

# Near Eastern and Islamic Studies

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**Thomas Burman**  
University of Notre Dame

## “Ramon Martí: Engaging Islam and Judaism on the Edge of Scholastic Christendom”

The Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí (d. after 1284) was the most learned Latin author of religious polemic in the later Middle Ages. Having learned Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic, his writing (a short work against Islam and two massive treatises against Judaism) quote directly and abundantly from Jewish and Muslim religious and philosophical sources. Since Martí lived his whole life in Iberia and North Africa, his intellectual production allows us to look at the Latin scholastic movement in its most dynamic period, not from its center in Paris and Oxford, but from its most distant periphery, both geographically and intellectually. Viewed through the lens of Martí’s works written on this Iberian periphery, we are not surprised to find that Latin scholasticism is deeply preoccupied with Judaism, but Martí’s only passing interest in Islam forces us to recognize that, despite being profoundly dependent on Arab philosophy, scholastic culture was largely unwilling or unable to think systematically about the religious beliefs of Islam.

**Thomas E. Burman** taught at the University of Tennessee for twenty-five years before becoming Robert M. Conway Director of the Medieval Institute and Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame in 2017. His scholarly work focuses on the intellectual, cultural, and religious interactions between Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the western Mediterranean. His first book, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) examined the learned culture of the Arabic-speaking Christians of Islamic Spain, while his *Reading the Qur’an in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) traced the reactions of medieval and early-modern Europeans to Islam’s holy book, whether they read it in Latin translation or the Arabic original. It won the American Philosophical Society’s Jacques Barzun Prize in Cultural History. His research has been supported by fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is currently writing a book entitled *Ramon Marti and the Trinity: Islam, Judaism, and the Scholastic Project*.

**March 8, 2017**

**4:00-6:00 pm**  
**White-Levy Room**

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For further information,  
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**Lecture Series**  
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