

ANATOMY OF BELGIAN BIRTH RECORDS

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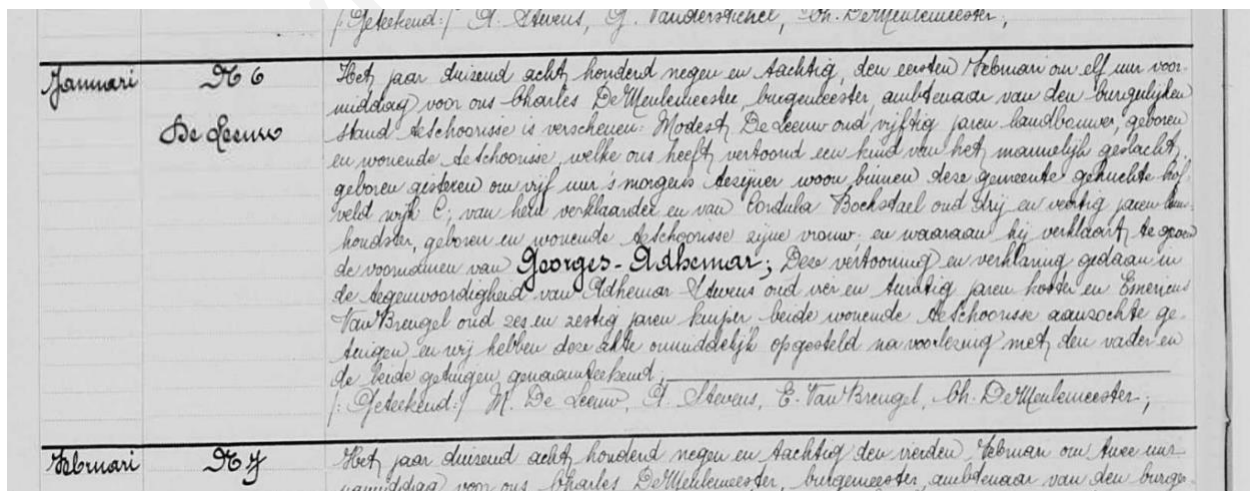
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Civil registration records in Belgium were drawn up in either Dutch or French. You will find French-language records in Wallonia, and also sometimes in Flanders and Brussels.

AN 1889 RURAL DUTCH EXAMPLE FROM SCHORISSE (EAST FLANDERS)

Source:

Schorisse, East Flanders, Belgium, Geboorteregister 1889, no. 6, Georges-Adhemar De Leeuw; digital image, "Belgique, Flandre-Orientale, registres d'état civil, 1541-1914," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9P6M-X5B?i=335&wc=Q82R-698%3A1068839901%2C1009338602&cc=2138513> : accessed 22 July 2020), Schorisse > Geboorten, huwelijken, overlijden 1871-1900 > image 336 of 889; citing België Staatsarchief (Belgium State Archives), Oost-Vlaanderen.



Preamble: gives the (1) date and hour of registration, (2) the registrar's name and title, and (3) the place of registration

- (1) Het jaar duizend acht honderd negen en tachtig, den eersten Februari om elf uur voor-middag (*The year eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, [on] the first of February, at eleven o'clock in the morning*)
- (2) voor ons Charles De Meulemeester, burgemeester, ambtenaar van den burgerlijken stand (*before us Charles De Meulemeester, mayor, registrar of civil registration*)
- (3) te Schoorisse (*at Schoorisse [i.e. Schorisse]*)

Variations:

- some times not the mayor [burgemeester] but an alderman [schepen] or delegated officer [*gedelegeerde ambtenaar*] registers the birth
- the municipality [*gemeente*] is often qualified by the name of the district [*arrondissement*] and/or province [*provincie*]

Main record: gives the (1) name, age, occupation, place of birth, and residence of the informant [frequently this is the father], (2) the child's gender, date and place of birth, (3) the name, age, occupation, place of birth, and residence of the mother, and (4) the first name(s) of the child

is verschenen (appeared)

- (1) Modest De Leeuw oud vijftig jaren landbouwer, geboren en wonende te Schoorisse (*Modest De Leeuw, fifty years old, farmer, born and residing in Schorisse*)
- (2) welke ons heeft vertoond een kind van het mannelijk geslacht (*who showed us a child of the male gender*), geboren gisteren (*born yesterday*) om vijf uur 's morgens (*at five o'clock in the morning*) te zijner woon binnen deze gemeente gehucht hof-veld wijk C (*at his dwelling within this commune, hamlet hofveld ward C*);
- (3) van hem verklaarder (*of him the informant*) en van Cordula Bockstael (*and of Cordula Bockstael*) oud drij en veertig jaren (*forty-three years old*) huis-houdster (*housewife*), geboren en wonende te Schoorisse zijne vrouw (*born and residing in Schorisse, his wife*);
- (4) en waaraan hij verklaart te geven de voornamen van **Georges-Adhemar** (*and to which he declares to give the first names of Georges-Adhemar*);

Variations:

- the child will be either of male [mannelijk] of female [vrouwelijk] gender [geslacht]
- the date is often expressed as today [*heden*], yesterday [*gisteren*], or the day before yesterday [*eergisteren*]
- the time is usually expressed in the morning [*'s morgens*], before noon [*'s voormiddags*], in the afternoon [*'s namiddags*], in the evening [*'s avonds*], or at night [*'s nachts*]
- the first names are often written in Latin. E.g., Ludovicus (Louis), Ludovica [Louisa], Carolus (Karel), Guilielmus [Willem], etc.

Closing lines: will include (1) the name, age, occupation, and residence of two witnesses, and (2) signatures

- (1) Deze vertooning en verklaring gedaan in de tegenwoordigheid van (*This display and declaration was done in the presence of*) Adhemar Stevens, oud vier en twintig jaren (*Adhemar Stevens, twenty-four years old*) koster [*sexton or verger*] en Emericus Van Bruegel oud zes en zestig jaren (*and Emericus Van Bruegel, sixty-six years old*) kuiper (*cooper*), beide wonende te Schoorisse (*both residing in Schorisse*) aangezochte getuigen (*requested witnesses*)

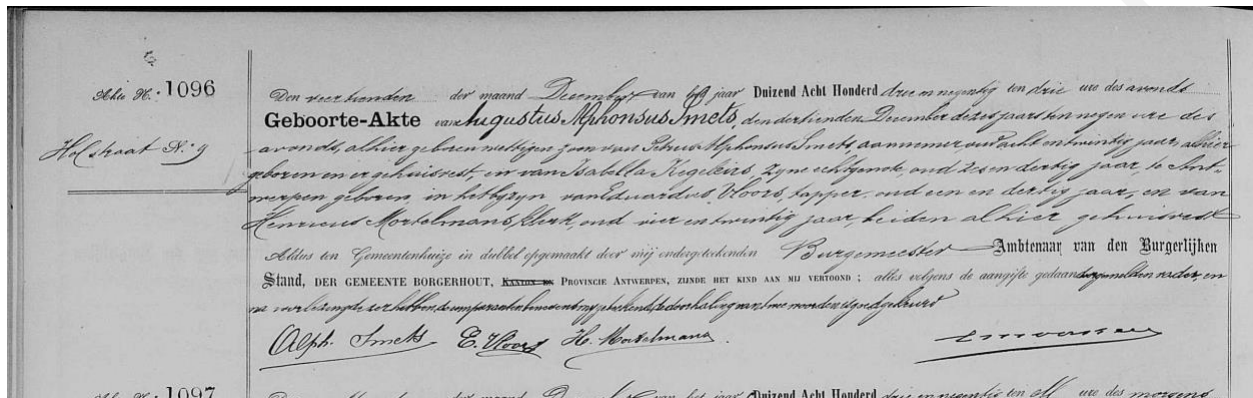
- (2) en wij hebben deze akte onmiddelijk opgesteld (*and we have immediately drawn up the record*) na voorlezing (*after [the] reading [thereof]*) met den vader en de beide getuigen genaamtekend ([and] *with the father and both witnesses signed*)

Variations:

- If the informant or one of the witnesses is illiterate it would be mentioned in this section. E.g.:
 - o De eerste getuige zegt niet te kunnen naamteekenen door onkunde (*the first witness says he cannot sign due to ignorance*)
 - o Uitgenomen de vader die verklaard heeft van niet te kunnen schrijven uyt reden van onwetendheid (*Except the father who stated not being able to write due to ignorance*).

Source:

Borgerhout, Antwerp Province, Belgium, Geboorteregister 1893, no. 1096, Augustus Alphonsus Smets; digital image, "Belgique, Anvers, registres d'état civil, 1588-1913," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GP6Q-9RW?cc=2138481&wc=Q82R-GL3%3A1007773701%2C1007840101> : accessed 22 July 2020), Borgerhout > Geboorten 1892-1896 > image 236 of 620; België Staatsarchief (Belgium State Archives), Brussels.



Civil registration in large towns and cities often followed a different formula.

Margin: includes (1) the number of the record and (2) exact address of the child

- (1) Akte n^o. 1096 (*Record no. 1096*)
- (2) Hofstraat n^o. 9

Preamble: includes (1) the date and time of registration

- (1) Den veertienden der maand December (*the fourteenth of the month of December*) van het jaar Duizend Acht Honderd drie en nengentig (*of the year Thousand Eight Hundred [and] ninety-three*) ten drie ure des avonds (*at three o'clock in the evening*)

Main Record: includes the name of the child, (2) the place, date and time of birth, (3) the name, occupation, age, place of birth, and residence of the father, and (4) the name, occupation, age, and place of birth of the mother

- (1) Geboorte-Akte van **Augustus Alphonsus Smets**, (*Birth record of Augustus Alphonsus Smets*)
- (2) den dertienden December dezes jaars (*on the thirteenth of December of this year*) ten negen ure des avonds (*at nine o'clock in the evening*) alhier geboren (born here)
- (3) wettigen zoon van Petrus Alphonsus Smets (*legitimate son of Petrus Alphonsus Smets*), aannemer (*contractor*), oud acht en twintig jaar (*twenty-eight years old*), alhier geboren en gehuisvest (*born and residing here*),
- (4) en van Isabella Kegeleirs, zijne echtgenote (*and of Isabella Kegeleirs, his wife*), oud zes en dertig jaar (*thirty-six years old*), te Antwerpen geboren (*born in Antwerp*)
- (5) in het bijzijn van (*in the presence of*) Eduardus Vloors, tapper, oud een en dertig jaar (*Eduardus Vloors, barkeeper, thirty-one years old*), en van Henricus Mortelmans, klerk, oud vier en twintig jaar (*Henricus Mortelmans, clerk, twenty-four years old*), beiden alhier gehuisvest (*both residing here*)

Closing lines: includes the (1) title of the registrar, (2) the place of registration, (3) the informant, and (4) the signatures

- (1) Aldus ten Gemeentehuize in dubbel opgemaakt (*Thus drawn up in duplicate*) door mij ondergeteekenden Burgemeester Ambtenaar van den Burgerlijken Stand (*by me the undersigned Mayor Registrar of Civil Registration*),
- (2) der gemeente Borgerhout, ~~Kanton en~~ Provincie Antwerpen (*of the municipality of Borgerhout, ~~County and~~ Province of Antwerp*),
- (3) zijnde het kind aan mijn vertoond (*the child being shown to me*); alles volgens de aangifte gedaan door gemelden vader (*all done according to the registration done by the aforementioned father*),
- (4) en na voorlezing dezer (*and after the reading of this*) hebben de comparanten benevens mij geteekend (*have the parties signed besides me*), de doorhaling van twee woorden is goedgekeurd (*the crossing-out of two words is approved*)

Source:

Florenville, Luxembourg Province, Belgium, Registre des actes de naissances 1886, no. 8, Marie-Aline Watelet; digital image, "Belgique, Luxembourg, registres d'état civil, 1580-1920," images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RJT-5QV?cc=2138510&wc=S51L-GPD%3A367345701%2C367488701> : accessed 22 July 2020), Florenville > Actes 1886-1890 > image 17 of 538; België Nationaal Archief, Brussels (Belgium National Archives, Brussels).

L'AN mil huit cent quatre-vingt-six, le Onze du mois de Fevrier
à Cinq heures du soir par devant nous Julien Stevenin
Echevin délégué officier de l'état civil de la commune de Florenville
canton de ce nom province de Luxembourg, est comparu Nicolas
N. Watelet Cultivateur
agé de Quatre-vingt ans
domicilié à Florenville, lequel nous a déclaré et présenté
sans enfant du sexe féminin né à Florenville, ce jour
à quatre heures du matin de Thi et de Marie Hubert
les époux, sans profession née à Musonne âgée de vingt
ans sans domicile à Florenville
et auquel il a déclaré vouloir donner les prénoms de Marie-Aline
Les dites déclaration et présentation faites en présence de François Boyars
agé de Cinquante-cinq ans domicilié à Florenville
et de Joseph Boyars agé de soixante-trois ans,
Cinquante heures domicilié à Florenville et
ont les pièces de l'enfant et l'enfant signé avec nous le présent acte de naissance,
après qu'il leur en a été fait lecture.
Nicolas Watelet
Julien Stevenin

Preamble: gives the (1) date and hour of registration, (2) the registrar's name and title, and (3) the place of registration

- (1) L'AN mil huit cent quatre-vingt-six, le onze du mois de Fevrier à cinq heures du soir (*The year one thousand eight hundred eighty-six, the eleventh of the month of February at five o'clock in the evening*)
- (2) par devant nous Julien Stevenin (*before us Julien Stevenin*) echevin (*alderman*) délégué officier de l'état civil (*delegated officer of civil registration*) de la commune de Florenville (*of the municipality of Florenville*), canton de ce nom (*county of that name*), province de Luxembourg (*province of Luxembourg*)

Variations:

- some times not the mayor [*maire*] but an alderman [*echevin*] or delegated officer [*délégué officier*] registers the birth

- the municipality [*commune*] is often qualified by the name of the district [*arrondissement*] and/or province [*province*]

Main record: gives the (1) name, age, occupation, place of birth, and residence of the informant [frequently this is the father], (2) the child's gender, date and place of birth, (3) the name, age, occupation, place of birth, and residence of the mother, and (4) the first name(s) of the child

- (1) est comparu (*has appeared*) Nicolas Watelet, cultivateur (*Nicolas Watelet, farmer*) âgé de trente-huit ans (*thirty-eight years old*) domicilié à Florenville (*residing in Florenville*),
- (2) le quel nous a déclaré et présenté (*who has stated and presented to us*) une enfant du sexe féminin (*a child of the female gender*) née à Florenville (*born in Florenville*), ce jour à quatre heures du matin (*today at four o'clock in the morning*)
- (3) de lui (*of him*) et de Marie Hubert son épouse (*and Marie Hubert, his wife*), sans profession (*no occupation*), née à Martué (*born in Martué*), âgée de trente-six ans (*thirty-six years old*), domiciliée à Florenville (*residing in Florenville*)
- (4) et auquel il a déclaré vouloir donner les prénoms de **Marie-Aline** (*and to which he has stated he wants to give the first names of Marie-Aline*)

Variations:

- the child will be either of male [*masculin*] of female [*féminin*] gender [*sex*]
- the date is often expressed as today [*ce jour*], yesterday [*hier*], or the day before yesterday [*avant-hier*]
- the time is usually expressed in the morning [*du matin*], before noon [*dans le matiné*], in the afternoon [*de l'après-midi*], in the evening [*du soir*], or at night [*du nuit*]

Closing lines: will include (1) the name, age, occupation, and residence of two witnesses, and (2) signatures

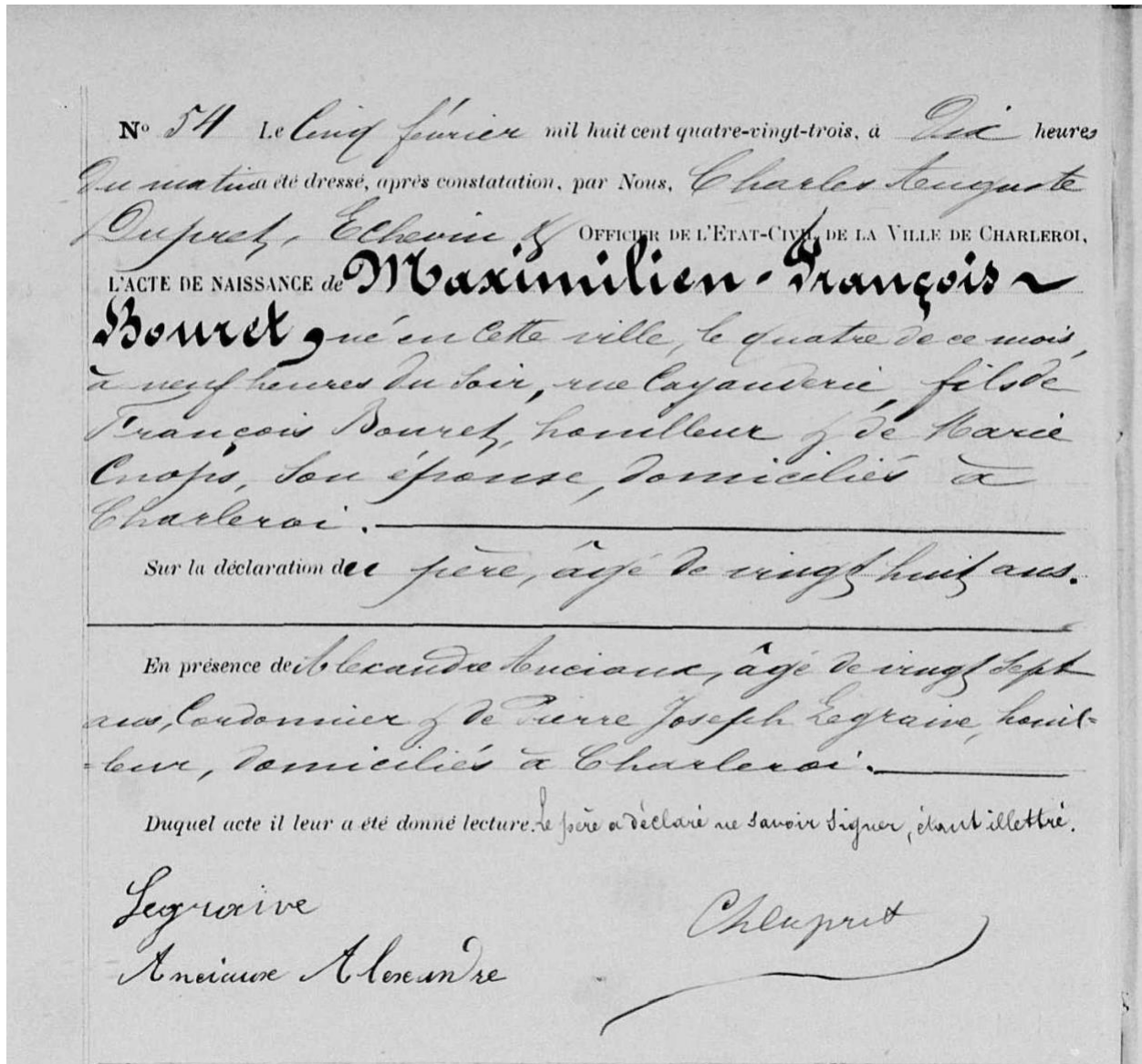
- (1) Les dites déclaration et présentation faites en presence de (*the said statement and presentation made in the presence of*) Francois Bayard, âgé de cinquante-cinq ans (*Francois Bayard, fifty-five years old*), instituteur pensionné (*retired teacher*), domicilié à Florenville (*residing in Florenville*) et de Francois Dupont, âgé de cinquante-cinq ans (*Francois Dupont, fifty-five years old*), cultivateur (*farmer*), domicilié à Florenville (*residing in Florenville*)
- (2) et ont les père de l'enfant et témoins signé avec nous (*and the father of the child and the witness have signed with us*) le présent acte de naissance (*the present record of birth*), après qu'il leur en a été fait lecture (*after a reading of it was given to them*)

Variations:

- If the informant or one of the witnesses is illiterate it would be mentioned in this section. E.g.:
 - o Le comparant a déclaré ne savoir écrire ni signer (*the informant stated that he cannot write or sign*)
 - o A l'exception du père qui a déclaré ne savoir signer, étant illettré (*Except the father who stated not being able to sign because he is illiterate*)

Source:

"Belgique, Hainaut, registres d'état civil, 1600-1913," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LNW-YYM?cc=2138500&wc=QZL7-J9P%3A1055731301%2C1055863101> : 22 May 2014), Charleroi > Naissances 1883-1889 > image 13 of 919; België Nationaal Archief (Belgium National Archives), Hainaut.



Preamble: includes (1) the number of the record, (2) date and time of registration, (3) the name and title of the registrar, and place of registration

- (1) N^o 54.
- (2) Le cinq février mil huit cent quatre-vingt-trois à dix heures du matin ()
- (3) a été dressé (*has been drawn up*), après constatation (*after the observation*), par Nous, Charles Auguste Dupret, Alderman & Office of Civil Registration of the City of Charleroi

Main Record: includes the name of the child, (2) the place, date and time of birth, (3) the name, and occupation of the father and mother, and their place of residence

- (1) L'Acte de Naissance de **Maximilien-François Bouret** (*The Birth Record of Maximilien-François Bouret*)
- (2) né en cette ville, le quatre de ce mois, à neuf heures du soir, rue Cayanderie (*born in this city, the fourth of this month, a nine o'clock in the evening, Cayanderie street*),
- (3) fils de François Bouret, houilleur & de Marie Cnops, son épouse, domiciliés à Charleroi (*son of François Bouret, coal miner, & Marie Cnops, his wife, residing in Charleroi*)

Closing lines: includes the name and age of the informant, the name, age, and occupation of the two witnesses, and (3) the signatures

- (1) Sur la déclaration du père, âgé de vingt huit ans (*upon the statement by the father, twenty-eight years old*)
- (2) En presence de Alexandre Anciaux, âgé de vingt sept ans (*in the presence of Alexandre Anciaux, twenty-seven years old*), cordonnier (*cobbler*), & de Pierre Joseph Legraire, houilleur (& *Pierre Joseph Legraire, coal miner*), domiciliés à Charleroi ([both] *residing in Charleroi*).
- (3) Duquel acte il leur a été donné lecture (*Which record was read to them*) Le père a déclaré ne savoir signer, étant illettré (*the father stated that he can not sign because he is illiterate*)