

Guide to the James Bruce archive

MSS 68



YCBA Library Court. Photograph by Richard Caspole, YCBA, 2016.

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Center for British Art, Rare Books and Manuscripts
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CALL NUMBER: MSS 68

CREATOR: Bruce, James, 1730-1794

TITLE: James Bruce archive

DATES: ca. 1750-ca.1850.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 60 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The archive comprises original manuscript material concerning the travels of James Bruce of Kinnaird in North Africa and Ethiopia, from 1762 to 1774. Bruce (1730-1794) was originally posted as British consul-general at Algiers, though his diplomatic service concluded in 1765. Over the next 10 years, Bruce traveled in North Africa to document the antiquities, flora, and fauna of the region. Bruce then traveled to Ethiopia to document the source of the Nile. The bulk of material concerns Bruce's search for the source of the Nile and his records of Ethiopia's flora and fauna. Some portions also cover Bruce's diplomatic work and his travel and documentation of architectural antiquities in North Africa and Ethiopia.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ycba.mss.0068>

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is unprocessed and may not be available for immediate access.

Conditions Governing Use

The collection is the physical property of the Yale Center for British Art. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Preferred Citation

James Bruce Archive. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Scope and Contents

The archive comprises original manuscript material concerning the travels of James Bruce of Kinnaird in North Africa and Ethiopia, from 1762 to 1774. Bruce (1730-1794) was originally posted as British consul-general at Algiers, though his diplomatic service concluded in 1765. Over the next 10 years, Bruce traveled in North Africa to document the antiquities, flora, and fauna of the region. Bruce then traveled to Ethiopia to document the source of the Nile. The bulk of material concerns Bruce's search for the source of the Nile and his records of Ethiopia's flora and fauna. Some portions also cover Bruce's diplomatic work and his travel and documentation of architectural antiquities in North Africa and Ethiopia.

The archive includes approximately 1,500 items, including correspondence, manuscript writings or notes, records, manuscript maps, volumes of diaries or day books, and an assortment of passports and other official documents.

Approximately 900 drawings by Luigi Balugani and James Bruce, formerly in the archive, have been transferred to the Department of Prints and Drawings at the the Yale Center for British Art. About 300 of the transferred drawings include significant textual annotations by Balugani.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Preferred Titles

Bruce, James, 1730-1794. Travels to discover the source of the Nile

Subjects

Antiquities
Botany
Diplomats
Natural history

Geographic Names

Africa, North -- Antiquities
Africa, North -- Description and travel
Blue Nile River Valley (Ethiopia and Sudan)
Ethiopia -- Antiquities
Ethiopia -- Description and travel
Ethiopia -- History -- 1490-1889
Nile River

Genres / Formats

Correspondence
Diaries
Drawings (visual works)
Maps
Notebooks

Names

Balugani, Luigi Antonio Melchiorre, 1737-1771
Bruce, James, 1730-1794

Contributors

Bruce, James, 1730-1794
Balugani, Luigi Antonio Melchiorre, 1737-1771