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Yale Divinity Library

Guide to the Lamin Sanneh Papers

RG 323



Lauren Burchinal and Scott Libson

2024

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
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<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 323

CREATOR: Sanneh, Lamin O., 1942-2019

TITLE: Lamin Sanneh Papers

DATES: 1968–2017

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 11.5 linear feet (28 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: This collection documents the professional life of Lamin Sanneh (1942-2019), the D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale Divinity School. The collection contains professional correspondence, extensive drafts, and materials from his teaching and research projects, enabling the researcher to delve into topics Lamin Sanneh engaged throughout his career including World Christianity, West African Islam, Muslim-Christian relations, missiology, and human rights.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.323>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.323>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Sandra Sanneh, Kelefa Sanneh, and Sia Sanneh, 2023.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

Lamin Sanneh Papers (RG 323), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical

Lamin Sanneh was born on May 24, 1942, on MacCarthy Island in the Gambia, then a colony within the British Empire. His family, which had royal lineage, was Muslim, and Sanneh was educated as a Muslim. After achieving high marks on the civil service exam, he moved to the capital city of Banjul. It was while living and working in Banjul that Sanneh experienced a conversion to Christianity that would shape the rest of his life and career. A scholarship from the United States government made it possible for Sanneh to study in the US, first at a mostly Black college in Virginia and then at Union College in Schenectady, New York, where he received his B.A. Following his graduation, Sanneh returned to West Africa to study Arabic before earning an M.A. from the theology department of the University of Birmingham, studying classical Arabic and Islamic Studies with John Taylor in the Selly Oak Colleges. He attended the Near East School of Theology and worked with the Islam in Africa Project (IAP, which later became known as the Program in Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, or Procmura). In 1974, he received his Ph.D. in African Islamic History from the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London.

Sanneh's teaching appointments spanned the globe. Together with his wife Sandra and son Kalefa (born in 1976), Lamin Sanneh left the University of Ghana after three years (1975-1978) when the military cracked down on political unrest. They moved to Aberdeen, where Sanneh taught between 1978 and 1981. There, the Sannehs second child Sia was born (1979), and Sanneh met Andrew Walls, with whom he would collaborate extensively for the rest of his life. In 1981, Sanneh took up a visiting appointment at Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions, intending to return to Aberdeen after a year. Harvard proved such a stimulating intellectual environment, especially as Sanneh was developing the ideas that would come out in his book, *Translating the Message*, that he ended up staying until 1989. It was then that Sanneh moved to Yale Divinity School, where he became the D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity, and where he would work until his sudden death in 2019.

A world-famous scholar of religion, Sanneh specialized in missionary studies, Islam and Christianity in Africa, and Muslim-Christian relations. He authored numerous books and articles and is known for his works, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (1989); *Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process: The African Dimension* (1993); *The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism* (1996); *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (2000); and *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam* (2016).

Lamin Sanneh earned many awards and honors including Senegal's highest honor, the Commandeur de l'Ordre National du Lion. He was appointed by Pope John Paul II to serve on the Pontifical Commission of the Historical Sciences at the Vatican and by Pope Benedict XVI to the Pontifical Commission on Religious Relations with Muslims. Sanneh received a lifetime appointment at Clare Hall, University of Cambridge (1996), was appointed Honorary Professional Research Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (1997), won the John W. Kluge Chair in the Countries and Cultures of the South at the Library of Congress (2004-2005), and received the Marianist Award from the University of Dayton in 2011. At Yale, Sanneh was a fellow of Trumbull College, served as the chair of Yale's Council on African Studies for several years, served on the board of Yale's Overseas Ministry Study Center, and, in partnership with Andrew Walls, established the Yale-Edinburgh Conference. In addition to his teaching and research, he served as the editor of several academic journals, a consultant to the Pew Charitable Trust and the 1998 Lambeth Conference in London. He was also appointed as a founding member of the Council of 100 Leaders of the World Economic Forum.

Further biographical information can be found in Lamin Sanneh's 2012 memoir *Summoned from the Margin: Homecoming of an African*.

Scope and Contents

The Lamin Sanneh papers document Sanneh's career from the beginnings of his work to the late 2010s. The contents of this collection provide an in-depth view into the progression and day-to-day life of his work, including professional materials related to his research, teaching, and service to the field.

Series I, PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1969-2008, is organized chronologically. Contents include conversations about his publications; invitations to and logistics of academic conferences, workshops, and lectures; communication from the organizations and projects he was involved with, planning for movement between institutions through grants, fellowships, visiting professorships, temporary positions, sabbaticals, and new job opportunities; letters from students, people interested in his work. Some correspondence has been placed in more relevant folders as they pertain to specific events and organizations.

Series II, WRITINGS, 1968-2016, is composed of drafts and final copies of his articles, monographs, lectures, reviews, lectionary readings, and notes. There are full and partial drafts of his monographs, as well as a copy of his M.A. dissertation.

Series III, COURSE FILES, includes materials Sanneh saved from the classes he taught such as syllabi, course readings, and lectures. The classes include Christian-Muslim Dialogue, African Religions, Prophet Movements, World Christianity, Introduction to African Religions, and Religious Healing. The folders were filed and labeled by Sanneh with some relevant additions.

Series IV, ORGANIZATIONAL FILES, 1970-2005, contains documents related to his work with organizations such as the African Theological Initiative, The IAI (International African Institute), OMSC (The Overseas Ministry Study Center), Pew Charitable Trusts, PROCMURA, the Yale-Edinburgh Group.

Series V, RESOURCE FILES, 1960s-2010s, contains materials organized alphabetically by subject. Materials include mostly academic articles, newspaper and magazine articles, and clippings. Series V provides insight into the sources Lamin Sanneh used to shape both his research and teaching.

Series VI, COLLECTED MATERIALS, 1960s-2010s, contains other miscellaneous materials collected by Sanneh, including student papers, newsletters organized by publication, and pamphlets.

Series VII, BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS, 1979-2008, contains a small number of documents that relate to Sanneh's life, including articles written about him and his work, biographical writings, and CVs.

Arrangement

Arrangement

- I Professional Correspondence, 1969 - 2008
- II Writings, 1968 - 2016
- III Course Files, 1973 - 2017
- IV Organizational Files, 1970 - 2005
- V Resource Files, 1960s - 2010s
- VI Collected Materials, 1960s - 2010s
- VII Biographical Documentation, 1979 - 2008
- VIII Digital Materials, 2002

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b. 1, f. 13	Professional Correspondence	1983
b. 1, f. 14	Professional Correspondence	1983
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b. 2, f. 4	Professional Correspondence	1988
b. 2, f. 5	Professional Correspondence	1988
b. 2, f. 6	Professional Correspondence	1988
b. 2, f. 7	Professional Correspondence	1989
b. 2, f. 8	Professional Correspondence	1989

b. 2, f. 9	Professional Correspondence	1990
b. 2, f. 10	Professional Correspondence	1990
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b. 3, f. 3	Professional Correspondence	1991
b. 3, f. 4	Professional Correspondence	1991
b. 3, f. 5	Professional Correspondence	1992
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b. 5, f. 6	Professional Correspondence	1996
b. 5, f. 7	Professional Correspondence	1996

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b. 6, f. 8	Professional Correspondence	2004
b. 6, f. 9	Professional Correspondence	2008
b. 6, f. 10	Undated Correspondence	n.d.

Series II: Writings, 1968–2016

Master's Dissertation		
b. 6, f. 11	The Concept of 'Ibadah in the Qur'an, University of Birmingham	1968
Related to Monograph Publications		
<i>The Jakhanke: The History of an Islamic Clerical People of the Senegambia</i>		
b. 6, f. 12	Draft Materials	
b. 6, f. 13	Photographs	
b. 6, f. 14	Copies of "The Chronicle of Karamokho Ba of Touba, Guinea"	
b. 6, f. 15	Notes and Related Materials	
b. 6, f. 16	Related correspondence	1978 October– 1990 January
b. 7, f. 1	<i>West African Christianity: The Religious Impact</i>	1982–1985
<i>Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact on Culture</i>		
b. 7, f. 2	Early Full Draft Manuscript "Mission, Translation and Cultural Change"	c. 1988
b. 7, f. 3	Drafts	1986–1987
b. 7, f. 4	Drafts	n.d.
b. 7, f. 5	<i>Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process: The African Dimension</i>	1993, n.d.
b. 7, f. 6	<i>The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism</i>	1996–2005
b. 7, f. 7	<i>Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa</i>	c. 1999
b. 8, f. 1	<i>Whose Religion is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West</i>	c. 2003
b. 8, f. 2	<i>Whose Religion is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West</i>	2003
b. 8, f. 3	<i>Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam</i>	c. 2016
b. 8, f. 4	Correspondence and contracts related to monographs	1984–1996, n.d.
Articles		
b. 8, f. 5	Published articles	1974–1979
b. 8, f. 6	Published articles	1980–1985
b. 8, f. 7	Published articles	1986–1989
b. 8, f. 8	Published articles	1990–1993
b. 8, f. 9	Published articles	1995–1997
b. 8, f. 10	Published articles	2001

Articles (continued)

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b. 8, f. 12	Published articles	2011, n.d.
b. 8, f. 13	Drafts	1980s
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b. 9, f. 1	Drafts	1986–1988, n.d.
b. 9, f. 2	Drafts	1993–2000
b. 9, f. 3	Drafts	2003, n.d.
b. 9, f. 4	Drafts	2000s?
Book reviews by Lamin Sanneh		
b. 9, f. 5	Drafts and published reviews	1979–1982, n.d.
b. 9, f. 6	Drafts and published reviews	1983–1988, n.d.
b. 9, f. 7	Drafts and published reviews	1990–2002
Unpublished materials		
b. 9, f. 8	Papers, presentations, lectures	1971–1976
b. 9, f. 9	Papers, presentations, lectures	1970s–1980s
b. 10, f. 1	Autobiographical writing	1980s
b. 10, f. 2	Reflections on biblical texts	1989, n.d.
b. 10, f. 3	Papers, presentations, lectures	1980s
b. 10, f. 4	Papers, presentations, lectures	1980s?
b. 10, f. 5	Papers, presentations, lectures	1980s–1990s
b. 10, f. 6	Papers, presentations, lectures	1996–2003
b. 10, f. 7	Papers, presentations, lectures	2004–2016
b. 10, f. 8	Papers, presentations, lectures	2000s
b. 10, f. 9	Papers, presentations, lectures	2000s
b. 11, f. 1	Papers, presentations, lectures	2000s
b. 11, f. 2	Notes	n.d.
b. 11, f. 3	Notes	n.d.
b. 11, f. 4	Notes	n.d.
b. 11, f. 5	Notes	n.d.

Series III: Course Files, 1973

Materials gathered in course files include syllabi, exams, lectures, notes, and course readings gathered and organized by Lamin Sanneh.

African Religions		
b. 11, f. 6	Course Materials	1986–1990, n.d.
b. 11, f. 7	Course Materials	2006–2017
b. 11, f. 8	Class Readings	
b. 11, f. 9	Class Readings	
Christian-Muslim Dialogue		
b. 12, f. 1	Course Materials	1986–1989
b. 12, f. 2	Course Materials	1980s
b. 12, f. 3	Course Materials	1996–2015
b. 12, f. 4	Notes	n.d.
b. 12, f. 5	Newspaper clippings and articles	
b. 12, f. 6	Class Readings	
b. 12, f. 7	Class Readings	
b. 12, f. 8	Class Readings	
Introduction to African Religions		
b. 12, f. 9	Course Materials	1983–1988
b. 12, f. 10	Class Readings	
Methods in the Study of Missions		
b. 13, f. 1	Course Materials	1987–1988
Ordinary Class (University of Aberdeen)		
b. 13, f. 2	Course Materials	c. 1978
Prophet Movements		
b. 13, f. 3	Course Materials	1983–1989
b. 13, f. 4	Class Readings	
Religious Healing		
b. 13, f. 5	Course Materials	1983–1986
b. 13, f. 6	Notes	1984, n.d.
b. 13, f. 7	Class Readings	

Study of Religions (Islamic Option)		
b. 13, f. 8	Course Materials	1976-1977
World Christianity		
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b. 13, f. 10	Course Materials	2002-2017
b. 13, f. 11	Class Readings	
Miscellaneous Classes		
b. 14, f. 1	Course Materials	1973-1987, n.d.
b. 14, f. 2	Course Materials	1990-2002, n.d.

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b. 14, f. 3	Programmatic Materials	1992–1997
b. 14, f. 4	Programmatic Materials	1995–1997, n.d.
	"The Africans" TV Program	
b. 14, f. 5	Correspondence	1984–1986
b. 14, f. 6	Programmatic Materials	1984–1986, n.d.
	American Theological Society	
b. 14, f. 7	Programmatic Materials	1991–1996
	Association of Theological Schools	
b. 14, f. 8	Programmatic Materials	1993–1997
	Center of Theological inquiry	
b. 14, f. 9	Programmatic Materials	n.d.
	Center for World Christianity	
b. 14, f. 10	Programmatic Materials	1999–2002, n.d.
	"The Changing Role of the Ulama" Conference	
b. 14, f. 11	Programmatic Materials and Submitted Papers	1984
b. 14, f. 12	Submitted Papers	1984
	Conversion in Africa Conference	
b. 15, f. 1	Programmatic Materials	1988–1989, n.d.
	Emory University Proselytizing Project	
b. 15, f. 2	Programmatic Materials	1996–1998, n.d.
	Encyclopedia of Sub-Saharan Africa	
b. 15, f. 3	Programmatic Materials	1991–1992, n.d.
b. 15, f. 4	Programmatic Materials	1991
	Gospel and Our Culture	
b. 15, f. 5	Programmatic Materials	1991–1997, n.d.
	Harvard University	
b. 15, f. 6	Related Materials	1981–1985, 1996
	IAI (International African Institute)	

IAI (International African Institute) (continued)

b. 15, f. 7	Programmatic Materials	1976–1985, n.d.
b. 15, f. 8	<i>IAI Bulletin</i>	1976–1979
IAP (Islam in Africa Project)		
b. 15, f. 9	Programmatic Materials	1977–1984
b. 15, f. 10	Programmatic Materials	1985–1987, n.d.
IFACS (Institute for Advanced Christian Studies)		
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Kennedy Center		
b. 16, f. 3	Programmatic Materials	1997–1998
MANSA (Mande Studies Associaton)		
b. 16, f. 4	Programmatic Materials	1992–1993, n.d.
NAMP (North Atlantic Missiology Project)		
b. 16, f. 5	Programmatic Materials	1996–1998
OMSC (Overseas Ministry Study Center)		
b. 16, f. 6	Related Correspondence and Programmatic Materials	1982–1989
b. 16, f. 7	Related Correspondence and Programmatic Materials	1990–1991
b. 16, f. 8	Related Correspondence and Programmatic Materials	1991–2001, n.d.
b. 16, f. 9	SISMIC (Scholars Initiative for Studies in Mission and International Christianity)	1990–1991
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b. 17, f. 1	Related Scholarly Articles	1982–1996
b. 17, f. 2	Related Scholarly Articles	2002, n.d.
b. 17, f. 3	Notes and Related Materials	1987–2001, n.d.
Pew Charitable Trusts		
b. 17, f. 4	Programmatic Materials	1992–1993
b. 17, f. 5	Programmatic Materials	1994–1998, n.d.
Pew Seminary 2000		
b. 17, f. 6	Programmatic Materials	1999–2000

PROCMURA (Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa)		
b. 17, f. 7	Programmatic Materials	1988–1989
b. 17, f. 8	Programmatic Materials	1991–1995, n.d.
Selly Oak Colleges		
b. 17, f. 9	Related Materials	1968, 1980–1987, n.d.
University of Aberdeen		
b. 18, f. 1	Related Materials	1980–1988, n.d.
University of Cambridge		
b. 18, f. 2	Related Materials	1994–1995, n.d.
University of Ibadan		
b. 18, f. 3	Related Materials	1970–1973, n.d.
University of Florida		
b. 18, f. 4	Related Materials	1984–1988
Var Leer Foundation		
b. 18, f. 5	Programmatic Materials	1982–1984, n.d.
Yale Divinity School		
b. 18, f. 6	Related Materials	1987–2006, n.d.
Yale Edinburgh Conference		
b. 18, f. 7	Programmatic Materials and Drafts	1989–2003, n.d.
Miscellaneous Organizations		
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Series V: Resource Files, 1960s–2010s

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b. 19, f. 4	Gathered Scholarly Articles
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b. 19, f. 6	Gathered Scholarly Articles
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b. 20, f. 2	Gathered Scholarly Articles
b. 20, f. 3	Newspaper and Magazine Articles
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African American History

b. 20, f. 5	Gathered Scholarly Articles
b. 20, f. 6	Collected Newspaper Articles
b. 20, f. 7	Clippings

American Culture and Politics

b. 20, f. 8	Gathered Scholarly Articles
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Anglican Church, The

b. 20, f. 9	Gathered Articles
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Asian Religions

b. 20, f. 10	Gathered Scholarly Articles
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Bahamas, The

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Ethics and Philosophy

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Higher Education

b. 21, f. 2	Gathered Articles
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Human Rights

b. 21, f. 3 Gathered Materials

b. 21, f. 4 Gathered Materials

Islam

b. 21, f. 5 Ephemera

b. 21, f. 6 Newspaper Articles

b. 21, f. 7 Gathered Scholarly Articles

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b. 21, f. 9 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 21, f. 10 Gathered Scholarly Articles

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b. 22, f. 4 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 22, f. 5 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 22, f. 6 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 22, f. 7 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 22, f. 8 Gathered Scholarly Articles

Relations Between Islam and Christianity

b. 23, f. 1 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 23, f. 2 Gathered Scholarly Articles

Missions

b. 23, f. 3 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 23, f. 4 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 23, f. 5 Gathered Scholarly Articles

Muslims in Britain

b. 23, f. 6 Gathered Materials

b. 23, f. 7 Gathered Materials

Religious Studies

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Religious Studies (continued)

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World Christianity

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b. 24, f. 5 Gathered Scholarly Articles

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b. 24, f. 9 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 24, f. 10 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 25, f. 1 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 25, f. 2 Printed copy of the introduciton to John Stratton's Saints and Virtues

World Politics

b. 25, f. 3 Gathered Articles

Miscellaneous

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b. 25, f. 5 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 25, f. 6 Gathered Scholarly Articles

b. 25, f. 7 Gathered Scholarly Articles

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2002

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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.

Subjects

Christianity and other religions -- Islam
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