original C.E.C.[xcvii] The results of the newly set up 'state education' stood, of course, in sharp contrast. The report of 1956 gave figures that were much more in line with the previous ones: 1 200 boys and 1 000 girls in the first neighbourhood, 300 children in the new parish. An honest comment was added: *"5 emergency classrooms were built to combat the official state schools: already more than 300 children are enrolled in these classes, mostly girls; two more classrooms are urgently needed."*[xcviii]

For the following years there is only information from the *Annals*. Again, other numbers were systematically given. Numbers from 3 500 to 4 000 pupils are

mentioned in the 'Congolese' primary schools. As the nomenclature used is seldom clear-cut, it is almost impossible to find out what is precisely meant by this. However, seeing that separate numbers are given for other levels of education, this appears to relate solely to primary education.[xcix]

2.2.3. Bokuma (1900-1910)

In the *Annals* of 1928 an article was published called "History of the mission post in Bokuma", in which religious education and the difficult beginning of conversion work in the area were mentioned. Schools were not explicitly discussed.[c] After this, nothing special appeared about this subject in the *Annals*, but from the activity report concerning the Sisters of the Precious Blood from 1934 some information can be extracted: "At Bokuma the Sisters have a school for boys with 108 pupils, a school for girls with 51 pupils and a nursery school with 42 pupils." [ci] Information was still scarce after this. From a report of 1935, about the Sisters of Beveren-Waas in Wafania, the following does appear: "Sr. Julie is the head of a school for boys which currently has 365 pupils. This year there are 17 graduates, of which five have begun their grammar school in Bokuma,..." [cii] This is a reference to the only school with real secondary education in the entire region, the junior seminary in Bokuma, founded in 1930.[ciii]



Class photo of the highest class of the boys' school in Bokuma, 1959.
MSC Borgerhout Collection

In the *Annuaire* about 10 rural schools, primary education at the central school (by the MSC, JB), a junior seminary with 35 students, and girls' education by the Sisters of the Precious Blood were reported for 1948. The girls' school consisted

of a primary school with 62 pupils and a department for 'cutting and sewing' with 32 pupils. The numbers for the seminary are particularly difficult to place. In an article in the *Annals* in 1948, 45 seminarians were mentioned.[civ] The pupil numbers fluctuated, in fact, rather strongly. For example, the year 1947 began with 50 students and ended with 28.[cv]

The seminary, as the most prestigious educational institute in the region, received the most attention in the publications and reports for the 1950s. The report for 1956 mentioned a start-up girls' school and a boys' school that "*shot up out of the ground*", a term that applies more to the development of the buildings than to the numbers of pupils. Pupil numbers were only given for the junior seminary, there were about 50.[cvi]

2.2.4. Bokote (founded in 1905, moved in 1910)

In the meantime, in 1926, there appeared to be a nursery school in Bokote.[cvii] Eight years later Sister Henrica wrote in the *Annals*: '*About our school colony: After the holidays there are just about a hundred extra new pupils. In the week the sisters now have 702 people in the classes. As far as the number of girls is concerned, there are now 115, and we must add to that the 135 foolish virgins over which Sister Rosa is in charge.*'[cviii] What she meant by 'the foolish virgins' is not entirely clear. In another, anonymous article a boys' school led by the Daughtersis also mentioned: "*Once past the lokole-house, we arrive at the classes.... Sr. M. Ghislina is very busy: she is already teaching the girls from half past seven, more than a hundred; she is assisted by two black teachers, whom she also has to help along the way ...*", and "*At a quarter past ten the classes begin for the boys.*"[cix]

This is confirmed in the activity report about the Daughters of the Sacred Heart: "*The nursery school has 70 children, led by Sr. Aleidis. The girls' school has 126 pupils and is led by Sr. Josepha. The boys' primary school has 949 pupils and the teaching is done by Sr. Engelberta, Sr. Josepha, Sr. Alphonsine, and Sr. Aleidis. The dressmaking workshop, that houses around thirty girls, is run by Sr. Henrica.*"[cx] The numbers given here for the boys' school give the impression of a rather large school. This is confirmed in the general activity report of the Vicar, the numbers correspond *grosso modo*: "*Bokote: school at the post has flourished extremely well with its 1 125 boys and 150 girls.*"[cxi] Again, Vertenten confirms in his article in the *Annals* from 1934, which has already been cited, that:

"In the last few years there has been a great influx of male youths at our mission

posts: Bokote and Boende above all (Bokote 1000 and Boende 600). In Bokote they have been able to lodge most of the children with the families that live there at the mission. There are guest families which accommodate up to 20 to 30 children."[cxii]



Bokote, 1956. Class photo with pupils and teacher in the company of Sister Jozefa. MSC Borgerhout Collection.

After the war Van Wing quoted 53 rural schools for this post. Then there was also primary education at the mission post, led by the MSC, with 7 classes for 350 pupils (!), and girls' education by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart: a nursery school with 39 pupils and primary education with 5 classes for 36 pupils. This last number seems exceptionally strange. A manuscript from 1946 with data about the mission at Bokote reported 310 boys and 26 girls, which is reasonably in agreement with the previous numbers.[cxiii] According to this document, there were supposed to be 949 boys and 46 girls attending in the rural schools.

Again, attention here was primarily paid to the building plans in the fifties, particularly the boarding school for which the first stone was laid in 1950. The scarce numerical data again come from the annual report from 1956: about 450 boys and 100 girls populated the primary school at that time.[cxiv] Another 11 small schools in the interior are also mentioned, but the criteria used here to determine what 'rural schools' were differed from those used in the *Annuaire*.

2.2.5. Wafanya (1917)

In 1930 the following was written about the Sisters of Beveren-Waas in Wafanya: "*E.Z. Julia, a qualified teacher, is the superior. Besides managing the house and the community she is also the headmistress of the school and is responsible for over 100 boys. She has also already started a sewing school for girls and primary education for girls is already under discussion.*"[cxv] The reporting in the Annals

was noticeably well-disposed towards the Sisters of Beveren-Waas. In 1931 father Vertenten wrote in an article, titled "Wafanya advances": *"The boys' school flourishes under the diligent and expert leadership of Mother Julia, she already has 136 pupils. The girls' school will quickly follow: the sewing school is there already and in a short time the little girls have already learnt a great deal, the larger ones are already learning to work on the machine. The sewing school is a beautiful hall, roomy and light, completely built in stone."*[cxvi] And in 1932 he was even more lyrical: *"If you see little Mother Julia, you would never think that she, supported by the moral authority of Father Rector, would have been able to accomplish such astonishing work here: in only a few years she has set up a complete primary school. She has 300 children at school, nearly all boys. At the inspection I found that they knew so much about the curriculum that most of them could move to a higher class. Under her leadership Sister Lutgardis has started girls' primary schools (the sewing school has already been there a long time) and Sister Andrea is now starting the nursery school."*[cxvii] Clearly the boys' school of the missionaries was really run by the Sisters of St Vincent. That was confirmed by an activity report from 1935: *"Sr. Andrea runs the nursery school and has 23 children. Sr. Lutgardis is responsible for the girls' school, which houses 45 pupils and the dressmaking workshop. Sr. Julie is the head of the boys' school which currently has 365 pupils."*[cxviii]

A report from just after the war gives an interesting reference point. It compares pupil and school numbers from July 1944 and July 1945. I will restrict myself to the primary school: In 1944 there were 221 boys, in 1945 that became 252 (first and second grade together). There were again 23 girls reported. For the other school types there is no clear reference point. For example, there is no mention of a domestic school but a teacher training college is referred to.[cxix] Besides the 85 rural schools, which were depending from the mission post, in 1949 there was mention of primary education for boys at the central school, consisting of 6 classes for at least 350 pupils. For the girls the following numbers were given: a nursery school with 1 class and 20 pupils, primary education with 2 classes for 35 pupils, and the domestic school with only 1 class for 15 pupils.

From the Annals for 1954 there is also the following quotation: *"Schools: as is the case everywhere it is also very difficult to get girls to school at this mission post: there are only 25 pupils under the supervision of one teacher. The nursery school has 30 infants (1 teaching assistant). The boys' school has 275 pupils divided over 5 study years (7 teachers). The qualified teacher Sister manages everything. The sewing and washing is taken care of by the big girls. The vegetable garden and*

nursery form an ideal practice place for our schoolboys.”[cxxx]

2.2.6. Boende (1925)

The mission post of Boende was the first one that was set up by the MSC itself. In 1926 Father Marcel Es, MSC reported: “(...) *I have just written the number 37 down for the boys; with the girls we cannot begin until Sisters are available.*” The Daughters of the Sacred Heart would indeed not arrive in Boende until April 1927.[cxxxi] One of the Daughters, Sister Emilienne, reported that year that in Boende there was a girls’ school and a boys’ school and cabinet maker’s training with the Fathers.[cxxii] Father Vertenten reported in 1929 in a travel report: “*Every day 48 boys and 25 larger girls came to school and there is a small nursery school for about 20 little black infants.*”[cxxiii]

In the following period the Annals did not report anything specific about Boende but the activity report for 1934-35 did report that the Daughters of the Sacred Heart took care of the education for boys and girls: “*Sr. Mauritsia is responsible for the nursery school and teaching the girls. She has 50 girls in her primary school and 36 infants in her nursery school. Sister superior, Sr. Marie, with Sr. Bernardina and Sr. Magda is responsible for the boys’ school. They have 824 pupils. The dressmaking workshop is run by Sr. Celesta.*”[cxxiv] In 1934, Vertenten returned to the subject of the number of boys who went to school in Boende and spoke on that occasion of 600.[cxxv] However, the somewhat more official activity reports about the vicariate also reported strong growth in 1935 and 1937: “*Boende: the school is developing and houses almost 700 pupils.*”[cxxvi] “*Our central schools have started to flourish. The number of pupils has especially increased in the school in Boende. The Commander of the Force Publique has amicably granted us a non-commissioned officer to give the pupils lessons in physical education.*”[cxxvii]

In 1941 Father Cortebeeck reported in the Annals about “*400 boys of the colony*”.[cxxviii] A memo from the end of the war period reported about “*550 schoolchildren at the mission post, 1 150 in the interior with 31 teaching assistants*”.[cxxix] In the post-war period Boende developed further to become the second centre of the MSC mission area. The *Annuaire* records 58 rural schools, primary education at the central school (9 classes with 600 pupils), an agricultural school (for boys) with 39 pupils, and a girls’ school of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart (primary education in 3 classes with 22 pupils).

For the fifties, we find rather detailed statistics in an annual report about the

school year 1953-54.[cxxx] This reports (here presented as a table):[cxxxii]

Table 5 - Situation of education in Boende, 1954 (source: Aequatoria Archive)

The annual report of 1955 seems to be less precise in its indications, and reports the following numbers: *“The cabinet making workshop led by (Father) Verpaele has 27 pupils and his construction school has 21, with 50 nursery schoolchildren, about 700 school boys, 110 girls, about 90 men at the agricultural school, 35 girls in the domestic school, about 60 at the evening school. And the teacher training school is starting shortly.”* Concerning the rural schools: *“Father N. Jockin is in charge of an immense interior. ... 22 bush schools, about 900 pupils.”*[cxxxii]

At that time the only particular concern was about the mission post of Boende. Besides this, in the fifties the town began to develop rapidly, something that would quickly disturb the local missionaries: *“But the town of Boende is steadily developing a few kilometres from the mission and it is of the utmost urgency that Boende town becomes a whole new parish. There Father De Meyst is nominated as pastor. (...) for the freemasons are also beginning to recognise the value of Boende town...”*[cxxxiii]

2.2.7. Mondombe (1925)

There are a few statistics to be found for this small mission post. Vertenten wrote in 1931 about the start of the mission post: *“In 1926 they began here at a two hour distance from the state post (...) The children, about 125, begin school at 7 o’clock. One teacher Sister is in charge, she is assisted by native teachers.”*[cxxxiv] A few years earlier he had already made mention of *“(...) a school with three classrooms, each of which has an area of 6 by 5 meters, the Brother has had 40 large school banks made for it.”*[cxxxv] In 1932 the report was: *“Straight away the children from the Montessori school of Sister Imelda are ready for a song and a dance after a nice ‘melesi, madame’(‘merci, madame’, JB). She has thirty-odd.”*[cxxxvi]

Although it was not explicitly stated, we can conjecture that this information is about a boys’ school. In the activity report about the Daughters of the Sacred Heart from 1935 it was indeed reported that *“Sr. Ludovica ran the nursery school, and has 53 children. The girls’ school has 60 pupils, who receive their lessons from Sr. Imelda. There are 228 boys and their education is given by Sr. Imelda and Sr. Ascanus. The same Sr. Ascanus also teaches the school for around twenty adults. Sr. Léonarda is responsible for learning to cut.”*[cxxxvii] The same Sister

Imelda wrote an article in the *Annals* a few years later in which she also talks about the pupils: "*Rascals hey, and we are getting up to the 300.*"[cxxxviii]

At the end of the school year 1944-45 the school had 324 boys and 35 girls.[cxxxix] Strangely enough it was reported in the annual report for the school year 1947-48 that "*a very lovely school colony has been built that may house around 300 pupils.*"[cxl] Van Wing spoke in 1949 of 49 rural schools, a primary boys' school consisting of 7 classes with 450 pupils, and a primary girls' school, set up in 1930, run by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. Later, in the fifties, there was only scarce information available about a boys' school and about the first year of the girls' school. According to this same information the area had 28 rural schools with over 1 000 pupils in 1955.[cxli]



2.2.8. *Flandria-Boteke (1926)*

Flandria was a special mission post in the sense that it was set up near the *Huilever* establishment.[cxlii] That there was a form of cooperation between the two can be seen from Van Goethem's activity report, in which he writes among other things: "*Huilever continues to provide for the upkeep of one hundred pupils. The school has 350.*"[cxliii] Frans Maes, former headmaster of the school in Flandria, confirmed that there was a little monetary support from the "company", which also continued after the war.[cxliv] There was also a Batswa school in Boteke: "*In Boteke the sisters run a nursery school with 35 pupils, a school for young girls with 45 pupils and a boys' school for Batswa with 130 pupils.*"[cxlv] The report by Van Goethem, already cited, confirms this: "*Boteke: beside the school group at Flandria: boarding school at Batswa with one hundred and thirty pupils.*"[cxlvi] These Batswa schools enjoyed a certain amount of special attention. This actually related to a sort of racial segregation, whereby the Pygmies, who were seen as a non-sedentary (nomadic) people, received a 'specially adapted' education. The photograph of the kindergarten shown here confirms again the existence of the nursery school (*école gardienne*), whereas Corman in 1935 only reported two primary schools (and Frans Maes also reported nothing on this matter in the discussion I had with him).

The *Annuaire* of 1949 gives incomplete information for this post: 70 rural schools, primary education at the central school (no numbers) and a girls' school run by the Sisters of the Precious Blood (primary school with 117 pupils). The annual

reports from the first half of the fifties were mainly restricted to the building of a new school for the Batswa. Flandria therefore had three schools: a school on the H.C.B. ground, one at the mission post (situated next door), and the so-called Batswa school. From what appeared in the *Annals* it can be deduced that this was the same boys' school.[cxlvii] A notable observation about the rural schools: the report from 1955 gives 21 rural schools with about 1 300 children in the interior. This differs greatly from the numbers from 1949. Probably the intention of the Apostolic Vicar to reduce the number of rural schools was in fact being carried out, although I have not yet found any convincing evidence of this.[cxlviii]



Prize-giving in Boteke (Flandria), in the 1950s. From: MSC Borgerhout Archives

2.2.9. *The other mission posts*

There is almost nothing to be found about *Bolima* (1934) before the war, which naturally has everything to do with the fact that it was a new mission post at that time. Only the following report from 1935 can be quoted: “*It is a new post that has around 350 pupils. The school was taught by Sr. Ghislaine and dressmaking is given by Sr. Osmonda.*”[cxliv] “*Bolima: a new post, a Father, a Brother and four Sisters. The school operates regularly.*”[cl] The information about Bolima in the *Annuaire* was also very brief after the war. There was only mention of primary education at the central school and of 19 rural schools in the interior. Only one MSC worked there at that time. Later, too, there was very little information available. In 1955 there were said to be 250 boys at school there.[cli] In the *Annals* there was mention of a school for “Pygmies” (in other cases people talked about “Batswa”).[clii]

Before the war the only report about *Bokela* (1936) was that it was a new

post.[cliii] In 1949 there was primary education at the central school with 6 classes and 315 pupils. For the girls there was a primary school with 3 classes and 32 pupils, founded by the Daughters of the Sacred Heart (in 1937). There were also 72 rural schools. For this mission post, figures from 1944 are also available. They seem to be somewhat contradictory, considering that in the same document there is a report of “*about 150 schoolboys*” and “*about 100 Christian boys at the primary school*”. [cliv] Most probably a distinction is simply being made between baptised and non-baptised children. As is known, baptism was only possible after a certain period of instruction and, naturally, religious instruction. For the further evolution of this post in the fifties we only have the 1955 report available. This talks of a boys’ and a girls’ school at the mission post and an unspecified number of schools in the interior at which over 400 pupils followed lessons.[clv]

For *Ikela* (1937) only its existence is reported before the outbreak of the war. The *Annuaire* reported primary education for boys at the central school, with 7 classes and 300 pupils, and primary education for girls with 3 classes and 30 pupils (under the supervision of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart and started in January 1941). In the interior there were 21 rural schools dependent on this mission post. In 1944 there were 239 schoolboys and 26 schoolgirls reported for this mission.[clvi] However, in 1955 only the boys’ school with 320 pupils was mentioned.[clvii]

Father De Rop gave a number of details about *Imbonga* (1940) in a report from 1945: “*Founded at the start of 1940 as an auxiliary post of Flandria with the prospect of later becoming an independent post when there was enough staff. The working area: a part of the mission of Flandria and a part of Wafanya.*” On education: “*What exists: Imbonga post: complete primary education: 5 teaching assistants with 75 boys. ... Bangonda: Bilangi school with 2 teachers: 52 boys.*” [clviii] In the *Annuaire* it was only reported that primary education was given at the central school and that there were 51 rural schools dependent on the mission post. There were four MSC working there. In the 1950s the information was also limited here to the construction of a new boys’ school building.[clix]

In 1945, finally, *Iyonda* was founded. This post was first reported in the general report by Mgr. Vermeiren from 1947-48. This was a leper house, to the south of Coquilhatville. Nothing was reported about education, not even in the *Annuaire* from 1949. From later information it seems that there was a boys’ school and a girls’ school. There was also mention of a nursery school and an evening school.[clx]

Concluding remarks

On the basis of internal reports, inspection reports and what there is to be made of the publications of the missionaries, only a very fragmented picture of the true state of the numbers of pupils through the thirties, forties and fifties can be formed. We can, however, clearly recognise certain tendencies, which are in themselves not surprising.

First and foremost there is the overemphasis on primary education, which was the case for the whole territory in the form of rural schools. In this context it is useful to cite once more from the *Katoliek Jaarboek*, which contained a summary of all the schools which went further than the simple primary level at the time of independence.[clxi] A small search on the Vicariate of Coquilhatville yielded interesting results: the top of the school pyramid was formed by the junior seminary of Bokuma, comparable with the Latin-Greek school stream in Belgium. Next to this there was a *Groupe Scolaire* in both Coquilhatville and Bamanian, supervised by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. These were at that time comparable to the modern humanities of six years and were taught in French. Next came secondary schools in both Coquilhatville and Bamanian with a reported 'African' curriculum, which at that time were changing over to the Belgian curriculum. Whether this refers to the same *Groupes Scolaires* is difficult to discern. The *Groupe Scolaire* of Coquilhatville apparently also included at that time an *école moyenne* for boys. The *Jaarboek* said about this school type: "(They, JB) comprised a curriculum of four years and prepared their pupils for office work."

These schools were all boys' schools. That immediately confirms the second large tendency: the under-representation of girls in education was also a fact in this area. An observation that is both quantitative and qualitative: there was no secondary education for girls and the participation in primary education was very low in comparison with that of the boys. Paradoxically enough there was an important role reserved for women (the mission Sisters) in the development of the school network. In many mission posts the men left the rudder in the hands of the Sisters, who then took over the direction of the boys' schools and the girls' schools if that was necessary.

A third point, that more specifically concerns the local situation, is the observation that the higher levels of education were in the hands of the Brothers of the Christian Schools except for the *in se* very specific case of the junior seminary that was supervised by the MSC itself. Whether this only related to a difference in professional qualifications or to the different characteristics and/or

attitudes of the two congregations will have to be investigated further.

NOTES

[i] Geerts, F. (1948). Ontwikkeling der kerkelijke indeling en der kerkelijke hiërarchie in Belgisch Kongo. In *Kerk en Missie*. 28, pp. 9-18 and 40-49.

[ii] See also Briffaerts, J. & Dhondt, P. (2003). The Dangers of Urban Development. Missionary discourse on education and urban growth in the Belgian Congo (1920-1960). In *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, vol. 59, 2, pp. 81-102.

[iii] Camille Coquilhat (1853-1891) was a professional soldier, a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. From 1882 he participated in the Stanley expedition in the area around the upper course of the Congo. After his return he became a co-worker in the cabinet of Leopold II. In 1889 he was appointed vice governor general. Lieutenant Alphonse Vangele (1848-1939) was involved in the same Stanley expedition. Being also a colonial pioneer, he was also appointed vice governor general in 1897.

[iv] Equateurville would probably have to be translated as “Evenaarsstad” in Dutch or “Equatorville” in English, although I have never seen these versions of the name, which is the reason for the use of the French name here. Vinck, H. (1992). Resistance and collaboration at the beginning of the colonization in Mbandaka (1883-1893), published at: www.aequatoria.be; De Meulder, B. (1994). *Reformisme, thuis en overzee*. Unpublished doctoral thesis K.U.Leuven, p. 350; Mayota, N. (1990). Poste protestant de Bolenge, in *MBANDAKA, Hier et aujourd’hui. Eléments d’historiographie locale*, Etudes Aequatoria 10, as published at : www.abbol.com

[v] Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en Staat 1880-1914. Redemptoristen, Trappisten, Priesters van het Heilig Hart, Paters van Mill-Hill in Oud-Kongo*. Berchem: Epo.

[vi] Dries, R. (1910). Het beschavingswerk der Cisterciënzers in de Evenaarsstreek. In *Onze Kongo*, 1, p. 51. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[vii] That was the case from 1895. The administrative organisation of the *circonscription urbaine* was introduced in 1893, under Leopold II. This denomination was given to the places which were the most suitable for colonisation, with the intention of stimulating the establishment of Europeans there and to avoid speculation and possible later sale of these areas. Cf. Beyens, A. (1992). L’histoire du statut des villes. In *Congo 1955-1960: recueil d’études - Congo 1955-1960: verzameling studies*. Brussel: Académie Royale des Sciences

d'Outre-Mer, p. 16. For more information on the earliest development of Coquilhatville, see: Lufungula, L. (1983). Il y a cent ans naissait Equateurville: l'ébauche de l'actuelle ville de Mbandaka (June 1883-June 1983). In *Zaire-Afrique: économie, culture, vie sociale*. 175. p. 301-312 or de Thier, F.M. (1956). *Le centre extra-coutumier de Coquilhatville*. Institut de Sociologie Solvay. Etudes Coloniales 2. Bruxelles: Université Libre, p. 7-31.

[viii] Report about the principal chapel. In *Het missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland distrikt van den evenaar door de EE. PP. Trappisten, hervormde cisterciënzers der abdij van Westmalle*, 5 (1908-1909), p. 70.

[ix] In 1884 the *Livingstone Inland Mission* was replaced by the *American Baptist Missionary Union*, which moved the mission post in 1899 to Bolenge. Ten years later this congregation transferred all its mission posts in the Upper Congo to the *Foreign Christian Missionary Society*, later renamed the *Disciples of Christ Congo Mission*. Cf. Smith, H. (1949). *Fifty years in Congo. Disciples of Christ at the Equator*. (Indianapolis, United Christian Missionary Society), p.15.

[x] Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914)*. Deel 2. p.89-181. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xi] Concerning the discussions about the end of the Trappists' Congo mission, see Vermeir, O. (1976). *De missie van de paters Trappisten in Belgisch Congo, 1894-1926*. Unpublished Master's thesis K.U.Leuven, pp. 55-77 of Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914) Deel 2. Redemptoristen, trappisten, norbertijnen, priesters van het H. Hart en paters van Mill-Hill*. Berchem: Epo, pp. 171-176.

[xii] Hoe staat het op de Missie? In *Het missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland, 1906-1907*, VII, p. 126. "Het Missiewerk in Belgisch Congoland" was the mission periodical of the Trappists from 1904. Before that time, reports about the Trappist mission were published in the mission periodical of the Norbertines of Averbode.

[xiii] These posts may be found on the overview map on p. 132-133.

[xiv] Afrika Archief, "fonds missions", n° 635, letter from Father Kaptein, abbot of the Trappists of Westmalle, from 26 July 1920.

[xv] This "removal" was often explained in the periodical articles by "health problems" but was actually due to a conscious policy of the local heads which allowed them to broaden the mission activities in spite of the hierarchy forbidding the foundation of yet more posts.

[xvi] The Trappists certainly already had a catechist from 1911.

[xvii] AAVSB. Mission des Trappistes, Report of 1924. (AAVSB stands for "Reports on schools and vicariate/bishopric Coquilhatville/Mbandaka 1924-1963", a

collection of documents from the Aequatoria Archive by Honoré Vinck bound in three volumes, unpublished).

[xviii] Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *Missie en staat in Oud-Kongo (1880-1914)*. Deel 2.

[xix] See also Eggermont, B., *Se marier chrétiennement au Congo Belge. Les stratégies appliquées par les Missionnaires de Scheut (CICM) au Kasai, 1919-1935*. In *Missionering en inculturatie, Bulletin van het Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome*, LXIV, 1994, p. 113-147.

[xx] This refers to the S.A.B., abbreviation for *Société Anonyme Belge pour le commerce du Haut-Congo*, which acquired the absolute rule over a territory with a surface area of more than a million hectares in 1904 and which maintained tense relations with the missionaries, whom S.A.B. found a threat to their own position of power with respect to the local population. Concerning this tense relationship, see among others Claessens, A. (1980). *Les conflits, dans l'Equateur, entre les Trappistes et la Société Anonyme Belge (1908-1914)*. In *Revue Africaine de Théologie*, 4, p. 5-18 and Delathuy, A.M. (1994). *o.c.* p. 145-160 and 177-179. [Original quotation in Dutch]

[xxi] Vinck, H. (2003). *Les manuels scolaires des Pères Trappistes au Congo Belge (1895-1925)*. In Depaepe, M., Briffaerts, J., Kita Kyankenge Masandi, P. & Vinck, H., *Manuels et Chansons scolaires au Congo Belge*. Leuven: Presses Universitaires. pp. 95-131.

[xxii] Conférence des supérieurs des missions catholiques du Congo Belge (1930). *Recueil d'instructions aux missionnaires*. 6eme édition. Leuven: Kuyl-Otto.

[xxiii] Duchesne was governor of the province Coquilhatville (Equatorial province) from 1921 to 1933. Jadot, J.M. (1956) Duchesne (Charles-Marie-Nestor). In *Bibliographie Belge d'outre-mer*, vol. V, 272-285; see also Lufungula L. (1986) *Les gouverneurs de l'Equateur: 1885-1960*. In *Annales Aequatoria*. 7, 149-166 and at http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Congo-K_Provinces_1960-1966.html (01/2004). [Original quotation in French]

[xxiv] Afrika Archive, Fonds Missions, portefeuille n° 635 "Trappistes Coquilhatville". Letter from the Governor General a.i. Duchesne to the Governor General, 27 December 1921. [Original quotation in French]

[xxv] AAFE 5.2.6-8. Letter from Paul Jans to Frère Visiteur (Véron Ignace). Bamanian, 8 January 1929. (AAFE stands for Aequatoria Archive, "Fonds Ecoles").

[xxvi] Vinck, H. (2003). *Les manuels scolaires des Pères Trappistes au Congo Belge*.

[xxvii] Scheut Archives, Rome, "Fonds De Jonghe". Copy in the possession of Honoré Vinck.

[xxviii] It is not in fact about his predecessor; the letter refers to Georges Van Der Kerken (1888-1953), whom Duchesne replaced during his leave in Belgium in 1921. Van Der Kerken wrote a still very well-known work, "L'ethnie Mongo", in which he was the first to draw attention to the threatened extinction (falling birth rate) of the local population.

[xxix] Jadot, J.M. (1956). l.c. [Original in French]

[xxx] Letter from Edward Van Goethem to Eduard De Jonghe, Dated 29 October 1924, Scheut Archives, Rome, "Fonds De Jonghe". Copy in the possession of Honoré Vinck.

[xxxi] Letter from Leon Derikx (in the name of the heads of missions of the Belgian Congo present) to the chairman of the mission orders in Belgium, Kisantu, 23 July 1919, cited in Depaepe & Van Rompuy (1995). *o.c.* p. 56. For a discussion of this letter, with extended citations, see also Briffaerts, J. (2002). l.c. p. 193-194, and the accompanying notes.

[xxxii] The precise development of the church province, with a detailed description of the border corrections, may be found in the overview, published by the MSC, *Symbolum historiae M.S.C.* (Rome, 1966) p. 234-238.

[xxxiii] Vermeir, O. (1980). La fin de la mission des Trappistes à L'Equateur (1920-1926). In *Annales Aequatoria*, I, p. 213-238. This article is taken from the master's thesis that the author wrote on this subject (already cited previously) and which he based mainly on the archives of the Abbey of Westmalle, of the MSC in Borgerhout and the Scheutist Marcel Storme in Leuven.

[xxxiv] That means that by the end of 1926 27 MSC were already active in the prefecture, certainly a very respectable number. Naturally, the overwhelming majority were ex-Trappists. See Vermeir, O. (1980). *o.c.* p. 235.

[xxxv] Geerts, F. (1948). Ontwikkeling der kerkelijke indeling en der kerkelijke hiërarchie in Belgisch Kongo, *Kerk en Missie*, p. 9-18 en 40-49.

[xxxvi] Van Goethem was already prefect from the beginning in 1924 and would remain vicar until 1946. In 1947 he was followed by Hilaire Vermeiren, who became the first Bishop of the bishopric Coquilhatville (later Mbandaka) in 1959. See *Symbolum historiae M.S.C.*, Rome, 1966, p. 234-238.

[xxxvii] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du Vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 40 p. 1 March 1935. p. 31.

[xxxviii] Map published in MSC, *50 jaar in Zaire* (August 1975), an information brochure published on the occasion of the jubilee of the MSC presence in the Congo.

[xxxix] Concerning the sources for the mission activities of the Daughters of

Charity, information is chiefly to be found in the common mission periodicals of the Lazarists and the Daughters of Charity, which can be found in the Provincial house of the Lazarist Fathers in Leuven (Belgium). Three periodicals are concerned, of which the latter appeared in two different editions (one in Dutch and one in French): *Annales de la congrégation de la mission (et de la compagnie des Filles de la Charité)*: 1925-1960. *De kleine bode van de H. Vincentius a Paulo en van de gelukzalige Louise de Marillac*: 1930-1940. *Sint Vincentius A Paulo. Driemaandelijks tijdschrift van de Lazaristen en de dochters der liefde*: 1939-1960. *Saint Vincent de Paul. Revue trimestrielle des Lazaristes et des Filles de la Charité*. 1939-1953. In addition, I interviewed two of the Daughters of Charity who were living in Belgium. These were Sister Suzanne Carbonelle, active in the Belgian Congo (including Coquilhatville) from 1952 to 1985 and Sister Gisèle Van Minnenbrugge, active in the Congo after independence.

[xl] The congregation was founded in 1633 by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. They were also active from as early as 1671 in the Liège region. Like the Brothers of the Christian Schools, this congregation was closed down under the French regime. From 1834 the activities were restarted, also in Belgium which had become independent in the interim. *Dochters der Liefde* (1926). *De dochters der Liefde van den H. Vincentius A Paulo*. Tilburg: Dochters der Liefde. p. 167.

[xli] Cited from a letter of 16 march 1925 from Father Rutten, general superior of Scheut, to Father Robert Brepoels, superior of the Trappist mission, from the MSC archive Borgerhout. Vermeir, O. (1980). l.c. p. 229. [original in French]

[xlii] Vandekerckhove, C. (1939). Les Lazaristes au Congo. In *Saint Vincent de Paul. Revue trimestrielle des Lazaristes et des Filles de la Charité*. pp. 112-118. [original in French]

[xliii] This was by far the best represented of the Sisters congregations in the vicariate of Coquilhatville. Repeated attempts to establish contact with the congregation on my behalf, including via the MSC, were not successful. The Sisters claim to have neither information nor documents nor archives. They systematically refuse any requests for verbal contact. In spite of this, a British Sister, Mary Venard, published a biographical work in 1992 about the Belgian Province of the Daughters: Venard, M. (1992). *Geschiedenis van de Belgische provincie van de Dochters van O.L.Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*, Provincialate of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Brussels. (translated by Lauwers, J., MSC). The book contains a separate part about the mission to the Belgian Congo, pp. 121-148. This work is not distinguished by a critical approach, does not contain an academically responsible note structure and is certainly somewhat

brief about the activities in the Congo. It does, however, report the existence of a provincial archive in Belgium. Besides this there are only two older publications from the colonial period (a slim recruitment brochure from the thirties or forties and a more extensive information brochure from 1955): *Dochters van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van het Heilig Hart* (ed.). (1955). *Congregatie van de dochters van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*. Lescuyer: Lyon. 148 p. en idem (s.d.). *Dochters van O. L. Vrouw van het Heilig Hart: missiezusters*, De Bièvre: Brasschaat. 23 p. The scarce specific information that can be found about this congregation therefore corresponds, as far as the sources are concerned, with the documents of or about other congregations.

[xliv] Most of this data comes from the MSC, *50 jaar in Zaïre*. Additional sources were: *Annuaire des Missions Catholiques* by Corman (1924 and 1935) and Van Wing (1949) and the work cited here about the sisters.

[xlv] As far as the source material is concerned this male congregation presents markedly fewer problems than the female. There is an extensive archive of the Brothers in their Generalate in Rome that had already been consulted on site by Lies Van Rompaey in the context of research for “In het teken van de bevoogding”. She made her extensive notes available to us. Apart from this there was a somewhat brief contact with the archivist in Rome, via e-mail, which allowed a number of clarifications and supplementary information to be obtained. A number of documents were also copied from the archive in Fexhe, a personal collection of documents collected by Brother Jules Cornet. A written reflection was made of others. In the training house in Dilbeek there remain only two large albums with a collection of documents, photos and souvenirs of the Congo. This was also consulted and described in a report. Processing of this data was done in 2001 by Pieter Dhondt. As far as published sources are concerned, use was made of the *Bulletin des écoles chrétiennes*, the general periodical of the Brothers in Belgium, in which the missions are reported in a more or less systematic fashion. The years 1 (1907) up to 41 (1960) were consulted. There was also a periodical of the alumni of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Congo: *Signum Fidei*. Up to now we have only been able to find one copy of this potentially very interesting periodical. A question about possible copies of this was similarly directed to the archivist of the Brothers in Rome but has received no answer.

[xlvi] http://www.relins.be/scherm12_26.html 01/2004.

[xlvii] Mission work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Congo, *Zaaiers onder de Afrkaanse hemel*.

[xlviii] Frère Alban (1970). *Histoire de l'institut des frères des écoles chrétiennes*.

Expansion hors de France (1700-1966). Rome: FEC. p. 641-643.

[xlix] AAFE 5.2.6-8. Letter from Paul Jans to Frère Visiteur (Véron Ignace). Bamanya, 8 January 1929. [Original in French]

[l] <http://www.mariannahill.org/anglais/index.htm> 01/2004

[li] Marian Hill was at least mentioned in the correspondence of the Flemish Trappists when their own problems with the hierarchy arose. See also Vermeir, O. (1980). l.c.

[lii] According to Honoré Vinck they were also in Imbonga from 1949 or 1950.

[liii] Practically nothing about these Sisters is available as source material, apart from the personal memories and probably a few photos that the surviving mission Sisters have preserved themselves. In view of the small size of the congregation they did not have their own periodical or publication. The sisters were, however, very approachable and prepared to cooperate in an interview. On 13 September 2002 I spoke with Sister Rafaëlle, Sister Innocentia and Sister Hilde, in Beveren-Waas.

[liv] Interview with Sister Rafaëlle and Sister Innocentia, at Beveren-Waas, 13 September 2002. See also: Pauselijke Missiewerken (1961). *Katholiek Jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi, 1960-1961*. Brussels: Pauselijke Missiewerken. p. 65.

[lv] Depaepe & Van Rompaey dedicated just eight pages to the problem of educational statistics.

[lvi] The Mission annual report "Katoliek jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi. 1960-1961" (sic) elucidates this matter due to the overview that is given in relation to the various "types" of schools, in which what the various types actually stand for is briefly explained.

[lvii] In official publications the government subdivision was assumed.

[lviii] Finally, there is also the "Katoliek Jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi" from 1960, which has been referred to previously.

[lix] AAVSB. Rapport de 1929, présenté par Mgr. Van Goethem.

[lx] AAVSB. Année scolaire 1929-1930. Nombre des élèves et du personnel enseignant, Vertenten, December 1930. According to the information from Honoré Vinck, nursery schools were not considered to be separate schools but the pupils in the nursery schools were still not considered to be pupils of the primary school.

[lxi] The data originate in both cases from the same author, Petrus Vertenten, who was, at that time, mission inspector for the whole missionary area.

[lxii] This dated from 1935 and claims to give the state of business on the 30 June

1934.

[lxiii] The schools were not systematically treated in this publication, neither is there a separate "education" section provided. Teaching is repeatedly reported among the other activities that a congregation practiced at a particular place. This data must be compared with similar data from other sources. For the period 1930-1934 our collection of inspection reports is not as complete as that for the year 1929. These inspection reports come, almost without exception, from two collections: the booklist "Missions" in the Afrika Archive in Brussels (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Aequatoria Archive, booklist "Ecoles" in Borgerhout.

[lxiv] See also Depaepe & Van Rompaey.

[lxv] Van Wing, J. & Goemé, V. (eds.) (1949). *Annuaire des missions catholiques*. Bruxelles: Edition Universelle.

[lxvi] The number of inspection reports in our possession for the period 1935-1939 is much lower, while annual reports from this period are not available. A updated version of the *Annuaire des missions catholiques* was only published at the end of the forties under the editorship of Van Wing. The periodicals of the missionaries and the internal reports also contain much less detailed information.

[lxvii] Delafaille (1934). Mijn eerste dienstreisje in Kongo. In *Annals van Onze Lieve Vrouw van het Heilig Hart*, 9, p. 197. My emphasis. This publication is cited below as *Annals*. [Original in Dutch]

[lxviii] AAVSB. Vicariat Apostolique de Coquilhatville, activité missionnaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, Mgr. Van Goethem, 7 p. [Original in French]

[lxix] AAVSB. Document with statistics and an overview of mission life, s.n., 4 p., dated 1938. Similar data for 1937 report 111 schools with 6,143 boys and 578 girls.

[lxx] AAVSB. Commentaire au rapport annuel 1951-1952, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, typed, s.n., 3 p. [original in French]

[lxxi] Ibidem. [original in French]

[lxxii] AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, signed by H. Vermeiren, 8 October 1954. [original in French]

[lxxiii] AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville 1955, s.n., 21 September 1955. [original in French]

[lxxiv] AAVSB. Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville (rapport 55-56), s.n., s.d. [original in French]

[lxxv] "Coq. 25 jaar Vikariaat" In *Annals*, maart 1957, p. 46.

[lxxvi] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1957-58 vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville. [original in French]

[lxxvii] Church hierarchy was introduced in November 1959. The organisation into vicariates became obsolete and the Congo consisted from then on of six ecclesiastical provinces, each divided into a number of dioceses. From then on Coquilhatville was the name of one of the ecclesiastical provinces that was about equal in surface area to the Equatorial Province. This ecclesiastical province was divided into five dioceses and an attached prefecture. One of these dioceses, the archdiocese of Coquilhatville, corresponded to the former vicariate of the MSC. Hilaire Vermeiren became Archbishop.

[lxxviii] The statistics that were published by the (in the meantime) Congolese *Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique* (B.E.C.) in Leopoldville contrast sharply at first sight. They reflect the situation of October 1962, a little over two years after independence. At that time there were 9 656 boys and 4 777 girls in Catholic primary education of the bishopric. Considering that a maximum of one year can lie between the two publications, there certainly seems to have been different criteria used in their compilation. Bureau de l'Enseignement Catholique (1963). *Statistiques de l'enseignement national catholique 1962-63*. B.E.C.: Léopoldville. p. 24.

[lxxix] Vertenten, P. (1932) Nieuws uit Bamanía bij Coquilhatville. In *Annals*, 4, p. 78. [original in Dutch]

[lxxx] Rousseau, L. (1932). From a letter by E. Broeder L. Rousseau. In *Annals*, 1, p. 6. [original in Dutch]

[lxxxii] Moeyens (1933). Over Bamanía. In *Annals* 1, p. 11. [original in Dutch]

[lxxxii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang, 1934-1935, s.n. [original in French]

[lxxxiii] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, typed, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]

[lxxxiv] AAVSB. Missie-post van Bamanya (bij Coquilhatville), G. Wauters, 20 April 1946.

[lxxxv] See *Annals*, September 1955, p. 131.

[lxxxvi] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1950-1951, Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.; AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, H. Vermeiren, 8 October 1954; *Annals*, December 1954.

[lxxxvii] AAVSB. Commentaire au rapport annuel 1951-1952, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n., 3 p.

[lxxxviii] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956; also the *Annals* report in 1957 a training college, a pedagogical school and a "school for moniteurs" (teaching assistants).

- [lxxxix] Ibidem: this last document gives numbers for the three schools.
- [xc] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1957-58 vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.
- [xci] Dubrulle, M.(1928). Robert Longundo. In *Annals*, 2, p. 32.
- [xcii] AAVSB. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, rapport sur l'activité missionnaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, E. Van Goethem, s.d. [original in French]
- [xciii] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 1950-1951, Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.
- [xciv] AAVSB. Rapport annuel 3 July 1952 - 30 June 1953, Vicariat apostolique Coquilhatville, s.n.
- [xcv] *Annals*, March 1952, p. 36 e.v.
- [xcvi] AAVSB. Rapport annuel du vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, H. Vermeiren, 8 October 1954.
- [xcvii] AAVSB. Vicariat Apostolique Coquilhatville (report 55-56), s.n.
- [xcviii] AAVSB. 1955 Overview, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956. [original in Dutch]
- [xcix] We indicate here in particular two anonymous articles: "Coquilhatstad", in *Annals* from December 1956, p. 176 and "Pastoor van een zwarte parochie: interview met Pater De Gols, pastoor van de eerste zwarte parochie van Coquilhatstad" in *Annals* from May 1957, p. 68.
- [c] Brepoels, R. (1928). Geschiedenis van den missiepost in Bokuma. In *Annals*, 4, p. 81.
- [ci] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang, 1934-1935, s.n. [Original quotation in French]
- [cii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Soeurs de St. Vincent de Wafanya de 1934-35, s.n. [Original quotation in French]
- [ciii] Vinck, H. (s.d.). Joris Van Avermaet (1907-1956): Bio-bibliographie. To be found on Aequatoria's website: www.aequatoria.be/BiblioVanAvermaet.html (01/2004). In the MSC's archive in Borgerhout there is an extensive historical note about the seminary, composed by one of the missionaries, Remi Sanders, a few years after independence. This places the beginning of seminary education at as early as 1923, at the time of the Trappist mission. MSC archive Borgerhout, "Historiek van het klein seminarie te Bokuma", Sanders, R., s.d., typed, 36 p.
- [civ] Heireman, G. (1948). Ons zwart missieseminarie van Bokuma schrijft aan ons blank missieseminarie van Assche. In *Annals*, p. 118.
- [cv] MSC archives Borgerhout. "Historiek van het klein seminarie te Bokuma", p. 22.
- [cvi] AAVSB. Commentaire au rapport annuel 1951-1952, Vicariat apostolique

- Coquilhatville, s.n., 3 p.; AAVSB. Overzicht 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956; *Annals*, December 1954.
- [cvii] Emiliana, Sr. (1926). Brief uit Bokote. In *Annals*, p. 127.
- [cviii] Henrica, Sr. (1934). Laatste berichten uit Bokote (parts of a letter from E. Sister Henrica). In *Annals*, 1, p. 12.
- [cix] *Annals*, 1934, 5, p. 109.
- [cx] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n.
- [cxi] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935. [Original in French]
- [cxii] Vertenten, P. (1935). Een blijvend loofhuttenfeest. In *Annals*, 10, p. 221.
- [cxiii] AAVSB. Manuscript about Bokote, signed (illegibly), 24 February 1946.
- [cxiv] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
- [cxv] *Annals*, 1930, 8, p. 176. [original in Dutch]
- [cxvi] Vertenten, P. (1931). Wafania vooruit. In *Annals*, 7, p. 151. [original in Dutch]
- [cxvii] Vertenten, P. (1934). Van uit Wafania. In *Annals*, 6, p. 127. [original in Dutch]
- [cxviii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Soeurs de St. Vincent de Wafanya de 1934-35, s.n. [original in French]
- [cxix] AAVSB. Statistiques générales de la mission - 1 juillet 44 - 1 juillet 45, Vicariat Apostolique de Coquilhatville, with report "Wafanya".
- [cxx] "Wafanya - Zusters van Beveren". In *Annals*, October 1954, p. 140. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxi] Volgens de *Annuaire* van Corman. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxii] Emilienne, Sr. (1927). From a letter from Sister Emilienne, Boende. In *Annals*, p. 269.
- [cxxiii] Vertenten, P. (1929). Van Coquilhatville naar de boven-Tschuapa (vervolg). In *Annals*, 3, p. 55. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxiv] AAVSB. Rapport sur l'activité missionnaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n. [original in French]
- [cxxv] Vertenten, P. (1935). Een blijvend loofhuttenfeest. In *Annals*, 10, p. 221.
- [cxxvi] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l'activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]
- [cxxvii] AAVSB. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, rapport sur l'activité missionnaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, E. Van Goethem. [original in French]
- [cxxviii] Cortebeeck, Y. (1941). Boende. In *Annals*, 1, p. 7. [original in Dutch]

- [cxxxix] AAVSB. Note with data about the Boende mission, manuscript, H. Delafaille, 1944-45. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxxx] AAVSB. Katholieke missie Boende St Martinus, jaarverslag 1/7/53 - 1/7/54, s.n., 1 November 1954.
- [cxxxxi] The term “succursale schools” refers to the rural schools.
- [cxxxxii] AAVSB. Overzicht 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.[original in Dutch]
- [cxxxxiii] Ibidem.[original in Dutch]
- [cxxxxiv] Vertenten, P. (1931). Missieleven (uit den missiepost Mondombe St-Theresia). In *Annals*, 1931, 4, p. 76. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxxxv] Vertenten, P. (1929). In *Annals*, 4, p. 78. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxxxvi] *Annals*, 1932, 8, p. 176. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxxxvii] AAVSB. Rapport sur l’activité missionnaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n. [original in French]
- [cxxxxviii] Maria Imelda, Zr. (1937). Iets over onze schooljongens van Mondombe. In *Annals*, 3, p. 54. [original in Dutch]
- [cxxxxix] AAVSB. Note with data about Mondombe, manuscript, Yernaux, July 1944 - July 1945.
- [cxl] AAVSB. Report 1947-1948, Vicariat Apostolique de Coquilhatville, Mgr. Vermeiren. [original in French]
- [cxli] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.
- [cxlii] *Huilever* refers to the *Huileries du Congo Belge*.
- [cxliii] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 march 1935.[original in French]
- [cxliv] Interview with Frans Maes in Borgerhout on 9 July 2002.
- [cxlv] AAVSB. Rapport sur l’activité missionnaire des Soeurs du Précieux Sang, 1934-1935, s.n. [original in French]
- [cxlvi] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]
- [cxlvii] Theresia, Sr. (1955). Triptiek uit Flandria. In *Annals*, p. 165. See also *Annals*, December 1954.
- [cxlviii] See below, chapter 5.
- [cxlix] AAVSB. Rapport sur l’activité missionnaire des Filles de N.D. du Sacré Coeur de 1934 à 1935, s.n. [original in French]
- [cl] AAVSB. Rapport général sur l’activité du vicariat de Coquilhatville de 1934-1935, Mgr. Van Goethem, 1 March 1935.[original in French]
- [cli] AAVSB. Overzicht 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.

[clii] *Annals*, December 1954.

[cliii] Voor Bokela: AAVSB. Vicariat apostolique de Coquilhatville, rapport sur l'activité missionnaire durant l'exercice 1936-1937, E. Van Goethem. Voor Ikela: *Annals*, 1938, 4, p. 80.

[cliv] AAVSB. Note with statistical data about Bokela St Pieter, manuscript signed P.Smolders, dated 1944. [original in Dutch]

[clv] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.

[clvi] AAVSB. Note with data about Ikela, manuscript, G. Michielsen, dated 1944.

[clvii] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.

[clviii] AAVSB. Report: mission Imbonga, A. De Rop, 1945. [original in Dutch]

[clix] AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.

[clx] Wijnants, P. (1954). Leprozerie van Igonda. In *Annals*, p. 149; AAVSB. Overview 1955, s.d, s.n., s.l., dated February 1956.

[clxi] *Katoliek Jaarboek voor Kongo, Ruanda en Urundi*, 1960-1961. p. 206-255.

[clxii] Dibalú, A. (1969). *L'histoire de la formation des maîtres de l'enseignement élémentaire dans l'évolution de l'enseignement au Congo*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Université de Laval, Québec.

[clxiii] *Ibidem*. p. 127.

[clxiv] AAVSB, "Note additionnelle sur les écoles rurales", par P. Trigalet, in "Rapport Général 1934-1935", p. 33.

[clxv] Vertenten, P. (1929). Met de Theresita de Momboyo op naar Wafanya. In *Annalen*, 12, p. 274. This relates to a village in the vicinity of Flandria, Ifulu. [original quotation in Dutch]

[clxvi] Maria Godfrieda, Zr. (1934). Wat ze zoal te doen hebben. In *Annalen*, 5, p. 108.

[clxvii] See Dams, K., Depaepe, M. & Simon, F. (2002). 'By indirections finding directions out': Classroom history, Sources and Objectives. In Jamrózek, W. & Żołądź-Strzelczyk, D. (eds.), *W dialogu z przeszłością. Księga poświęcona Profesorowi Janowi Hellwigowi* [Dialogue with the past. In memoriam Professor Jan Hellwig.]. Poznan: Adam Mickiewicz University Press. p. 69.

[clxviii] Dembour, M.B. (2000). *Recalling the Belgian Congo: Conversations and introspection*. New York: Berghahn Books.

[clxix] For the definition of those themes I again used the marker that was previously used by researchers in the research into "Orde in vooruitgang". I would particularly like to thank Betty Eggermont and Hilde Lauwers for their willingness to share their experiences on this subject.