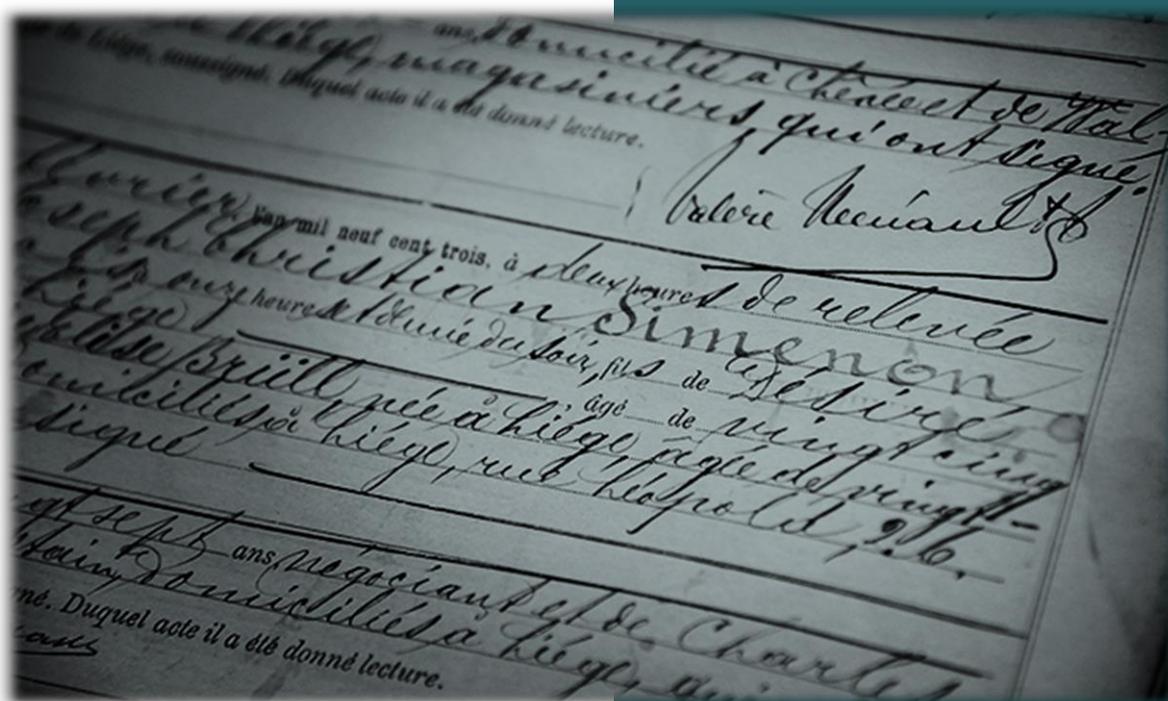# Analyses of records

TABLES OF CONTENTS

I. ACCESSIBLE INFOMATION

A. Which information can be found using this search engine?

The *Analyses of records* search engine is the result of decades of work by our numerous volunteers and the staff of the State Archives. Thousands of pages of archives have been systematically analysed to provide a succinct description of the document (content, date, place). In addition, the names of all the people mentioned in the document were noted, and if possible other data such as place of residence, profession, date of birth, etc.

The Projects page, as with the previous search engine, provides an overview of the different projects, their content, the people who have worked on them, latest updates, etc.

B. Which records are analysed?

Most of the information available via the search engine comes from genealogical documents, such as church registers and civil status registers. But the search engine also allows access to analyses of notarial deeds, building permits, property records, militia registers, foreigners' files, etc.

The Projects page provides more information about the records analysed for each project.

C. Which regions and which municipalities are concerned?

The search engine can be used to find information on Belgian municipalities as well as certain foreign municipalities, provided they are mentioned in the documents analysed. The volume of information available varies from one region to another, depending on the data analysed.

II. CARRYING OUT RESEARCH

You don't have to be logged in to search records!

The *Free Search* tab is more suitable for a general search and the *Search a person* tab for a specific search.

A. Free search

1. Search term(s)

You can enter one or more keywords in the *Search term(s)* field. The search engine then browses the entire database to find the keyword(s).

Example: The results of a search for the word "brasseur" (brewer) will include records mentioning a person named "Brasseur", records mentioning someone practising the profession of brewer, and notarial deeds in which the word "brasseur" is mentioned in the description and/or remarks.

Inverted commas may be used for exact searches. The search engine will then display the keywords in the same order as indicated in the search field.

Example:

- Without inverted commas = vente moulin (sale mill) > the search engine looks for the occurrence of the words "vente" and "moulin" regardless of the order or presence of these keywords together.
- With inverted commas = "Vente moulin" > the engine searches only scans for those occurrences of the terms in which the keywords *Vente moulin* are written together and in the same order.

It is also possible to use an asterisk (*) and a question mark (?) to search for names that match one or more characters at the beginning or end of a search term (*) or for which a letter is not known (?).

Example:

- *Mart* for Demarteau, Jacquemart, Martin or Martens.
- De ?oninck for De Coninck or De Koninck.

2. Location

You can search for a place by entering its full name in the *Location* search field.

Please note

It is possible that a volunteer has made a spelling error (e.g. Arhcennes instead of Archennes), that the old spelling of a place name was used (e.g. Messency instead of Messancy) or that a place name has been translated (e.g. Graafschap Namen instead of Comté de Namur).

The list of results may contain analyses of records drawn up in the place searched for (visible directly from the list of results in the *Place of record* column) or analyses of records in which the place searched for is mentioned as the place of birth of a deceased person or in remarks on the sale of an estate in this place (in this case, you must click on the analysis of the record because this place is not displayed in the list of results).

3. Period

You can narrow down the search by specifying a time period.

- "The" = the date of the record or the date of death, birth or marriage is known. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796);
- "From" (until) = the date is not known but lies within a particular time span. Our data contains records from 1580 to 1920, which is thus the date range for searching for a person or a record. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796);
- "Before" = the date is unknown except for the end of the date range. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796);
- "After" = the date is unknown, except for the start of the date range. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796).

It is also possible to carry out statistical research, for example from a demographic-sociological perspective, by searching for specific data for a given period.

4.   More filters

By clicking on *More filters,* two new fields are shown. This section allows the search to be filtered according to the 'type of record' (e.g. baptism record) and the 'project' (e.g. Death certificates of soldiers from Département de l'Ourthe) that contain the search terms.

- *Type of record*: Use the drop-down menu to select a type of record.
  Please note: You can only choose one type of record per search query!
- *Project*: Select a project from the drop-down menu.
  Please note: You can only choose one project per search query! The list of projects is also available on the Projects page.

Once you have filled in the fields and clicked *Search,* the search engine browses millions of analyses. Clicking *Reset* deletes the data entered and the filters selected.

B. Search a person

The database already contains 42 million names and is continuously enriched! So it may feel as if you were looking for a needle in a haystack! To find the person you are looking for, we recommend using the *Find a person* tab. This search is recommended for finding a person using their last name and/or first name in the specific fields provided.

The more precise the search criteria, the more relevant the results! BUT... The more search criteria you use, the less likely you are to get results!

1. Name

Use this search field to enter the last name of the person you are looking for. It is also possible to search for compound names.

Example: Lemercier or Petit-Jean in the *Name* search field.

It is also possible to use an asterisk (*) to search for names that match one or more characters at the beginning or end of a search term.

Example: *Mart* for Demarteau, Jacquemart, Martin or Martens.

Don't forget to search using alternative spellings!

Example: Dupont or Dupond - Fontaine or Fonteine.

In notarial deeds or war damages files, for example, institutions are often mentioned as stakeholders. These institutions have been included in the database in the *Name* field and can therefore also be found using this search field.

Example: Société belge de tissage or Fabrique d'église de Notre-Dame.

Please note

If both the last name and first name are given, the search engine will search for the combination of the two names and only those results will be shown in which both last and first name occur together in an analysis.

If only the last name or first name is entered and the other field remains empty, the search will be based on the completed field only. As a result, the number of results will be higher and therefore less relevant.

2. First name

In this search field, enter the first name(s) of the person you are looking for.

Example: Catherine or Jacques François in the *First name* search field.

You can also use an asterisk (*) to search for names that match one or more characters at the beginning or end of a search term.

Example: An* for Anne, Anthony or Anne Marie.

Please note that the search engine does not translate first names. It may therefore be necessary to search separately for the French, Dutch or Latin version of a name.

Example: For the first name Antoine, also search for Antoon or Antonius (Dutch and Latin translation respectively).

And don't forget to search using other spellings!

Example: Elisabeth or Elizabeth - Mark or Marc.

Please note

If both the last name and first name are given, the search engine will search for the combination of the two names and only those results will be shown in which both last and first name occur together in an analysis.

If only the last name or first name is entered and the other field remains empty, the search will be based on the completed field only. As a result, the number of results will be higher and therefore less relevant.

3. Profession

A profession can be selected from the predefined list (enter the first three letters to show the list) or by typing the full job title if it is not mentioned in the drop-down menu. If a profession is not listed in our database, this does not mean that it does not exist and that there are therefore no analyses. Not all professions have yet been included in this database and, as the analysis of the documents progresses, the reference list of professions will also be enriched to become a genuine reference list. It is also possible that a volunteer made a spelling mistake (e.g. 'tapisier' instead of 'tapissier'), that the old spelling of a profession was used (e.g. 'laboureur' instead of 'agriculteur') or that a profession was translated (e.g. 'Naaister' [NL] instead of 'couturière' [FR]).

This list has been translated into four languages (French, Dutch, English and German) and has thus been "standardised". Professions are grouped by category to make them easier to translate.

If there are more details about the profession indicated by volunteers than in the reference list, this additional information is mentioned in the *Remarks* field but will not be translated.

Example: Captain – Capitaine administrateur [FR] or Trader – commerçant négociant [FR].

4. Role

Each person mentioned in the deed was given a "role".

Example: In a marriage certificate, the roles are 'groom' and 'bride'. Depending on which details were recorded, the father and mother of the couple, witnesses, legitimate children and/or a previous partner may also be specified.

Which roles are mentioned depends on the type of record described. You can choose a role from the drop-down menu.

Please note

Only one role can be searched at a time. All the roles in the drop-down menu are assigned and therefore appear in at least one of the analyses.

5. Adding a second person to the search

The fields are the same as those explained above. If the fields in this section are completed, the search results will only contain analyses in which both persons are mentioned together and not separately.

6. Location

You can search for a place by entering its full name in the *Location* search field.

Please note

It is possible that a volunteer has made a spelling error (e.g. Arhcennes instead of Archennes), that the old spelling of a place name was used (e.g. Messency instead of Messancy) or that a place name has been translated (e.g. Graafschap Namen instead of Comté de Namur).

The list of results may contain analyses of records drawn up in the place searched for (visible directly from the list of results in the *Place of record* column) or analyses of records in which the place searched for is mentioned as the place of birth of a deceased person or in remarks on the sale of an estate in this place (in this case, you must click on the analysis of the record because this place is not displayed in the list of results).

7. Period

You can restrict your search by specifying a period.

- "The" = the date of the record or the date of death, birth or marriage is known. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796);
- "From" (until) = the date is not known but lies within a particular time span. Our data contains records from 1580 to 1920, which is thus the date range for searching for a person or a record. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796);
- "Before" = the date is unknown except for the end of the date range. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796);
- "After" = the date is unknown, except for the start of the date range. The format is DD/MM/YYYY (e.g. 20/02/1858) or YYYY (e.g. 1796).

It is also possible to carry out statistical research, for example from a demographic-sociological perspective, by searching for specific data for a given period.

8. More filters

By clicking on *More filters*, two new fields are shown. This section allows the search to be filtered according to the 'type of record' (e.g. baptism record) and the 'project' (e.g. Death certificates of soldiers from Département de l'Ourthe) that contain the search terms.

- *Type of record*: Use the drop-down menu to select the type of record you are interested in.
  Please note: You can only choose one type of record per search query!
- *Project*: Select a project from the drop-down menu.
  Please note: You can only choose one project per search query! The list of projects is also available on the Projects page.

It is not recommended to use these advanced filters for your first search for a person or for a general search query.

Once you have filled in the fields and clicked *Search*, the search engine browses millions of analyses. Clicking *Reset* deletes the data entered and the filters selected.

III. SEARCH RESULTS

The search results screen is displayed. At the top centre of the results page, the specifications of your search query are displayed.

Please note

If too many search terms have been entered (for example, if all the fields have been filled in), there may be no results. It will then be necessary to limit the number of search terms to increase the chances of finding an analysis.

A. Options

The buttons at the top of the screen allow you to:

- *Modify search* = When your search query needs to be modified. The search terms entered are saved and can be modified, deleted or other terms can be added;
- *New search* = To carry out a new search query;
- *Copy page link* = You can save the URL of the results page to find back your search results later;
- *Report an error* = This button takes you to the contact form where you can report errors. The URL is automatically displayed in the form. Please do not delete it so that we can find back your exact search query and correct the error.
- *Export page as csv* = To download only the results page displayed, in .csv format. If you want to export the rest of the results, go to the next page and click on the *Export page as csv* button again.
- *Filter results* = You can filter your search results without having to return to the search menu. In this section, the same fields as in the previous section are displayed (see *II. Carrying out research*): *Place*, *Period*, *Type of record* and *Project*. They can be modified or complemented if necessary;


- Indicates the current number of results displayed on one page and the total number of results;

- Page navigation: Makes it easier to navigate from one page to another, either using the arrows or the page numbers.

Please note

For a more fluid display of results it is not possible to select a page more than 4 pages away from the one currently shown, or to go to the last page of results. We therefore recommend using the filters as much as possible in order to better target your search query, thereby avoiding a high number of possibly less relevant search results.

25 / page ⌄
10 / page
25 / page
50 / page
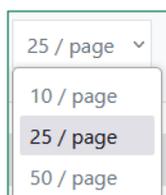
- To select the number of results per page (10, 25 or 50).

B. Structure of the results list

The results are sorted in columns:

◇ Type of record	◇ Place of record	◇ Date of record	Name	First name	Role

- *Type of record* = The type of record found. If the type of record was not specified on the search screen (see II. *Carrying out research - More filters*), all records containing the search terms will be displayed;
- *Place of record* = The municipality where the record was registered. If no place is mentioned, "/" is displayed instead. If the place you searched for is not the same as the one displayed in the results screen, this means that the place is mentioned elsewhere in the record analysis. It is therefore not the place where the record was registered, but the place of birth, death or residence of the person documented.
  Click on *View* for more information;
- *Date of record* = Date on which the record was compiled. If only the year is displayed, this means that only the year in which the record was compiled is known. This may be the case for example in projects that include indexes to church registers or civil status registers. A period of time may be displayed here if the exact date of registration is not known.
- *Name* = Last name(s) of the person you are looking for.
  o If several people with the same name are mentioned in the record, they are displayed on the same line.
    Example: In a birth certificates, the father and the child have the same last name and are therefore shown together in the list of results.

| Birth certificates | Liège | 03/03/1865 | Wimet | Aline Charlotte Françoise | Child | View |
| | | | Wimet | Edouard Joseph | Father | |

  o If you searched for two persons, both last names are displayed one below the other.

Marriage certificates	Brussel	06/05/1911	Aubert	Henri	Groom	View
			Aubert	Henri Claude Martial	Father of the groom	
			Wimet	Marie Thérèse Désirée	Mother of the husband	
Marriage certificates	Sint-Joost-ten-Node	07/08/1833	Wimet	Marie Thérèse Desirée	Bride	View
			Wimet	Jean Baptiste	Father of the bride	
			Aubert	Henri Claude Martial	Groom	
			Aubert	Claude	Father of the groom	

- *First name* = First name(s) of the person you are looking for. If you searched for two persons, both first names are displayed one below the other;
- *Role* = The person's role in the record. The same person can have several roles if he or she is mentioned several times in different records;

- *View* = Click on this button to display the details of the analysed record. It is not strictly necessary to click on the button itself. Each line can in fact be clicked to view the details of a record.

Please note

Only the *Type of record*, *Place of record* and *Date of record* columns can be sorted alphabetically or chronologically. Due to the structure of the database it is not possible to sort the *Last name* and *First name* columns however. Persons are displayed by record and not as distinct entities (the entity is the record and not the person).

IV. RECORD ANALYSIS

By clicking on the *View* button, the details of the analysis are displayed in a pop-up window (analysis file). The search criteria entered are highlighted in yellow in the record file.

Example: Search for the burial records of the *Van Haelen* family:

The following options are available at the top of the form:

- Open the analysis in a new tab with a unique URL

- Copy the URL of the page;

- Print the analysis;

- Open the contact form to report an error in the analysis. The URL of the record is automatically inserted in the form. Please do not delete it so that we can find back your exact search query and correct the error.

The file itself contains the following information:

- *Record identifier* = Each analysis has its own unique identifier. This identifier is permanent and makes it easier to find the analysis.
  - Example: GRIMPR_GRIMBEG_00026058 in the form below.
- *Details of the record:*
  - Type of record = The type of record, e.g. baptism record or inventory of property;
  - Project = Project title, including a hypertext link to the project details;
  - Place = Place where the record was compiled;
  - Description = Description of the record with more information on the type of record;
  - Remarks = Remarks relating to the record;
  - Date of record = Date on which the record was created and signed.
- *Details of persons mentioned:*
  - Role = The person's role in the record, e.g. Deceased or proprietor;
  - First name / last name;
  - Date of birth;
  - Place of birth;
  - Date of death;
  - Place of death;
  - Profession;
  - Place of residence;
  - Remark.

If one of these fields regarding a person is not displayed, it means that it was not filled in by the volunteer or staff, or that no corresponding information was mentioned in the record.

Use the *Next* and *Previous* arrows to browse the records on the results page (only those of the results page displayed on the screen: 10, 25 or 50 results). To browse the records on the other results pages, if available, go to the next or previous results page.

V. PROJECT

Each project carried out by volunteers or State Archives staff is listed on the Projects page and can be consulted via the record analysis form.

On the project page, the following information are displayed:

- *Code* = alphanumeric project code allocated by the State Archives;
- *Project* = project name;
- *Date of update* = Date of publication of the project, but also of additions to the content or corrections of errors in the data.

The three columns can be sorted alphabetically (*Code - Project*) or chronologically (*Date of update*).

For each project, the following information is shown:
- Project title;
- Project description = More information on the work carried out (analyses);
- Status = Closed or ongoing. If the project is ongoing, other record analyses will be added to the database;
- Number of records = Total number of records analysed;

- Number of people referenced = Total number of people mentioned in the records;
- Period = Date range of the analyses;
- Geographical description = Place where the records were compiled (municipality, district, province, country or world);
- Data introduced by = Names of the volunteers or staff of the State Archives who analysed the records;
- Last update = Date of project update;
- URL = Link to the inventory for the archive in which the analysed records are held, or to the genealogical site for analyses of church registers or civil status registers. Unfortunately, no direct links to the corresponding records can be provided.

VI. ACCESS TO THE ORIGINAL RECORD

To date, only a limited number of digitised records have been linked to their respective analyses. Direct links to the digitised originals are currently not available.

Digitised church registers and civil status registers can be accessed via the search engine *Genealogical sources*. For more information on how to use this search engine, see the user guide.

More information about access to other types of records, such as citizen lists or declarations of inheritance, can be found in the corresponding inventory of the archive (URL mentioned on the project file). If the analysed records have already been digitised, they can be accessed using the *Archive Inventories* search engine. If the records have not been digitised, the original records can be requested in the reading room of the State Archives where they are held.

VII. HELP FEEDING THE *ANALYSES OF RECORDS* DATABASE

Would you like to take part in a volunteer project? Do you already possess analyses of certain types of records for a given period and place, and would you like to make them available to the research community? Let us know via the contact form!