Francesca Romana Romani & Eleonora Di Vincenzo, Roma Tre University

Muḥammad Bayram’s reinterpretation of ḍār al-ḥarb regulations in the Risāla fī ḍār al-ḥarb wa-suknāhā

The unpublished manuscript of the Risāla fī ḍār al-ḥarb wa-suknāhā by the Tunisian šayḫ, reformer, journalist and traveller Muḥammad Bayram al-Ḩāmis (1256/1840-1307/1889), is available in a single copy, probably handwritten by the author and conserved at the King Saud University (216.7/ T.M; 3456). The relatively short text (12 folios, 19 lines per page; 16,5 x 20,5 cm), deals with the behavior of Muslims both in ḍār al-islām and in ḍār al-ḥarb according to the author’s modernist view of the relations between Islam and modernity, which lead him to accept, inter alia, the ḥalāl status of meat belonging to animals slaughtered by non-Muslims, especially during travels abroad, or the lawful status of the meat of animals killed through bullets.

The text, that has not been hitherto edited nor translated in any language, shows a yet unknown facet of the world view of an important figure in Islamic modernism in a crucial period where some Muslim countries – specifically Tunisia and Egypt in the case of the author’s life experience – had to deal with extended confrontation with the growing power of European countries, especially France and the United Kingdom.

The presentation will discuss some excerpts from the manuscript and its relations to issues relative to the changing regulations of fiqh in an evolving world where traditional definitions about behaviours of Muslims in ḍār al-ḥarb cannot apply and a creative interpretation of sources is needed according to Muḥammad Bayram’s general intellectual and political program.