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COLLEGIUM  
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Seminar

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*The Devil in the Detail:  
Annotations to the 'Alchoran Latinus'  
during the Middle Ages*

Thursday, 5 December, 4:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall  
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala  
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## ABOUT ANTHONY LAPPIN

Anthony Lappin studied at Magdalen College, University of Oxford, where he gained his D.Phil. After a Junior Research Fellowship and a Temporary Lectureship at the Queen's College, University of Oxford, he was employed as a lecturer in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Manchester, where he has remained. In January 2014, he will take office as Professor of Spanish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth. Lappin is currently President of the Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature.

Lappin's research has focused upon medieval religious history and literature, with a particular interest in hagiography, monasticism, and Christian–Muslim relations.

A recent Leverhulme Trust Award allowed him to begin work on the earliest Latin translation of the Qur'an, the *Alchoran latinus* from 1143, carried out by Robert of Ketton and Herman of Dalmatia at the behest of Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny. The translation was enormously popular in the middle ages and early-modern period, and two editions of different states of the text have been published: *Alchoran Latinus*, I: *Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal ms. 1142* and III: *Editiones Theodori Bibliandri* (Rome: Aracne, 2012–2013). Whilst at SCAS, Lappin will be working towards an edition of the numerous marginal annotations to the text, particularly those created in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Previous publications include studies of hagiography (*Berceo's 'Vida de Santa Oria'* [Legenda, 2000] and *The Medieval Cult of Saint Dominic of Silos* [Maney Publishing, MHR Texts and Dissertations, 2002]), of medieval poetry (*Gonzalo de Berceo: the Poet and his Verses* [Tamesis, 2008]), and articles on the development of monasticism and on various authors (e.g. Gil Vicente, Cervantes, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz) between the medieval and the Baroque.

## ABSTRACT

The *Alchoran latinus* is one of the first translations of the Qur'an, and probably the first to have been composed in a non-Islamic setting: prepared by two Christian scholars at the behest of Peter the Venerable, between the years 1141–43, as the centrepiece to a series of works translated directly from Arabic which formed a sort of "encyclopedia of Islam". This group of texts was copied and distributed from Cluny. There it was enriched by an apparatus of annotations, designed to explicate passages in the Qur'an, provide interpretations, highlight tidbits useful for polemic or refutation of Islam, complain about Muhammad's morality or his tendency to repeat himself, divide the text into manageable portions. In the first part of this paper, then, I shall look at what the Cluniac annotations can tell us about the copying and assembly of the text. From its beginnings in Cluny the text was widely copied and read — over twenty medieval manuscripts survive — and in the copying the nature of the marginalia was significantly changed. By looking at a select number of manuscripts in detail, I will highlight the changes wrought over the four hundred years that the text was read in manuscript, and conclude with some consideration of the different atmosphere which led to the printing of the text of the *Alchoran latinus* in Basel in 1543 and one separate tradition of marginalia to the *Alchoran* in Nuremberg in the same year.