

# LIVED ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN GHANA

BENEDIKT PONTZEN



Benedikt Pontzen, who holds a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the Freie Universität Berlin, joined the Center for African Studies and the Center for Global Islamic Studies in August 2018 as a postdoctoral researcher. Working on lived Islam and “African Traditional Religion” as well as religious pluralism in Ghana, he is currently employed in the “Islam in Africa in a Global Context” project, which is funded through a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation’s Initiative on Religion in International Affairs to the University of Florida. The project is carried out by the Center for Global Islamic Studies in conjunction with the Center for African Studies. During the academic year 2018/19, the project’s thematic focus

will be lived Islam in Africa in a comparative context. Benjamin Soares, the director of the project, and Benedikt Pontzen are organizing a series of events on this topic, including a workshop on “Youths and Lived Islam in Africa and Beyond” in October and a summer institute on “Lived Islam in Africa.” Benedikt is also working with the Islam in Africa Working Group (IAWG) at CAS and is involved in co-organizing the IAWG symposium on “Religious Minorities in Muslim Africa” in the spring.

Benedikt Pontzen is currently finalizing his monograph about “Lived Islam in a Zongo in Asante,” which will appear in 2019. In addition, Benedikt Pontzen is working on other essays that are to be published shortly: one on “Islamic Amulets in Ghana,” one on “Relating to the Divine

in Different Religious Traditions in Ghana,” and one on “Bōkā: Islamic Discourses on ‘ATR’ in Ghana.” In spring semester, Benedikt Pontzen will teach a course on “Islam in Africa” and present his work at international conferences.

Over 2019, Benedikt Pontzen will continue working on his publications on religious pluralism and religious encounters in Ghana. During the summer, he will carry out fieldwork on “African Traditional Religion” and shrines in Ghana to further pursue and develop his research on “Living with Spirits in Africa.”

*Benedikt Pontzen is a Luce Foundation postdoctoral fellow in the Center for Global Islamic Studies and the Center for African Studies.*