

**Archival collection:** Albert Trouwborst: Rwanda-Burundi

**Archival inventory by:**  
Sjoerd Kompier, 2021

**Updated by:**  
Ursula Oberst, 2024

*Shelf 4*

**Title:** Albert Trouwborst: Rwanda-Burundi

**Dated (mostly):** 1958-1959, 1968, 1970s-2000

**Dimensions:** 4 boxes

**Languages:** Dutch, French

**Summary:** The collection contains sources from Albert Trouwborst's fieldwork in Burundi in 1958/59 and the visit to his former research area in 1968. These include two photographs, written notes on aspects of Burundi life, informative cards on Burundi material culture, a description of his photo-material, a mailing list with ethnological objects to be sent to the *Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde* in Leiden, as well as typed texts concerning Burundi socio-political organisation and rites. The collection also comprises correspondence from the 1970s-2000s, a collection of documents on Burundi in the 1960s as well as descriptions and correspondence concerning the Georges Smets Archive.

**Institution:** African Studies Centre, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands.

**Repository:** African Studies Centre Library, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands.

**Acquisition:** The archival material was kindly donated to the Africa Studies Centre by Margot Trouwborst-Bemelmans, widow of Albert Trouwborst, in 2008.

**Conditions Governing Access:** State of archive: Good, no damaged papers; Legal issues: No personal information present

## **Biographical information<sup>1</sup>:**

Albert Trouwborst was born in Tarakan on the island of Borneo in the then Netherlands-Indies on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 1928. After studying Indology (1945-1950) in Leiden, Trouwborst started working for the Katholiek Sociaal Kerkelijk Instituut in The Hague, an institution which surveyed the need for churches and schools among the Dutch populace. The following year (1952), he was appointed as a curator of the Africa-section of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Royal Ethnological Museum) in Leiden, a role which he would fulfil until 1960. Trouwborst was able to combine his curatorship with the continuation of his study of anthropology, resulting in the publication of his dissertation: *Vee als voorwerp van rijkdom in Oost-Afrika (Livestock as an object of wealth in Eastern-Africa)* (1956).

In 1958 and 1959, Trouwborst conducted anthropological fieldwork in Mutaho, Muzenga and Renga in the rural part of Burundi, at the time part of the Belgian mandate area Ruanda-Urundi. The question central to this study was whether African societies were characterized by rigidly defined social rules. His findings would be published in full, in an unabridged form and distributed to friends and colleagues in 2007, named *Leven op de heuvelen van Burundi (Life on the hills of Burundi)*.<sup>2</sup> As a consultant on behalf of UNESCO, Trouwborst travelled to Burundi in 1968 to investigate the possible set up of an ethnology department at the University of Bujumbura. This trip also included a visit to his former fieldwork area to collect additional data.

Trouwborst's return from Africa marked the beginning of a long career in academia in both Montréal (assistant-professor at the anthropological department, specialising in the Caribbean: 1960-1964) and the Catholic University of Nijmegen, where he would play a decisive part in the development of the anthropological department, both as a lector of non-western sociology (1964-1971) and professor of social anthropology (1971-1989). From the end of 1994 until July of 1995, he was the interim-director of the African Studies Centre in Leiden. Albert Trouwborst passed away on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 2007, in Nijmegen.

For more extensive biographical information, as well as a bibliography, we refer to the [archival guide](#) (in Dutch) written by René van der Haar, who prepares archives for the Catholic Documentation Centre of the Radboud University in Nijmegen. The guide written by Van der

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<sup>1</sup> This brief biographical section is fully based on the biographical section for the archival inventory made by René van der Haar: R. van der Haar, *Het persoonsarchief van Albertus (Albert) Antonius Trouwborst* (published online, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> M. Doortmont, In memoriam: Albert Trouwborst, NVAS Nieuwsbrief, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2007).

Haar also delves into Trouwborst's interest in regions outside of Africa. [Additional information](#), especially regarding Trouwborst's activities outside academia, is provided by Humphrey de la Croix, a historian specialised in both the colonial history of Indonesia and the Indonesian diaspora.

**Note on the history of the collection:**

The archival material of Albert Trouwborst was split after his passing. A second part was donated to the Catholic Documentation Centre of the Radboud University in Nijmegen, where René van der Haar described it in the above-mentioned archival guide.

The photographs made during Trouwborst's fieldwork in Burundi are stored in the archive of the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, described as: "RV-10565-1 negatieven", "RV-10566-1 negatieven" and "RV-13788-352-36/182 dia's".

## Description of the collection:

### TROU-1

- Transparent folder:
  - 14x tracing paper with traced weaving-patterns, braiding-patterns, patterns for basket-weaving, including serial numbers: 3605-21, 3605-30, 3605-35, 3605-55, 3475/5½, 3475/5½ (top-edge), 2x 1667-33, 1667-108, 1667-132, 1667-159 (closed 2-stroke method), 1667-166A, 3506-36 (closed 3-stroke method), 3506-36.
  - Copied journal articles including maps of Burundi (French):
    - L'organisation territoriale du Burundi en 1933
    - Mutations sociales et mouvements de population 1920-1960
    - L'organisation territoriale du Burundi en 1954
    - Éléments d'histoire économique 1945-1962
  - 3x card containing information and visual representation of Burundi utensils (Dutch), description on backside: 'Bij de Burundi's', coded in order: p. 123, p. 108, p. 94:
    - 'In het graspaais van een muganwa' (Urundi-prins, herdersprins)
    - Muziekinstrumenten der Burundi
    - Voorbehoedsmiddelen
  - 2x photograph (Copyright reserved to Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde Leiden, Nederland)
    - Portrait of a woman (t.o.p. 144)
    - Group of men and boys in front of a dwelling (t.o.p. 40)
  - A. Trouwborst, Mailing list detailing ethnographic objects from Burundi and Tanganyika to be sent to the 'Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde' (The Netherlands) from the Astrida branch of L'Institut pour Recherche Scientifique en Afrique Centrale (IRSAC) (16/3/1959) (Dutch)
  - A. Trouwborst, 'Objects Africa-section of the 'Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde', Leiden (including: serial number – description – place of origin – relevant literature for each object) (Dutch)
    - Serial number 1352/1 'bracelets' to 1352/116 'bracelet' – serial number 1162/75 'jewellery' – serial number 1667/1 'bobbin' to 1667-190 'small basket'
  - Written letter from Johana Muvyira Runga from Kiyamugeri (18/12/195?) (French)
  - Notes: 'Incopréhensibles (enregistrement-Mutaaho)' (French)
  - List: 'Negatives of photographs made by Dr. A.A. Trouwborst' (1958-1959)
    - Description of the content of 54 camera rolls
    - Each photograph has a number, as well as a description in Dutch and French. Among the places where they were taken: Nyabikenke in Central-Rwanda, Rubagabaga in Northern-Burundi, Gitega in Central-Burundi, Muzenga in Central-Burundi, and Nkondo in Southern-Burundi
- 1.2 Publication: Mark Heirman, *Ruanda: Het land van de duizend leugens* (Antwerp, 1995)
  - Brief chronological history of Rwanda
  - Excerpts are marked in yellow, the copy includes notes in the side-lines

- 1.3 ELBA RADO Ring-binder: (Dutch)
  - Text: 'Burundi: Van koninkrijk tot staat'
  - Text: 'Identiteit B'
  - Text: 'Mythen, ritueel en ideologie'
  - Text: 'Over kasten en clans'
  - Text: 'De kraal (urugo) en de heuvel (umusozi): vie locale'
  - Text: 'Hoofdstuk I: Culturele antropologie tussen andere wetenschappen'
- 1.4 Grey Ringbinder: 'Tekst: Kasten + Clans' (Dutch)
  - Text: 'De kasten'
- 1.5 Grey Ringbinder: 'Trommen, Locale organis.' (Dutch)
  - Text: 'De sociale organisatie op lokaal niveau'
  - List of inhabitants of Kibogoye (Central-Burundi); including: name – caste – clan – details
  - Written notes (Dutch): 'Marriage' – Vendetta' – 'The royal drums' (including references to other authors) – 'The officials of the royal ritual'

#### TROU-2

- 2.1 Reports by Amnesty International on human rights abuses in Burundi and Rwanda, 1990s
- 2.2 Correspondence regarding a possible publication on the history of Rwanda (publisher: UNESCO), 2000s.
- 2.3 Correspondence, conference programs, Burundian government reports, 1990s., among which manuscript by E. Kabagema, sent by the ASCL to A. Trouwborst for review; Republique du Burundi (1990). Charte de l'unité nationale.
- 2.4 Second manuscript by E. Kabagema, sent by the ASCL to A. Trouwborst for review, 2001
- 2.5 Notules sur le Ruanda-Urundi [1959 ?]
- 2.6 Handwritten notes ; list of the all items donated by Margot Trouwborst-Bemelmans

#### TROU-3

- 3.1 Correspondence 1970s and 1980s
- 3.2 Collection of documents on Burundi in the 1960s with among others: J. Kestemont (1962). Note de la mission pour l'étude des possibilités de la culture du thé au Rwanda et au Burundi; Université du Burundi (1982 ?). Répertoire des mémoires de fin d'études soutenus jusqu'en 1981 ; Nations Unies (1968) : Liste du personnel international en poste au Burundi. UNDP (1968) : Conditions de vie au Burundi.
- 3.3 Conference brochure and other materials related to two UNESCO conferences: *Construire l'avenir pour le Burundi*. Paris, 26-28 September 1997 and *Regional approach to conflict management and conflict transformation in the Great Lakes Region*. Nairobi, 29-30 April 1999.

#### TROU-4

- 4.1 Overprints and photocopied articles by G. Smets. Handwritten notes: analysis of place and personal names contained in the Georges Smets files. Furthermore: De Nederlandse Vereniging voor Afrikastudies (NVAS): flyer, bylaws (1997), newsletter 2005 & 2007, membership list
- 4.2. Documents concerning the Georges Smets files, among which: Ridder-Van Kranendonk, G. de and Vinken, K. (1982): Handleiding bij de gebruikmaking van de

dossiers Georges Smets met een voorwoord van Prof. Dr. A.A. Trouwborst;  
Correspondence with A. Dorsin角度-Smets; Ridder-Van Kranendonk, G. de (1982).  
De reisroute van Prof. G. Smets tijdens zijn etnografisch onderzoek in Burundi in  
1935; Ridder-Van Kranendonk, G. de (1982). De bestuurlijke herindeling van Burundi  
in 1935.

- 4.3 Correspondence 1970s, 1990s and 2000s.
- 4.4 Correspondence 1970s and 1980s
- 4.5 Handwritten notes of interviews with inhabitants of Trouwborst's 1958/59  
fieldwork area. The data was collected during his visit to Burundi in 1968;