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Dominicus Germanus de Silesia in Rome: The Roman Prodromes of a Future Qur'an Translator*

Abstract

This study describes the Roman stays and Roman works of the Franciscan friar Dominicus Germanus de Silesia (1588-1670), the author of the Latin Qur'an translation known as "*Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*". In particular, it will show how these works already contain in a primitive state main features, motives and methodologies which Dominicus will fully develop in the *Interpretatio*, thus representing relevant preliminary steps, whose assessment is necessary to fully understand the mature production of the Franciscan friar.

Keywords

Dominicus Germanus de Silesia; Rome; Latin Qur'an Translation; Tafsir; Mission; Propaganda Fide; Arabic Grammar; Arabic Dictionary; Vernacular language

1. Introduction

One of the greatest achievements of the Franciscan friar Dominicus Germanus de Silesia (1588-1670) is certainly the Latin Qur'an translation "*Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*".[1]

Dominicus produced it at the El Escorial monastery, near Madrid, where he settled down in 1652 after different travels and stays in the Middle East and in Rome, and he worked on it at least from the year of his arrival, if not from before, up to his death on 28 September 1670.[2]

The main feature of the "*Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*" resides particularly in the fact that it contains, besides the qur'anic text in Latin translation, also its exegesis by the most important and acknowledged Muslim commentators, which Dominicus excerpts and translates into Latin, too. He divides the translation of the Qur'an in different blocks, and he puts the translated exegetical parts, which he calls "*scholia*", right after the translation of the qur'anic verses they refer to, thus alternating qur'anic text and *scholia*. At times, he supports the authenticity of the translations included in the *scholia* through the transcription of their source texts from the works of the Muslim commentators in the original Arabic.[3]

[1] The critical edition of the parts of this work containing the Latin translation of the qur'anic text was published with a brief introductory study by Antonio García Masegosa in 2009: Antonio García Masegosa, ed., *Germán de Silesia. Interpretatio alcorani litteralis. Parte I: La traducción latina; introducción y edición crítica*, Nueva Roma 32 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2009).

[2] On Dominicus's life, see Hartmut Bobzin, "Ein oberschlesischer Korangelehrter: Dominicus Germanus de Silesia, O.F.M. (1588-1670)," in *Die oberschlesische Literaturlandschaft im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerhard Koselleck, Tagungsreihe der Stiftung Haus Oberschlesien 11 (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2001), from which I draw my short account in section 2 of this study; see also: García Masegosa, *Interpretatio*, 13–22; Francis Richard, "Le Franciscain Dominicus Germanus de Silésie, grammairien et auteur d'apologie en persan," *Islamochristiana*, 10 (1984); Marcel Devic, "Une traduction inédite du Coran," *Journal Asiatique* 8, no. 1 (1883); Bertrand Zimolong, *P. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia O. F. M. Ein Biographischer Versuch* (Breslau: Otto Borgmeyer, 1928); Bertrand Zimolong, "Neues zu dem Leben und zu den Werken des P. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia O. F. M.," *Franziskanische Studien* 21 (1934); Bertrand Zimolong, "Nochmals P. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia O. F. M.," *Franziskanische Studien* 23 (1936).

[3] An example of this practice can be seen already in the *scholium* to the first sura, which contains a passage from the *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* ("Esoteric interpretations of the Qurʾan") by Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (born between 650–60/1252–61, died between 730–6/1329–35), both in Latin translation and, at the end of the *scholium*, in the original in Arabic script. The transcription of both versions of the passage from the manuscript El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 1624, can be found in Ulisse Cecini, "Germanus de Silesia's Qur'an Translation in the MS K-III-1 of the El Escorial Library: Newly Discovered Revised Versions," in *The Iberian Qur'an*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard A. Wiegers (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 138–40, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110778847-006. Due to the Arabic-Latin composite nature of the *scholia*, they had not been edited by García Masegosa, who edited only the Latin translation of the qur'anic text. I am currently preparing their critical edition. It should be added that, in a subsequent, enhanced version of the

Dominicus explains in the *praefatio* to the *Interpretatio* that he considers the fact that he bases his translation on the interpretation given by Muslim commentators a guarantee of its greater quality and reliability in comparison to past translations. Moreover, he is convinced that the refutations that he adds into the exegetical sections will be practically indisputable, even and especially by a Muslim audience, since they have been built on the same authorities that Muslims accept and use for their own understanding of the Qur'an.[4] The *scholia* are thus the "backbone" of Dominicus's translation, interpretation and refutation work in the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*. This, on its turn, is not an isolated work that comes from nothing, but is the crowning of a lifetime activity of broad scope, aimed to produce useful tools for the mission in the Muslim East. Dominicus, in fact, beyond the *Interpretatio*, leaves a large oeuvre, both printed and manuscript, of grammatical texts and dictionaries (not only related to Arabic, but also Persian, Turkish

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same *scholium* to the first sura, which can be found in the manuscript El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS K-III-1, fols. 15r-20r, each translated quotation from a Muslim commentator is systematically followed by the transcription of the corresponding passage in the original Arabic. About this manuscript, whose edition I am currently preparing, too, see Cecini, "Germanus de Silesia's Qur'an Translation in the MS K-III-1," 141–47.

[4] Cfr., for example, the following passage of the *praefatio* (García Masegosa, *Interpretatio*, 37): "*Si quis autem impie hanc meam germanam litteralem interpretationem calumniari uoluerit, pugnabo non armis* Camus*, seu, ut uocant, Thesauro linguae arabicae aut quibusuis aliis lexicis dictionariisque nec etiam proprio in tyrocinio edito. Verum ipsis rebus ualidioribus, hoc est, genuinis Alcorani expositoribus [...].*)" ("If someone wants to wickedly depreciate my faithful and literal translation, I will fight not with the weapons of the *Camus* [from Arabic *qāmūs* = lit. "the Ocean", but commonly used for "dictionary", *n. Cecini*], i.e. how they call the "Dictionary of the Arabic Language", or any other lexicon or dictionary, not even my own, which I produced during my training, but with something stronger and more effective than such things, that is, with the authentic and native commentators of the Qur'an". This and all translations, if not otherwise specified, are mine). With the word "*Camus*" Dominicus may refer – if he is not speaking generically of a dictionary, opposed to the exegetical works – to the famous dictionary of the Arabic Language by the Persian scholar al-Fīrūzābādī (729/1329–817/1415) *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* ("The Surrounding Ocean"). One finds today seven manuscripts of this work in the library of El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 587 to 593. Four of them are dated, bearing a date from before Dominicus's lifetime, MS 587 (856/1452), MS 588 (967/1559), MS 589 (975/1567) and MS 593 (961/1554). Cfr. Hartwig Derenbourg, H.P.J. Renaud, and Evariste Lévi-Provençal, *Les manuscrits arabes de L'Escurial* (Paris: Ernest Leroux; Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1884–1928), Tome I, 405–7. By "his own dictionary" Dominicus probably means his *Fabrica linguae Arabicae cum interpretatione Latina et italica accomodata ad usum linguae vulgaris et scripturalis*, published in Rome in 1639, when Dominicus was teaching at the *collegium linguarum orientalium* in San Pietro in Montorio, more about this work below.

and Armenian)[5], further translations, from Arabic and Persian[6], apologetical tracts and manuals, directed to Christian missionaries and to the Muslims themselves[7], along with notes taken for the preparation of his works[8].

If most of the manuscript works have been redacted, or rearranged and perfected, during Dominicus's stay in the last part of his life at the El Escorial monastery — where they still are —, the printed works are connected to his stays in Rome and to his relation with

[5] Beyond the Roman *printed* works, which will be described in more detail below, among the *manuscript* works I would like to particularly mention as especially relevant for this study the *Introductorium practicum in linguas arabicam persicam turcicam collectum et observatum per plures annos in orientalibus provincijs ac tandem in Regia Escurialensi Bibliotheca [...] organicè concinnatum*, preserved in the manuscript El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 1633. It is described in Richard, "Le Franciscain Dominicus," 96–98. The particular relevance of such work for this study is due to its "practical" character (*practicum*), which I will show below as a relevant element of Dominicus's methodology and purpose. Moreover, it profits, like the Roman works do, as I will show, from material and experiences collected by Dominicus in the field (*collectum [...] per plures annos in orientalibus provincijs*), finally systematically arranged in the El Escorial monastery. It develops and extends to other languages what one already finds for Arabic in the Roman works, such as the translation of prayers and central contents of the Catholic doctrine, as it is shown below. Further grammar and dictionaries of the Turkish language by Dominicus are found in El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS g-IV-27; an Italian-Armenian-Persian dictionary by him is found in El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS L-III-21.

[6] For example, a partial Latin literal translation, and an even shorter Turkish one, of the Persian version of Bellarmin's *Doctrina Christiana*, in El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 1632, fols. 11-46. Space was left also for an Arabic translation, which has not been accomplished. At the beginning of the manuscript (fols. 1-9) one finds a collection of Arabic proverbs, copied only on the recto-side, probably leaving the blank pages for their translation; another example is the Latin translation of the *al-Risāla al-shamsīya fī-l-qawāʿīd al-manṭiqiyya* [The letter to Šams al-Dīn on the foundations of logic] by Najm al-Dīn ʿAlī b. ʿOmar al-Qazwīnī, known as al-Kātibī [d. 657/1276], of which there are different exemplars, fragments and rewritings: with the title "*Logica Solana*" in El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 1631 and MS K-II-24 (which has two copies of the work, one of which is particularly interesting, being a bilingual Arabic-Latin fragment, at fols. 126v-114r, 1v); with the title "*Textura noua logicae solanae*"in El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial MS &-IV-15, fols. 148r-191r. Cfr. Richard, "Le Franciscain Dominicus," 94–96.

[7] The Persian-Latin *Veni Mecum ad Mohhammaedanos, id est breuis tractatus de diuinis processionibus et incarnatione Verbi aeterni*, El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 1630, fols. 3r-99r, described in Richard, "Le Franciscain Dominicus," 100–105; *Veni Mecum ad Christianos Orientales*, El Escorial, MS &-IV-15, fols. 192r-272r (some fragments are repeated); *Veni Mecum ad Mohhammaedanos ex Alcorano contra alcoranum pro defensione euangelicae ueritatis*, fols. 280r-286v (with Arabic transcription of the sources on fols. 286r-v); the fragment *Prima Pars. De diuinis nominibus*, MS &-IV-15, fols. 337r-347v), Cfr. Richard, "Le Franciscain Dominicus," 99–100.

[8] For example: El Escorial, MS 1630, fols. 99v-108v; MS &-IV-8, fols. 204r-277 (the same manuscript contains on fols. 1-204r Dominicus's autograph copy of the Latin Qur'an translation by Robert of Ketton of 1143, which Dominicus made in Ispahan in 1650). About Robert of Ketton's translation see, e.g., Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom, 1140–1560* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

the congregation *De Propaganda Fide*.[9] In this study I would like to show the connection that the Roman printed works have with Dominicus's future activity as Qur'an translator and how they contribute to shape the purpose of its work for the sake of the mission. Therefore, I am going to present such works, each of which deserves a dedicated study and edition of its own, here in brief, especially highlighting the aspects in them that prefigure Dominicus's approach to the translation of the Qur'an, as well as his translating practice. Before that, I will give a couple of chronological coordinates for a concise sketch of Dominicus's life.

2. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's life in brief.

Dominicus Germanus was born in Schurgast in Silesia, today Skorogoszcz in Poland, located about 60km south-east of Wrocław and 20km north-east of Opole. In 1624, i.e. when Dominicus was about 36, he joined the Franciscan Order, though probably already being a priest, in the Province of Bohemia. In 1630 he passed to the Roman Province and attended the *studium* of Oriental languages and *collegium* of the Franciscan missions at the convent of San Pietro in Montorio. His teacher was the founder of the *collegium*, Tommaso Obicini from Novara (1585-1632)[10]. Between the years 1630/31 Dominicus undertakes the first of the three travels "*in Oriente*" of his life. This first travel lasts four years, until end 1634 / begin 1635, in which Dominicus probably moves between

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[9] On the Congregation *De Propaganda Fide*, founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV, see: Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Governare le missioni, conoscere il mondo nel XVII secolo. La Congregazione Pontificia de Propaganda Fide* (Viterbo: Sette città, 2014).

[10] On Obicini cfr. Alessandro Vanoli, "Obicini, Giovanni Battista (in religione Tommaso)," in *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, 79 (2013), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-battista-obicini_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (Consulted: 05/12/2022), where one can find an extended bibliography.

Palestine and North/North-East Syria. The reason for the travel, as Dominicus himself explains,[11] is the improvement of his Arabic skills.

Between 1636 and 1640 he is again in Rome and at the *collegium* of San Pietro in Montorio, this time no longer a student, but a teacher (*lector*) of Arabic. He also becomes a member of the committee for the publication of the Arabic Bible, eventually printed in Rome in 1671.[12] It is during this four-year period that Dominicus publishes the books that are object of this study.

In 1640 he leaves for his second stay in the Holy Land and in the following year he is attested as Arabic teacher for his Franciscan brothers in Bethlehem[13].

In 1645 he is appointed Prefect of the mission to Samarkand in Great Tartaria (third and last sojourn in the East), before which he is again briefly in Rome. As a matter of fact, due to political conflict in the region, he will never be able to cross the border between Persia and the territory controlled by the Uzbeks to reach Samarkand. For this reason, he will stay for a long time in Isfahan and is attested also in other cities of Persia (Qom, Mashhad). He will return to Rome in 1652, but only for a short time, having asked and

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[11] From the dedication letter to Cardianal Francesco Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, of the *Fabrica overo dittionario della lingua volgare arabica et italiana* (Roma: Propaganda Fide, 1636), lines 3-5: "*quod tempus, quatuor annorum curriculo, transegi in Oriente, linguae Arabicae exercitationibus dandum existimaui*". ("I considered that the four-year period of time that I spent in the Orient should be dedicated to practice the Arabic language").

[12] About this, printed with the title *Biblia sacra arabica Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide jussu edita ad usum Ecclesiarum Orientalium additis e regione bibliis latinis vulgatis, Romae, Anno MDCLXXI*, see Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, Studi e Testi 118 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1951), 96–97; Ronny Vollandt, "The *Status Quaestionis* of Research on the Arabic Bible," in *Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan*, ed. Nadia Vidro et al. (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2018), 442–67; Nathan Gibson et al., "The Bible in Arabic: An Update on the State of Research," in *Between the Cross and the Crescent: Studies in Honor of Samir Khalil Samir, S.J. in the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Željko Paša, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 304 (Roma: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 2018), 57–84.

[13] Arduino Kleinhans, *Historia studii linguae Arabicae et collegii missionum ordinis fratrum minorum in conventu ad S. Petrum in Monte Aureo Romae erecti* (Firenze: Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1930), 76, n. 8, quotes the Acts of Propaganda Fide of 30 September 1641, ASC 1641, Congr. gen. 30 IX, n. 35, fol. 459: "*Referente Em. D. Pallotto litteras Fr. Francisci de Como, Reform. S. Congregatio licentiam petitam... concessit probavitque ut maneat Hierosolymis pro instruendis Fratribus in arabica lingua* prout P. Dominicus Germanus facit in Bethlehem" ("After His Eminence Sir Pallotto reported about the letter of the reformed Brother Francis of Como, the Sacred Congregation granted the permission he asked and allowed him to remain in Jerusalem to teach the Brothers in the Arabic language, *as Father Dominicus Germanus does in Bethlehem*"). Francis of Como had been a student of Dominicus, cfr. Kleinhans, *Historia*, 161.

obtained to go to the El Escorial monastery, where, as I have said before, he will be in the same year. There, he will stay until his death in 1670 and devote himself to the production of his remaining works that I have illustrated above.

3. The Roman printed works and Dominicus's approach to Arabic and the Qur'an

I shall now pass to review the works Dominicus printed during his sojourn in Rome between the years 1636 and 1640. They are three works, all printed by the *Propaganda Fide* typography, two of which have a linguistic-lexicographic nature, while the remaining one has a theological-apologetic character.

First, there is the so-called "little" *Fabrica*, printed in 1636.[14] The complete title reads: "*Fabrica overo Dittionario della lingua volgare, arabica, et italiana, Copioso de voci; & locutioni, con osservare la frase dell'una & dell'altra lingua*".[15] This, however, is not a dictionary, as it is said on the title page, but an elementary grammar of "vulgar" Arabic, as explained in the Latin preface to the reader. In such "*Ad lectorem*"-preface one finds what probably should be the real title of the work, that is to say "Introductory manual of the vernacular Arabic language", which is intended as a propaedeutic work to a future dictionary:

> *Existimabam perpetrare operae pretium, si saltem [...] hunc exiguum tractatum, qui (Introduttorio manuale della lingua Arabica volgare,) intitulatur: praemitterem, quo structuram vastiorem, quae adhuc vagit in cunis propugnarem.*

[14] A brief description of this work is found in Angelo Michele Piemontese, "Grammatica e lessicografia araba in Italia dal XVI al XVII secolo," in *Italia ed Europa nella linguistica del Rinascimento*, Mirko Tavoni, ed., vol. 2 (Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1996), 524–25.
[15] The edition I refer to is the one found in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 L.as.43p (available online, https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10521906 [Consulted: 05/12/2022]), henceforth: *Fabrica*, 1636.

I thought it would be worth the effort if I produced before at least [...] this short tractate, which bears the title of "Introduttorio manuale della lingua Arabica volgare". With it I will be able to defend the larger system that for now still cries in its cradle.[16]

This is confirmed in the first page of the work, which bears the same title: "*Introduttorio manuale della lingua Arabica volgare, diuiso in tre parti, ò trattati*"[17]. This 102-page long *in-quarto* booklet, written in Italian with exception of the dedication letter and the preface to the reader, places a particular emphasis on the *pronunciation* of *spoken* Arabic, with explanations of the individual sounds of the language that one could see as attempts of a sort of articulatory linguistics, and with numerous reading exercises, starting from Christian prayers in Arabic translation, accompanied by phonetic translation and original Latin.

For example, the first chapter ("*Dell'Alfabeto*", "On the Alphabet") of the first tractate ("*Delle lettere, e modo di leggere*", "On the letters and way of reading") opens with an alphabetic table ("*Tauola dell'Alfabeto*"), which covers from page 1 to page 3. The table is divided in seven columns. The first column on the left is called "*Valore*" ("value") and in it one finds the transcription of the phonetic value of each letter together with the aforementioned articulatory indications, not always, but only when the author considers them necessary for the Western reader, i.e. when they do not correspond to a sound of the Latin or Romance languages. The last column on the right gives the name ("*Nome*") of the letter, both in Arabic and Latin script (e.g.: "الف *Alef*, با *Ba*, تا *Ta*" etc.). In the five columns in between, one can find each letter written in Arabic script as isolated, in the ending position, in the middle and in the beginning of a word, as well as all combined in

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[16] *Fabrica*, 1636, viii (the page is not numbered. Page numbering begins when the actual works begins, after all the preliminary texts).
[17] *Fabrica*, 1636, 1. One will however find two tractates, not three.

a three-consonant, non-existing word that reunites all three positions, respectively. So, for example, the row of the letter *bāʾ* appears as follows: "B, b; ب ; ـب ; ـبـ ; بـ ; بيب ; با Ba". While for the *bāʾ* no additional explanation to the given pronunciation as "B, b" is needed, it is interesting to list here some of the values of the letters that are peculiar to the Arabic language. For the *alif*, one reads: "*A, a. con libero spirito della gola.*" ("with free air-blow from the throat")[18]; the *thāʾ*: "*Tzh, tzh. duretto e tenue à guisa del θ greco vn pochetto aspirato.*" ("slightly hard and soft, like the Greek *theta* with a slight aspiration"); the *ḥāʾ*: "*Hh, hh. con profonda aspiratione della gola, e spinto del petto.*" ("with profound aspiration from the throat and a push from the chest"); the *khāʾ*: "*Ch, ch. con lene raucedine del gottore*" ("with light hoarseness from the throat"); the *dāl* "*D, d. duro, e sottile*" ("hard and thin"); the *dhāl* "*Dh, dh. tenue, vn poco bleso*" ("soft, with a little of a lisp"); the *rāʾ* "*R, r. canino, e tenue*" ("dog-like and soft"); the *zayn*: "*Z, z. sottile*" ("thin"); the *sīn*: "*S, ʃ s. acuto*" ("high-pitched"); the *shīn* "*Sc, sch. romano, ò todesco*" ("Roman or German"); the *ṣād* "*Sz, sz. grosso, e graue*" ("large and low-pitched"); the *ḍād* "*Dzh, dzh. grosso, & acuto*" ("large and high-pitched"); the *ṭāʾ* "*Tth, tth. palatale, grosso & acuto*" ("palatal, large and high-pitched "); the *ẓāʾ* "*Tzh, tzh palatale, grosso, e duro*" ("palatal, large and hard"); the *ʿayn* "*Aa, æi, aao, aau. gutturale profondo, più difficile de tutti*" ("from the depth of the throat, most difficult of all"); the *ghayn* "*Gh, gh. gutturale, duro, e grosso*" ("from the throat, hard, and large"); the *qāf* "*Q, q. nella cima della gola graue*" ("on the top of the throat, low-pitched"); the *kāf* "*K, k. nel palato acuto*" ("in the palate, high-pitched"); the *hāʾ* "*H, h. nella cima della gola, lene, aspirata*" ("on the top of the throat, light, aspirated"). It is not easy to give an exact indication of what is meant by the articulatory explanations (especially about the translation of "*acuto*" as

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[18] I understand "*spirito*" to be the flux of air pushed out from the throat or the lungs, however not to be confused with the aspiration ("*aspiratione*"). I interpret the expression "*con libero spirito della gola*" to mean the free emission of air, without obstacles, to pronounce a vocalic sound.

"high-pitched" I am not sure at all), but if one thinks of the actual pronunciation of those sounds, one can imagine what Dominicus means, mostly not far from reality. As a matter of fact, as I will show below, Dominicus considers *listening* the primary way of learning, and this written descriptions only an aid to imitate what one has listened.[19]

The first tractate is concluded by reading exercises (p. 9-24)., through which the student should consolidate and practice what he learned through the theory explained before.[20] The texts included in this section are: the sign of the cross (p. 9), the Lord's Prayer ([in Arabic script:] "*al-ṣalāt al-rabbāniyya*; [Transcription:] *Assalat errabbanie*; [Title in Italian:] *L'Oratione del Signore*", p. 9-10)[21], the Hail Mary ("*salām al-ʿadhrā min jabrāʾīl al-malāk* [*sic*]; *Salamelaadhra men Gebrail elmelak*; *Salutatione della Vergine da Gabrielle Angelo*", p. 10-11), the symbol of the Apostles ("*al-athnā ʿashara ʿaqīdat madhhab dīn al-athnā ʿashara rasūl al-masīḥ*; *Elatzhnaascer aaqidet madhhab din ehtzhna aascer rasul almesihh*; *Duodecim articuli, seu mysteria professionis Fidei duodecim Apostolorum Christi*", p. 11-13), the ten commandments ("*al-ʿashar waṣāyā Allāh taʿālā*; *Elaascar* [*sic*] *vaszaia allah taaala*; *Li dieci commandamenti di Dio*", p. 13-14), the "Salve Regina"[22] (p. 14-15), "*Adeste oremus*" ("*halumma* [هلمَّوا] *li-nuṣalliya* [لنصلّى]; *Halomma lenaszalli*; *Adeste oremus*", p. 15)[23], "*Confessione generale*" ("*al-

[19] *Fabrica*, 1636, 1: "*la cui pronuncia legitima e patria, meglio s'impara con viua voce, che esplicarla con parole morte e mutole*". See the whole passage, with translation, below.
[20] *Fabrica*, 1636, 9: "*Mà accio meglio s'apprenda tutto quello, che fin qui detto hauemo, metteremo qui sotto alcune orationi quotidiane, per l'essempio dell'essercitio del leggere con lettere Arabiche pontate, ò vocalizate, espresse (quanto è possibile) con lettere italiane, con la sua esplicatione*" ("Nonetheless, in order to better learn what we have said up to this point, we will put below some daily prayers as examples to practice reading Arabic letters with points and vocalization, transcribed –as much as it is possible– with Italian letters and with their explanation [i.e. translation, *n. Cecini*]").
[21] Most of the following titles will reproduce the same scheme: Arabic script, transcription, translation.
[22] This text has the only title of "*La Salue Regina*". The text begins thusly: "*al-salām la-ki yā malika*; *Essalam leK ia maleKe*; *Salue Regina*".
[23] Begins as follows: "*Allahum tufiḍ fī adhhāni-nā*; *Quaesumus, o Deus, infunde mentibus nostris*".

a ʿtrāf al-ʿām")[24], "*Professio Fidei Catholicae S. Athanasij*" ("*i ʿtiqād al-īmān al-qāthūlīqī li-mār athānāsiyūs*") [25] (p. 18-23).

I reproduce here the first two texts as illustration of the general method:

بِسمِ ٱلْأَب وَٱلْإِبْن وَٱلرُّوحْ الْقُدس ٱلْأَله

Besme lab va-lebn va-rruh-elqodos elelah

In nomine Patris, & Filij, & Spiritus Sanctitatis Vnius

ٱلْوَاحِدْ أمِين

eluahheb Amin

Dei Amen

ٱلصَّلَاة ٱلرَّبانِيّه

Assalat errabbanie

L'Oratione del Signore.

تَاتِى	إِسْمَك	يَتَقَدَّسْ	ٱلسَّمَواتْ	فِى	ٱلَّذِى	ٱبُونَا
tati	esmak	ietqaddas	ssamuat	fi	elladi	Abuna
Pater	noster,	qui es	in coelis,	Sanctificetur	nomen	tuum, Adueniat

كَذَلِكْ	ٱلسَّمَا	فِى	كَمَا	مَشِيئَتَكْ	تَكُونْ	مَلَكُوتَك
kedhalek	ssama	fi	kama	mascietak	takun	malakutak
regnum	tuum,	Fiat	voluntas	tua sicut	in coelo,	sic &

بِيَوْمْ	يَوْمْ	كَفَاتَنَا	خُبْزَنَا	أَعطِنَا	ٱلْأَرْضْ	عَلَى
beiaum	iaum	kefatna	chobzena	aaattina	lardzh	aala
in terra.	Da nobis	Panem	nostrum	sufficientem nobis	de die	in diem,

نُغْفُرْ	كَمَا	وخَطَايَانَا	دُنُوبَنَا	لِنَا	وَٱغْفُرْ	
nogfor	kama	uchttaiana	donubena	lena	vogfor	
Et dimitte nob.	culpas nostras, &	peccata nostra,	sicut &	nos	dimittimus	

فِى ٱلتَّجَارِب	وَلَا تَدَخَّلْنَا	إِلَيْنَا	أَسَا	لِمَن	نَحْنَ	
fittagiarib	valatadachalna	eleina	asa	leman	nahhna	
ijs,	qui nos offenderunt, &	ne inducas	nos	in	tentationes,	

امِين.	ٱلشَّرِيْر	مِنَ	نَجِّنَا	لكِن
Amin.	menascerir	negina		laken
Sed libera nos à malo. Amen.				

[24] Begins as follows: "*Anā l-khāṭī l-shaqī aʿtarifu li-llāhi ḍābiṭ al-kull; Ego peccatorum miserimus [sic], confiteor Deo omnipotenti*".

[25] I.e. the Symbolum "Quicumque" pseudo-Athanasianum. Cfr. Heinrich Denzinger and Alfons Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Freiburg im Breisgau et al.: Herder, 1963), nr. 75-76, 40-42. The last three texts have only Arabic script and Latin translation. Maybe they suppose a student of more advanced level, who does not need the pronunciation aid anymore.

In the first text, it stands out how there is an addition at the end that underlines how the expression is finally addressed to one God, in order not to allow a polytheistic perception of Christianity. In the second, one sees how the phonetic transliteration respects the reading direction of the sentence in Arabic, from right to left.[26]

The section is concluded by the following statement:

> E questo basta per l'Introduttione, come s'hà da leggere, & anco vocalizare la lingua volgare lasciando sempre sospesa l'vltima vocale, come se fosse posta sopra un sokun ‿ ⁀ segno di quiete secondo li grammatici, eccetto se reggesse la seguente parola, & in particolare, s'ella hà nel principio l'articolo ال Alef lam. Onde osseruaranno (non dico già per regola infallibile, mà per più commune) che quando [24] venirà alle lor mani qualche scrittura Arabica, la quale non hauerà manco vna sol vocale, all'hora le lettere dolci, che sono si pronontiaranno come se fossero kestrate, perche inclinano più alla vocale e, che all'altre. Le restanti si regolaranno, come s'è accennato di sopra.[27]

> And this is enough for the introduction, as well as [the remark about] how one should read and vocalize the vulgar language, leaving always the last vowel unpronounced, as if a *sukūn* was placed above, i.e. the sign for silence according to the grammarians, except when [the last consonant] is bound to the next word, especially when the latter begins with the article ال *Alef lam*. Moreover one will observe (not as an infallible rule, but [a phenomenon that happens] more frequently), when one will stumble on some text written in Arabic script, which will not have one single vowel [written], than then the "soft" letters will be pronounced as if they have the vowel "*kasra*", since they tend more to the vocal "e" than to the others. The remaining letters will behave as it was mentioned above.

The purpose of this manual is thus eminently practical, with the aim of teaching a really spoken language, to be used in daily life and particularly in the practice of the mission. Hartmut Bobzin affirms that this manual presents a language that in fact does not exist, since classical written Arabic is not the counterpart of a *single* vulgar language, spoken in everyday life, but of a multitude of regional and local dialects. What Dominicus presents, continues Bobzin, is a sort of mixture of different Levantine dialects with classical Arabic.[28] However, Bobzin concludes that "nevertheless, the work does have a

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[26] This makes it clearer and more effective for the student than the illustrious predecessor represented by the *Alphabetum Arabicum*, printed by the Stamperia Orientale Medicea in 1592, which did not do that. Cfr. Piemontese, "Grammatica e lessicografia," 519–20: "consiste in [...] una *Excercitatio lectionis Arabicae* esemplata su *Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Salmi* 112 e 116, *incipit* del *Vangelo di S.Giovanni*, di cui si presentano il testo arabo, la trascrizione e il testo latino [note 1: Modello compositivo riflesso in Peter Kirsten, *Grammatices Arabicae, Liber I sive orthographia et prosodia Arabica*, Breslae: In Officina Baumann, 1608, che vi cita (pp. 31-32) anche un passo sulla pronuncia delle lettere]".

[27] *Fabrica*, 1636, 23–24.

[28] Cfr. Bobzin, "Ein oberschlesischer Korangelehrter," 224: "Und diese Grammatik krankt daran, daß sie etwas darzustellen versucht, was es in dieser Form eigentlich nicht gibt [i.e. „Vulgärarabisch", *n. Cecini*]:

certain practical utility". [29] This is in fact Dominicus's purpose, which one may apply to his entire production, to offer *practical and useful* tools for missionary practice, collected through careful listening and study (and excerpting) of original sources during his first stay in the Middle East.[30] This is also the reason why the work is written in Italian, except the dedicatory letter and the preface to the reader: from a vernacular to a vernacular, from vernacular Arabic to vernacular Latin, from a language that is spoken, not written – and should mainly be learned by listening to it – to a language that is really spoken, among others, in the streets of Rome and by the missionaries and administrators of *Propaganda Fide*. Dominicus says it himself in his good Italian, which, at least in this pristine moment of his academic life, seems to be better than his Arabic and also his Latin, in the short prologue that introduces the first tractate of the *Introduttorio manuale della lingua Arabica volgare*, in which he explains, in a way that I would dare to define poetic and almost romantic, its goal:

> ESSENDO necessario ribambire, e diuentar di nuouo fanciullo, à chi desidera imparare qualche lingua forestiera, & in particolare questa sì ricca & ampia lingua, è anco necessario che noi inanzi il tutto premettiamo li suoi primi elementi, la cui pronuncia legitima e patria, meglio s'impara con viua voce, che esplicarla con parole morte e mutole, per la raucedine, acutezza, e profonda aspiratione d'alcune di esse lettere. Pare cosa souerchia far vn lungo raggionamento[31] di esse, essendo che di ciò, già sono vsciti diuersi trattati; bastarà al principiante osseruare bene, & imparare le figure, e taccature dell'vna coll'altra nel principio, mezo, e fine, conforme nella soggetta tauola se gli mette inanzi alli occhi. Il che facendo con

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Dem schriftlich gebrauchten Klassischen Arabisch steht nämlich nicht nur *eine* Vulgärsprache (d.h. eine nur mündlich gebrauchte „Alltagssprache") gegenüber, sondern eine Vielzahl regional bzw. lokal voneinander unterschiedener Dialekte. Was P. Dominicus (gewiß besten Wissens und Gewissens) beschreibt, ist eine Art „Verschnitt" aus Elementen vershiedener levantinischer Dialekte und des Klassischen Arabisch."

[29] Cfr. Bobzin, "Ein oberschlesischer Korangelehrter," 224: "Gleichwohl besitzt das Werk einen gewissen praktischen Gebrauchswert."

[30] *Fabrica*, 1636, v: "*Ergo polyhistoram* [*sic*] *hanc, ex varijs Nomenclatorum, Lexicorum, necnon & eximiorum huius vastissimae, duarum, inquam, et quidem praecipuarum partium mundi, Asiae videlicet, & Affricae dominatricis, linguae Doctorum, dictis, sententijs, scriptisvè, ceù floribus (apis instar) collegi*" ("So I collected this compilation from various glossaries, dictionaries, as well as sayings, maxims and writings – which I collected as from flowers, like a bee – of the most illustrious language scholars of this very large part, or, should I say, these two main parts of the world, namely Asia and ruling Africa").

[31] One notices here and there signs of the Roman pronunciation of Italian: e.g. here "raggionamento", with geminated "g", above, about the letter ʿayn: "*più difficile* de *tutti*", instead of "di *tutti*". About this phenomenon, in Dominicus and other missionaries, see Pier Mattia Tommasino, "Il 'Dialetto Romano' nella lessicografia missionaria e diplomatica italiana del XVII e XVIII secolo," in *Per Muzio. Scritti in Onore Di Muzio Mazzocchi Alemanni*, ed. Franco Onorati (Roma: il cubo, Centro di Studi Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli, 2009), 253–70.

diligente studio, potrà ogniuno (se brama) imparare, non solo leggere, mà ancora sapere le significationi della parola, & intendere la proprietà della lingua Arabica.

BEING necessary for anyone who wishes to learn a foreign language to go back to his childhood, and become a little boy again — and especially this so rich and vast language [i.e. Arabic] — it is also necessary that we first put forth its essential elements, whose correct and genuine pronunciation is better learned by [listening to] a live vocal repetition, than by [reading] an explication through dead and speechless words, given the hoarseness, the high-pitched quality, and the profound aspiration of some of such letters. It seems unnecessary to deal with them extensively, since many tractates on this subject have already come out. It will suffice to the beginner to observe carefully and learn the [isolated] shapes [of the letters] and [their] connections to the others at the beginning, in the middle and at the end [of a word], according to what is shown in the table below. By doing this diligently, anyone will be able (if he so wishes) to learn, not only to read [correctly], but also to know the meanings of the given word, and to understand the characteristics of the Arabic language.

With these words I leave the so-called little *Fabrica*, which, again, is not a dictionary, but a language manual, and I pass to illustrate the real dictionary, the so-called "great" *Fabrica* of 1639.[32] It is a monumental work of large size ("small" in-Folio: 33x23cm) that extends for the amount of 1238 pages, and all its content is displayed in the three languages: Italian, Latin and Arabic. Here, for example, I reproduce the beginning of the three versions of the preface to the reader, on page vii, ix, xi, respectively[33].

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[32] The title of the work is Arabic and Latin (to help the reader, I insert the English translation of some words in the Arabic version): *Bināʾ / al-lugha al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-firanjiyyatayni (European) l-ʿāmmiyyatayni (vulgar) ay al-īṭāliyya wa-l-lāṭīniyya / taʾlīf (work) al-qiss (priest) al-ḥaqīr (low) min al-rahbana (monastic order) li-mār fransīskus al-qiddīs (holy) al-maʿrūf bi-l-ṭaqs (rite; religious custom; order of the ministry; clerical rank) / al-mutaḥaffiẓ (observant) al-ashadd (stricter) al-rāhib ʿabd al-aḥad al-namsāwī muʿallim l-lisān al-ʿarabiyy / bi-rūmiyya al-ʿuẓmā fī dayr mār buṭrus al-mutakannā jabali l-dhahab. / Fabrica / linguae Arabicae / Cum interpretatione Latina, & Italica, accomodata / ad vsum linguae vulgaris, & scripturalis. / Authore / P.[atre] F.[ratre] Dominico Germano, De Silesia, Ord.[inis] Min.[orum] de Obseru.[antia] Reform.[atorum] Prou.[inciae] Romanae, & in Conuentu / S. Petri, Montis aurei, linguarum Orientalium lectore.* (Translation of the Arabic: "Structure of the Arabic language and of two vulgar European languages, namely Italian and Latin. Work of the minor priest from the order of the holy Saint Francis, known in the order as strict observant, the monk Dominicus [lit. servant of the One] Germanus, teacher of the Arabic language in Rome the Supreme, in the monastery of Saint Peter, known as of the Golden Mountain). The edition I refer to is the one found in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 L.as.10 (available online, https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10495470 [Consulted: 05/12/2022]), henceforth: *Fabrica*, 1639. About this work see, Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 4, Studi e Testi 147 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1951), 177; Piemontese, "Grammatica e Lessicografia," 524–25; Pier Mattia Tommasino, "Eteroglossia e propaganda religiosa nel Mediterraneo moderno," *Lingua e stile*, 45 (2010): 223–58; Aurélien Girard, "Les manuels de langue arabe en usage en France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime," in *Manuels d'arabe d'hier et aujourd'hui. France et Maghreb XIXe-XXIe siècle*, ed. Sylvette Larzul and Alain Messaoudi (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2014), 12–26, http://books.openedition.org/editionsbnf/259; Francisco Moscoso García, "El siglo XVIII español y el estudio del árabe. El árabe dialectal en la Gramatica del padre Cañes," *Revista de estudios internacionales mediterráneos*, 22 (2017): 165–86, https://doi.org/10.15366/reim2017.22.008.

[33] I count the pages from the title page. As it happens in the "little" *Fabrica*, the only numbered pages are the ones pertaining to the dictionary itself, which thus begins with page 1. The introductory part and the indexes are not numbered.

AL BENIGNISSIMO

LETTORE.

Costume è stato, e sarà sempre (Benegnissimo lettore) di coloro, che s'affatigano per lasciare

alcuna cosa a beneficio delli cari posteri, sforzarsi a fare ogni possibile, che il tutto riesca

tanto chiaro, et aperto, quanto è soggetto all'universal censura.

BENEVOLO

LECTORI.

Semper fuit futurumque est, (Beneuolè lector) vt ij, qui aliquid mandant in beneficium charae

posteritati, vtantur ea (qua possibile est) diligentia, quatenus sit ita nudum, et apertum,

quantum vniuersi censurae est subiectum.

[In Arabic script]

Ilā dhī ghāyat al-faḍl al-qāriʾ al-nāẓir fī bināʾ al-lugha

al-ʿarabiyya wa-l-īṭāliyya wa-l-lāṭīniyya al-salām

Li-ʿilmī bi-ḍayyiqa maʿrafatī wa-bi-kalāl lisānī wa-fahmī: ayyuhā l-qāriʾ dhū amdat[34] al-

faḍli: qad kāna yajibu an takāsaltu mumārasa (pursuit; practice; experience) mā yaʿlū

quwwatī[35]

The vernacular, the language of everyday life, is the primary reference. The words are

sorted in the dictionary according to the alphabetical order of their Italian meaning.

Nevertheless, searches by Arabic or Latin word are possible too, thanks to the two indexes

at the end of the volume.

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[34] *sic*, I read, however, "*amadi-hi*".

[35] While Italian and Latin are symmetrical, Dominicus feels the need to introduce a further element of justification in the Arabic version. The first two versions say, with negligible differences, the following: "To the most favorable reader. It was always the custom and it will always be, that those who strive to leave something to the posterity, should employ the greatest care and effort possible, so that everything which is subject to universal judgment results clear and open." On the other hand, the Arabic begins thusly: "To the most favorable reader who is looking into the structure of the Arabic, Italian and Latin language, greetings. Because of my awareness of the narrowness of my knowledge and the poorness of my tongue and of my understanding, o most favorable reader, I should have been idle in the pursuit of what was beyond my strength."

This jewel of erudition, still considered valid for the study of Arabic in 1878, when the Franciscan fathers of Jerusalem published a new edition of it,[36] deserves, as I was saying before, a study of its own and it will be too long to enter here in too much detail. I will pass now to the third of the Roman works, the one that has more to do with the Qur'an.[37] The *Antitheses Fidei* of 1638 are a completely Arabic-Latin bilingual work from the title page and letter of dedication to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the nephew of Urban VIII, up to its last lines.[38] It is so organized as to alternate the pages in Arabic and Latin, placing the two versions side by side. However, the accent is placed more on the Arabic text, which is probably the original version, then translated into Latin. As a matter of fact, the 57-pages-long *in-quarto* book is bound like an Arabic book, thus opening by turning the cover from left to right. One founds then on the page on the right the Arabic text with the corresponding Latin text facing it on the page on the left. The first title page should not deceive us, since it is probably the work of the *Propaganda Fide* typography, similar to other similar title pages of the publishing house. On the top half of the page there is the title in Latin, in a larger size: "*ANTITHESES / FIDEI / Ventilabuntur in Conuentu S. Petri Montis AV-/REI Fratrum Minorum S.[ancti] P.[atri] / FRANCISCI. / Reformat.[orum].*"

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[36] *Dizionario italiano-arabo con aggiunta di un copiosissimo indice alfabetico delle voci arabe per cura d'un religioso francescano di terra santa* (Gerusalemme: Tipografia dei padri francescani, 1878.) One can find online the exemplar Padova, Biblioteca Maldura LING.LAR.40, under https://phaidra.cab.unipd.it/o:93358 [Consulted: 06/12/2022]. The name of the author is revealed in the first lines of the introduction, on page iii (again, the preface is not page-numbered): "*Sono già 250 anni dacchè il Padre Domenico Germano di Silesia ha pubblicato la sua* Fabrica Magna, *il solo dizionario italiano-arabo di qualche valore sino ad oggi [...]*".

[37] I am also intentionally not going into detail about Dominicus's activity as editor of his teacher Obicini's *Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus*, printed posthumous in 1636.

[38] On this work see Zacarias Remiro Andollu, "La Sagrada Congregación frente al Islám: Apostolado de la Prensa en lengua árabe," in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memoria rerum: 350 anni a servizio delle missioni*, vol. I/1 (Roma: Herder, 1971), 715-16;721; Aurélien Girard, "Teaching and Learning Arabic in Early Modern Rome: Shaping a Missionary Language," in *The Teaching and Learning of Arabic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Loop, Alastair Hamilton, and Charles Burnett (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 203–4; Dennis Halft, "The Arabic Vulgate in Safavid Persia. Arabic Printing of the Gospels, Catholic Missionaries, and the Rise of Shīʿī Anti-Christian Polemics" (PhD Thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, 2016), 134–42. Our exemplar of reference is Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. 2.7.182, which one can find online in the Google Books repository (https://books.google.es/books?id=H7rUgAG4tXcC&hl [Consulted: 06/12/2022]).

In the middle, one sees the big sigil of the congregation, reading: "EVNTES IN VNIVERSVM MVNDVM PRAEDICATE EVANGELIVM OMNI CREATVRAE"[39]. On the bottom half the text in Arabic script: "*Kāna hādhā fī sanatin alf wa-sittamiʾa thamāniya wa-thalāthīna li-rabbi-nā yashūʿi / l-masīḥi la-hu l-majdu dāʾiman / fī madīnat Rūmiya l-ʿuẓmā bi dayri mār buṭrus al-mutakannā jabali / l-dhahab*". The last three lines continue in Latin script: "*ROMAE, / Typis Sacrae Congreg.[ationis] de Propagan.[da] Fide. 1638 / Superiorum permissu*". It indeed mixes Latin and Arabic, but with an accent on Latin, whose version of the title is the only one present, and in larger size. The seal of the Congregation is in plain sight in the middle of the page. The real title page is found turning the pages, when, after the *imprimatur*, one finds a double, Arabic-Latin frontispiece on two pages facing each other, namely: "*Āyāt muḥākamāt* (Facing Latin: *Antitheses*) *ʿalā l-hudā l-ṭāhira* (*de directione syncera*) *al-muḥtāja* (*necessaria*)[40] *li-ḥuṣūl ilā ghāyati l-insān ay nihāyati-hi* (*ad ultimum hominis finem consequendum*) *bi-wisāṭati l-īmān* (*mediante fide*) *li-wāḥidi rabbi-nā yashūʿi*[41] *l-masīḥi ilāhi ḥaqqin wa-insānin ḥaqqin* (*in unum D.[ominum] N.[ostrum] Iesum Christum Deum verum et hominem verum*) *yuḥākimu ʿan-hā muḥākamatan jadaliyya ẓāhiriyya* (*Pro quibus decertabunt disputatione publica*) *fī rūmiyyati l-ʿuẓmā* (*Romae*) *bi dayri mār butrus al-maʿrūf bi-jabali l-dhahab min ruhbanati l-qaddīs mār fransīs al-mutaḥaffiẓīna* (*in Conuentu S. Petri Montis Aurei, Ordinis S. Francisci Obseruantium Reformatorum*) *al-qusūs al-mutaʿallimīna l-lisāni l-ʿarabiyy* (*Patres Auditores Linguae Arabicae*) [here the *Patres*' names follow].

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[39] Mc. 16:15.

[40] Actually at the end in the Latin title page, which thus reads: "*Antitheses / de directione / syncera / ad vltimum hominis / finem consequendum, / mediante fide in vnum / D. N. Iesum Christum Deum verum; / & hominem verum necessaria*" etc.

[41] One should note the different spelling of Jesus's name in comparison to the Islamic *ʿīsā*.

Therefore, the work originates from a public disputation, probably in Arabic, according to the tradition of the *collegium*[42], and presided over by our Dominicus Germanus, as can be seen in the Latin title page, which adds after the list of names "*Praeside R.[euerendo] P.[atre] F.[ratre] Dominico Germano eiusdem instituti, Prou.[inciae] / Romanae Reform.[atae] linguarum Lectore*".

Dominicus decided then to publish it, as he explains in the dedication letter to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, so that it does not fall into oblivion and for "the elevation [or benefit] of Scripture and Religious Law" of the Muslims ("*necessarium duximus, has publicas edere Antitheses ad propositum scripturae legisque eorum*", in Latin, "*istaẓharnā bi-aẓhāri l-āyāti l-muḥākamāt ʿalā ʿirāj kitābi-him wa-sharīʿati-him*", in Arabic). The reason for this statement becomes clear when one observes the four chapters in which the work unfolds, each of which discusses a qur'anic verse. As a matter of fact, as I have shown above, the Latin expression "*Antitheses*" translates the Arabic *āyāt al-muḥākamāt*, i.e. "disputed verses" or "opposed verses". The qur'anic verses, the *āyāt*, are the starting point. They are then interpreted, recurring also to Islamic authors such as Thaʿlabī and al-Jurjānī, in the light of biblical verses, to guide Muslims, in Dominicus's perspective, to find the path of true faith. In the text addressed to the reader, the only section without an Arabic counterpart, Dominicus explains: "Therefore, since in these antitheses of ours we have wished and tried to the most of our capabilities to demonstrate the truth of the Catholic faith starting from the sayings and writings of the inexorable enemies, as we have quoted them faithfully, even more faithfully we have translated and interpreted them, letting each word of the source correspond to a word in the translation (*de verbo ad verbum*), as I said, not as Canonical Scripture, but as it is reference and foundation for the

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[42] Cfr. Kleinhans, *Historia studii*, 13: " [...] *studentes post semestre studium inter se arabice loqui debebant et post annum disputationes publicas habere*" ("After a semester the students should speak among themselves in Arabic and after one year they should have public disputations").

opposed party (*non quidem vti scripturam Canonicam; sed vt aduersariae partis firmamentum*).[43]

Dominicus in this work and in this stage of his life already understands – also according to the philosophy of *Propaganda Fide*[44] – that the keystones of his approach to Islam, culminating in the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*, *must* be the Qur'an and the Islamic sources, not, as he explains, because he recognizes their doctrinal value, but because they represent the authority for his interlocutors. Just as he strives to let "his" missionaries speak not the language of grammars, but the language of the street and of everyday life, the language that Muslim people really speak, so also at an argumentative and theological level he is convinced that the language of the missionaries must be that of his interlocutors, built on *their* sacred text and *their* authorities. On the same line Dominicus will begin in the preface of his "interpretation of the Qur'an" by saying that it derives "not from lexica and dictionaries, but from the thought and explanations of the disciples of the prophet himself and from the native commentators of the Qur'an itself" ("*non ex dictionariis lexicisque, sed ex ipsiusmet autoris discipulorum* [...] *ac ipsiusmet Alcorani domesticarum expositorum sententia et declaratione*")[45]. All this is already present in the *Antitheses*, although in a more rudimentary form. Dominicus still uses "his own" sources, too: the Bible *in primis*, which is translated into Arabic and placed next to the Qur'an, and many Christian authors, both Western and Eastern, (for example, Augustine, Ambrose, John of Damascus and Athanasius). At this stage, Dominicus still aspires to "redirect" the meaning of the Qur'an in the light of the Bible.

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[43] *Quo circà; quoniam in his antithesibus nostris maxime intendimus, ac conamur demonstrare fidei Catholicae ex ipsorummet infessissimorum inimicorum dictis & scriptis, sicut ea fideliter adducimus, ita fidelissimè transferimus, sive explicamus de verbo (vt dixi) ad verbum; non quidem vti scripturam Canonicam; sed vt aduersariae partis firmamentum.*
[44] Cfr. Pizzorusso, *Governare le missioni*, 184–86.
[45] García Masegosa, *Interpretatio*, 35.

As an example, I will now make some observations about the Qur'an verse that is found in the first of the four "*Antitheses*" of the book[46]. The "*Antithesis prima*" puts next to each other fragments form the Qur'an, 9:30;32-33 with Isaiah 42:1-4 (p. 12 [Arabic], p. 13 [Latin]):

<table>
<tr><td align="center">ANTITHESIS PRIMA</td><td align="center">AL-ĀYATU L-ŪLĀ</td></tr>
<tr><td>Alcor. Textu Paenitentiae, versus medium; dictum eius. *Dixerunt Nazareni: Christus est filius Dei, atque illud est dictum eorum, qui fidem abnegauerunt antea*[47] & non multo post: *volunt exstinguere lucem Dei oribus suis, sed auertat Deus; nisi quod perficiat lumen suum inuitis, etiam infidelibus.*[48] *Ipse est qui misit apostolum cum directione, seu regula & fide veritatis; vt superiorem illum ostendat super fidem vniuersam, & etiam invitis participantibus.*[49] id est Christianis.

Isaiae. cap. 42[50]. Ecce seruus meus innitar ei, en electus meus, conplacuit sibi in illo anima mea, posui spiritum meum in eo, proferet iudicia mea gentibus.[51] Non clamabit neque suscipiet faciem alicuius, neque audietur in plateis vox eius[52], calamum conquassatum non confringet & linum fumigans non</td><td>Bi-sūrati l-tawba qawlu-hu[55]: *qālati l-naṣārā l-masīḥu huwa*[56] *bnu l-lāhi ḏālika qawlu-hum bi-afwāhi-him yuḍāhiʾūna qawla l-laḏīna kafarū min qablu:*[57] wa ʿammā qalīl *yurīdūna an yutfiʾū nūra l-lāhi bi-afwāhi-him wa-yaʾbā l-lāhu illā an yutimma nūra-hu wa-law kariha l-kāfirūna:*[58] *huwa l-laḏī arsala rasūla-hu bi-l-hudā wa-dīni l-ḥaqqi li-yuẓhira-hu ʿalā l-dīni kulli-hi wa-law kariha l-mushrikūna*[59]

Ishaʿyā al-nabī bi-l-faṣli l-thānī wa-l-arbaʿūna *huwa dhā ʿabdī adʿamu-hu hā mukhtārī raḍiyat bi-hi nafsī ajʿalu rūḥī fī-hi fa-yukhriju aḥkāmī ilā l-umami lā yaṣrakhu wa-lā yaqbalu bi-l-wajhi wa-lā yusmaʿu fī-l-aswāq ṣawtu-hu wa-qaṣaba mardūḍa lā yaksiru-hā wa-fatīla khāmida lā yutfiʾu-hā: yukhriju l-ḥukma ʿalā ḥaqqi-hi lā*</td></tr>
</table>

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[46] The four *antitheses* are devoted to the following topics and are based on the following quotations of Qur'an and Bible: *Antithesis prima: De directione supernaturali* (Ar. *fī l-hudā tafawwaqa l-ṭibāʿ*), Q. 9:20-33 / Is. 42:1-4; *Antithesis secunda: De actibus religionis qui sunt devotio et oratio* (Ar. *fī aʿrāḍi l-ʿibāda hiya l-tuqā wa-l-ṣalat* [*sic*]), Q. 1:1-7 / Is. 45: 14-15; *Antithesis tertia: De Deo creatore et attributis eius essentialibus* (Ar. *fī l-lāh al-khāliq wa-ṣifāti-hi* [*sic*] *al-maʿānī*), Q. 5:73; 4:171; 6:19 / Gn. 18:1-2; Ps. 2:7; *Antithesis quarta: De Deo salvatore et ejus attributis extrinsecis* (Ar. *fī l-lāh al-mukhalliṣ wa-ṣifāti-hi l-maʿnawiyya*), Q. 5:17; 3:59 / Is. 7:14.

[47] *Dixerunt...antea*] Q. 9:30

[48] *volunt...infidelibus*] Q. 9:32

[49] *Ipse...participantibus*] Q. 9:33

[50] King James Version: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4 He shall not faint nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."

[51] *Ecce...gentibus*] Is. 42:1

[52] *Non...eius*] Is. 42:2

[55] The qur'anic text in Arberry's translation, Arthur J. Arberry, trans., *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 210: "the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the Son of God.' That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the unbelievers before them. [...] desiring to extinguish with their mouths God's light; and God refuses but to perfect His light, though the unbelievers be averse. It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion, though the unbelievers be averse."

[56] Missing in the Cairo edition.

[57] *qālati...qablu*] Q. 9:30

[58] *yurīdūna...l-kāfirūna*] Q. 9:32

[59] *huwa...l-mushrikūna*] Q. 9:33.

extinguet: proferet iudicium secundum veritatem suam[53], non erit tristis neque turbulentus, donec ponat in terra iudicium, & legem eius expectabunt insulae[54].

yakhmudu wa-lā yarṣuṣu ḥattā yaḍaʿa l-ḥukma fī l-bilād li-sharīʿati-hi l-jazāʾir yastanẓirūna.

The biblical Latin text shows some textual variants with respect to the Vulgate (*Ant.: innitar ei / Vulg.: suscipiam eum*; *Ant.: en / om. Vulg.*; *Ant.: posui / Vulg.: dedi; Ant. in eo; Vulg.: super eo*). This was caused by the fact that it is here a translation from the Arabic version, while the Vulgate corresponds better to the Hebrew[60]. In fact, "*Innitar ei*" ("I will lean upon him" [probably, to support him, *n. Cecini*]) corresponds to the Arabic *adʿamu-hu* ("I will support him"), while "*suscipiam eum*" to the Hebrew "*ʾetmākh-bô*" ("I will grasp, hold him"); In the Arabic there is a "*hā*" ("Behold"), corresponding to the "*en*" of the *Antitheses*, which is missing in the Hebrew and in the Vulgate; "*Posui*" ("I placed") corresponds to the Arabic "*ajʿalu*", while "*dedi*" ("I gave") to the Hebrew "*nātattî*", as well as "*in eo*" ("in him") corresponds to the Arabic "*fī-hi*", opposed to the Vulgate-Hebrew couple "*super eo*" / "*ʿālāw*".

Now however, I will focus on the qur'anic verse: first of all, one should note that the qur'anic text is correct, which is not always the case in this work. For example, in the fourth "*antithesis*" ("*De Deo Salvatore*"; "About God the Savior"), the aim is to show how Christ, Son of Mary, is God, so one finds a quotation of Q. 3:44 (p. 37, "*sura Amram, circa initio*"; "sura Amram, close to the beginning"). In the Qur'an, this verse is a parenthetic sentence inside the story of Mary that points out that such story would be unknown to the Prophet if it was not for divine revelation ("*dhālika min anbāʾi l-ghaybi nūḥī-hi ilay-ka*"; Arberry's translation, p. 79: "That is of the tidings of the Unseen, that We reveal to thee"). Dominicus's Latin translation is however (p. 39): "*Ipse est vnus ex*

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[53] calamum…suam] Is. 42:3
[54] non erit…insulae] Is. 42:4
[60] The Hebrew verse of Is. 40:1, according to the BHS, reads: "*Hēn ʿaḇdî ʾetmākh-bô bᵉkhîrî rāṣtâ nafshî nātattî rûkhî ʿālāw mishpāṭ la-gôyîm yôṣî*"

filijs secreti quem annunciamus tibi" (This is one of the secret sons that we announced to you). It is not a parenthetic sentence, but the continuation of the speech of the angels (the "we" of the sentence) to Mary. As a matter of fact, on the Arabic side one reads (p. 38) "*dhālika min abnāʾi l-ghaybi nūḥī-hi ilay-ka*", with the significant change of sequence in the diacritic points from in the word *anbāʾ* from "above-below" (أَنبَآء, thus having a sequence of the letters *nūn-bāʾ*) to "below-above" (ابناء, thus reading *bāʾ-nūn*, *abnāʾ*, sons). Such a wrong reading is not repeated in the *Interpretatio*, which correctly translates: "*Hoc enim* nuntium *est de arcano secreto, quod nos reuelamus tibi*".[61]

Continuing the analysis of the verse from the first *antithesis*, I would like to underline how this can be seen as the first step of the future work of Dominicus's in *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis* (*IAL*). As I have pointed out in other contributions, Dominicus's work on the *Interpretatio* was one of constant revision.[62]

I will put here the version of the *Antitheses* next to two versions from the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*, a first draft and a revision of it.[63]

Antitheses	***IAL (1)***	***IAL (2)***
Alcor. Textu Paenitentiae, versus medium; dictum eius. *Dixerunt Nazareni: Christus est filius Dei, atque illud est dictum eorum, qui fidem abnegauerunt antea* & non multo post: *volunt exstinguere lucem Dei oribus suis, sed auertat Deus; nisi quod perficiat lumen suum inuitis, etiam infidelibus. Ipse est qui misit apostolum cum*	[...] *idem dicunt Christiani: Christus est filius Dei. Hoc dicto orium* [*sic*] *suorum, se ipsos conuincunt esse similes incredulis* [...] *ante illos* [...] *Quaerunt extinguere lucem Dei oribus suis, sed non permittit Deus hoc, sed ut perficiat lucem suam, etiam inuitis incredulis. <33> Ipse propterea misit apostolum suum cum directione et lege ueritatis, ut ostendat illam esse superiorem legi*	*Idem dicunt Christiani nunc existentes: Christus est filius Dei. Haec sunt uerba oribus ipsorum conficta, imitantes incredulos idolatras, suos antecessores* [...] *Volunt extinguere lucem Dei oribus suis, id est Alcoranum supprimere, sed nequaquam permittet Deus, nisi ut perficiat lucem suam, etiam inuitis istis incredulis istis. <33>Ipse est, qui misit apostolum suum cum*

[61] García Masegosa, *Interpretatio*, 67.
[62] Cfr. Cecini, "Germanus de Silesia's Qur'an Translation in the MS K-III-1."
[63] I put here only the parts parallel to the passage of the *Antitheses*. The two complete versions of Q. 9:28-35 are discussed in detail, together with their *scholium*, in my forthcoming contribution "Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's approach to the Qur'an. A first assessment (with critical edition)". The first draft of the *Interpretatio* (*IAL* [1]) is found in the manuscripts El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS 1624, fols. 168v-168r and Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, MS H 72, fol. 158v. The revised version (*IAL* [2]) is found in the corrections of MS 1624 and in manuscript El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS L.I.3, fols. 290r.

directione, seu regula & fide veritatis; vt superiorem illum ostendat super fidem vniuersam, & etiam invitis participantibus. id est Christianis.

uniuersae, quamuis grauiter id ferant consocificantes Deum.

directione et lege ueritatis, ut ostendat eum praepositum super legem uniuersam, quamuis grauiter ualde id ferant illi, qui Deo socium attribuunt.

The translation proposed in the *Antitheses* is indeed similar to that of the other two versions, so that it could be considered their first step. However, one notices some differences. The Arabic "*naṣārā*", which is reproduced in the Antitheses with "Nazarenes" is *translated* according to its meaning of "Christians" in the *IAL*. "*Dictum*", for "*qawl*" remains similar in the first draft, but then changes to "*verba*". In the *Antitheses* he does not translate "*bi-afwāmi-him*" ("with their mouths"), as he does in the other two versions ("[*hoc dicto*] *orium* [*sic*] *suorum*"; "with this saying of their mouths" / [*uerba*] *oribus ipsorum* [*conficta*] "words made up in their mouths"), nor he translates in the *Antitheses* "*yuḍāhiʾūna*" ("they resemble"), a difficult verb to interpret, which Dominicus comments at length in the *scholium* relating to this part, and which perhaps, when he drafted the *Antitheses*, he did not yet arrive to fully comprehend. In the latest version Dominicus shows more knowledge of the Muslim commentaries. This appears in the addition "*idolatras*", next to "*incredulos*" ("*imitantes incredulos idolatras*"). The translation of "*l-laḏīna kafarū*" here as "*incredulos*", together with an enhanced effort for consistency in the translation brings also to change the translation at the end of verse Q. 9:32, where, corresponding to "*wa-law kariha l-kāfirūna*" in the *Antitheses* one finds "*infideles*" translating "*al-kāfirūna*", while in the *IAL* one reads again "*increduli*". One can see also a doubt in translating the object of "*li-yuẓhira-hu*" to be the Prophet or the "religion/law of truth" ("*dīn al-ḥaqq*"), with the final choice of returning to the solution of the *Antitheses*. Again, a greater effort towards a literal translation brings Dominicus to change the translation of "*dīn*" from "*fides*" to "*lex*". On the other hand, the periphrasis "those who give God a companion" substitutes eventually the more concise preceding

attempts to translate "*al-mushrikūna*" and, what is more important, remove the gloss that univocally identifies them with the Christians.

One could go even more in depth, but I think that the analysis conducted so far suffices to show how the Roman works represent in a nutshell what Dominicus's methodology is, and they are a first stage of an ongoing process of development. In further stays in the East and with a more in-depth study of the exegetical literature as well as of the Qur'an itself, there will be a leap forward concerning quality. However, these first works remain necessary to fully understand their culmination represented by the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*.

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