

Ulisse Cecini

An Analysis of Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Incorporation of *Tafsīr* in His *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis* (ca. 1652–70)

1 Introduction

Among the various medieval and early-modern Latin translations of the Qur’an, Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis* (ca. 1652–1670) is distinct for its systematic and explicit engagement with Islamic Qur’anic commentaries (*tafsīr*, pl. *tafsīr*).¹ Dominicus not only explicitly states that his Qur’an trans-

1 For a short overview of Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s life and works, especially his Qur’an translation, see Ulisse Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia”, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, gen. ed. Johanna Pink, University of Freiburg, accessed April 02, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_059256. First published online: 2023. The critical edition of the Latin translation of the Qur’anic text contained in the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis* has been published by Antonio García Masegosa, *Germán de Silesia. Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis. Parte I: La traducción latina: introducción y edición crítica* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2009). On Dominicus’ approach to the Qur’an and a first analysis of his use of *tafsīr*, see Ulisse Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Approach to the Qur’an,” *Studia Islamica* 119 (2024): 244–97. Among the most relevant studies I would like to explicitly mention, in chronological order: Marcel Devic, “Une traduction inédite du Coran,” *Journal Asiatique* 8/1 (1883): 343–406; 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): 151–70; Bertrand Zimolong, “Nochmals P. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia O. F. M.,” *Franziskanische Studien* 23 (1936): 426–31; Francis Richard, “Le Franciscain Dominicus Germanus de Silésie, grammairien et auteur d’apologie en persan,” *Islamochristiana*, 10 (1984): 91–107; Hartmut Bobzin, “Ein oberschlesischer Koranglehrter: Dominicus Germanus de Silesia, O.F.M. (1588–1670),” in *Die oberschlesische Literaturlandschaft im 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerhard Koselleck (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2001), 221–31; the introductory study in García Masegosa, *Interpretatio*, 13–27; Ulisse Cecini, “Germanus de Silesia’s Qur’an Translation in the MS K-III-1 of the Escorial Library: Newly Discovered Revised Versions,” in *The Iberian Qur’an. From the Middle Ages to Modern Times*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard A. Wiegiers

Note: Ulisse Cecini is Ramón y Cajal Researcher at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and his research activity, of which this publication is a result, is currently funded by the Spanish State Research Agency [Agencia Estatal de Investigación] (RYC2020-029328-I/ AEI / 10.13039/501100011033). Prior to this affiliation, the research leading to these results was supported by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, grant agreement no. 810141, project EuQu: “The European Qur’an. Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1150–1850.”

lation is informed by interpretations drawn from *tafāsīr*, but also supplements the translated qur'anic text with extensive commentary sections, which he entitles *scholia*. In these explanatory passages, he systematically incorporates insights from Islamic exegetical sources, providing contextual information not only to justify his translation decisions but also to elucidate the text, its historical background, and its significance. These *scholia* encompass details about the circumstances of qur'anic revelation, as well as related themes, narratives, and traditions corresponding to the verses under discussion.²

In my 2024 study, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s approach to the Qur’an. A first assessment (with critical edition),” I advanced initial hypotheses regarding Dominicus’ engagement with Muslim exegetical sources in his *scholia*. Based on an analysis of *Textus 8, 3* (corresponding to sura 9, *at-Tawba* [“Repentance”], vv. 28–35)³ my preliminary conclusions indicated that his use of Muslim exegetical sources was primarily explicative, aimed at elucidating the text, its context, and its significance. I argued that polemics was not the primary objective, though elements of it were present—for instance, in the designation of the Prophet with the Latin term of “impostor”. I observed that confrontation was not actively sought, with potentially contentious passages intentionally omitted. Furthermore, I highlighted that Dominicus’ argumentative approach within the *scholia* did not target the Qur’an directly, but rather questioned the validity of the commentators’ reasoning or their rhetorical strategies. I also examined the fidelity of his translations, noting that while they were largely accurate, discrepancies emerged, including misattribution of authorship and instances in which passages cited by Dominicus could not be located in the sources he referenced, despite their appearance as direct quotations.⁴

This study builds upon this previous research by further examining Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s engagement with his sources, testing earlier hypotheses in new contexts and expanding the scope through additional case studies. I will demonstrate that the material drawn from Islamic commentaries, in addition to serving an explicative function, also contributed to Dominicus’ refutational efforts.

(Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 133–48; Ulisse Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia in Rome: The Roman Prodomes of a Future Qur’an Translator,” in: *The Qur’an in Rome. Manuscripts, Translations, and the Study of Islam in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Federico Stella and Roberto Tottoli (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2024), 263–85.

2 On general features and structure of the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*, see Cecini, “Germanus de Silesia’s Qur’an Translation in the MS K-III-1,” 135–41, and Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Approach”: 247–54.

3 Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Approach”: 254–88.

4 Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Approach”: 288–89.

His approach to refutation was implemented by highlighting what he perceived as absurdities, inconsistencies, or irrationalities in the commentators' arguments. Additionally, this study seeks to go beyond Dominicus' self-presentation, offering insights into his working methods and the ways in which he manipulated his sources to serve his objectives.

2 Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's Self-Presentation as Systematic and Rigorous Scholar

An initial examination of the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*, particularly its preliminary sections, suggests that Dominicus Germanus de Silesia was deeply committed to translating his sources literally and in accordance with an "Islamic understanding." His primary objective appears to have been the accurate and widely accepted explanation of the Qur'an from a Muslim perspective. This approach was intended to lend legitimacy to his work and to support missionaries in engaging in theological debates within Islamic contexts, enabling them to base their arguments on a purportedly shared interpretation of the Qur'an and Islam.

To establish his scholarly rigor and reliability, Dominicus Germanus de Silesia includes in the introductory section of his work an extensive list of the Prophet's relatives, companions, and followers, alongside the names and descriptions of the eleven commentators he regards as the most significant.⁵ al-Kāshānī, al-Biqā'ī, az-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, Abū Sa'ūd al-Imādī (whom Dominicus calls Abū Mas'ūd al-Amādī), Abū Ḥayyān, al-Bukhārī, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ḥarālī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, Ibn 'Ādil al-Ḥanbalī and Ibn Kamāl.⁶ To demonstrate his scholarly rigor, he

5 A preliminary edition of this and other previously unpublished material from the introductory section is presented in the forthcoming article, Ulisse Cecini, "The Qur'an Translation by Germanus de Silesia OFM (ca. 1650–1670): Observations About Its Inedited Sections," in *Documenta Coranica Christiana. Christian Translations of the Qur'an. Preliminary Considerations of the State of the Art*, ed. Manolis Ulbricht (Leiden: Brill). Further details on the preliminary section of the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis* can be found in Cecini, "Germanus de Silesia's Qur'an Translation in the MS K-III-1," 136–37. Recently, the Royal Library of El Escorial monastery Royal Library has made MS K-III-1 (henceforth, *K*) available online at the following URL (accessed April 2, 2025): <https://rbme.patrimoniocacional.es/s/rbme/item/13797>. The list of the commentators can be found on fols. 12v–13v.

6 On al-Kāshānī (born between 650–60/1252–61, died between 730–6/1329–35), see Pierre Lory, "Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, October 1, 2009; last updated, July 19, 2021.) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_22929;

meticulously records the commentators he references in the margins of the *scholia*, ensuring precise attribution. Additionally, he integrates source citations within the main body of the text, either by introducing paragraphs with phrases such as “[Commentator’s name] says. . .” or by incorporating references parenthetically.

On al-Biqā’ī (809–85/1407–80), see Walid Saleh, “al-Biqā’ī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, October 1, 2010; last updated, July 19, 2021,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23717;

On az-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), see Andrew J. Lane, *A Traditional Mu’tazilite Qur’an Commentary: The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144)* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2006);

On al-Bayḍāwī (d. Jumādā I 719/June 1319), see Walid Saleh, “al-Bayḍāwī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, October 1, 2017; last updated, July 19, 2021,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_25267;

On Abū Sa’ūd al-Imādī (d. 982/1574), see Richard C. Repp, “Abū l-Su’ūd,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, October 1, 2009; last updated, July 19, 2021,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23159;

On Abū Ḥayyān (654–745/1256–1344), see Sidney Glazer and Thomas Emil Homerin, “Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, July 1, 2008; last updated, July 19, 2021,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0287;

On al-Bukhārī, (b. 13 Shawwāl 194/20 July 810, d. on 1 Shawwāl 256/1 September 870), see Christopher Melchert, “al-Bukhārī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, June 1, 2012; last updated, July 19, 2021,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24024;

On Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ḥarāllī (d. 638/1241), see Adnane Mokrani, “Religions in al-Ḥarāllī’s Sufi Hermeneutics: An Apolemlcal Understanding of the Qur’an,” *Religions* 14/11 (2023): 1381, accessed April 16, 2025, doi:10.3390/rel14111381;

On ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081,) see Lara Harb, “al-Jurjānī, ‘Abd al-Qāhir,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, December 1, 2019; last updated, July 19, 2021,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_32887;

Despite extensive searches, I could find no encyclopaedia entry or bibliographical reference on Ibn ‘Adil al-Ḥanbalī (d. after 880/1475) in non-Arabic sources. Even within Arabic scholarship, existing references are limited to brief mentions. Therefore, I cite Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Emil Felber, 1902), 114, and Supplementband II (Leiden: Brill, 1938), 140 though these entries remain quite concise. Additionally, I refer to the edition of Ibn ‘Adil’s Qur’an commentary, *al-Lubāb fī ‘Ulūm al-Kitāb*, [The Essence of the Sciences of the Book] ed. ash-Shaykh Ahmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu’waḍ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya: 1419/1998); Among the Arabic sources providing brief accounts, I note Khayr ad-Dīn az-Ziriklī, *al-‘Ālām* (Beirut: Dar al-‘ilm li-l-Malayīn, 2002¹⁵), 58, and Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākḥ, “Tarjamah Mafqūdah,” [A Missing Biography] *Revue de l’Académie Arabe de Damas* [Majallat al-Majma’ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Arabi], 20 (1945): 381–83;

On Ibn Kamāl (b. 873/1448–9, d. 940/1534) see Victor Louis Ménage, “Kemāl Paṣḥa-Zāde,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, ed. Peri J. Bearman (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, April 24, 2012,) accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0480.

An instance of the former can be found in the third paragraph of the *scholium* commenting on *Textus* 7, 2 (corresponding to Q. 8:11–29), with its opening appearing in the manuscripts as follows⁷ (in the margin, not only are the names of the commentators recorded, but also other proper names within the quotation are transcribed in Arabic script. Through this approach, Dominicus demonstrates his proficiency in Arabic while simultaneously offering a reading aid, facilitating the rapid identification of quoted sources and key references.):⁸

Elzamchasciari et Elaämadi^a dicunt: inter hos erant duo principales^b, Mossaäb^c bon Aomar et Souaid^d bon Hharmalaet^e, nepotes Cossi, unius uiri magni^f inter Arabes, qui primus ex illis foedus pepigit^g cum Mohhammaedo semperque amicus eius permansit et consilio atque ope eum saepe iuuit, numquam tamen adduci potuit ut fidem eius reciperet^h.⁸

الزمخشرى
العمادى
مصعب بن
عمر
سويد بن
حرملة
قصي

a Elaämadi] Elaamâdi *E* Elaamadi *M* | *b* principales] *s.l. E om. M* | *c* Mossaäb] Moasseb *E M* | *d* Souaid] Sauid *E M* | *e* Hharmalaet] Hharmalae *E M* | *f* Cossi – magni] cuiusdam magni uiri *B* | *g* pepigit] pepigerat *E M* | *h* adduci – reciperet] ab eo adduci ad fidem potuit suscipiendam *E M*

7 El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS Árabe 1624 (henceforth *E*), fol. 156r; El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS L-I-3 [fols. 112r–319v] (henceforth *B*), fol. 277v; Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, MS H 72 (henceforth *M*), fol. 145v. The manuscript *M* though, which is not an autograph, but a copy of *E*, after folio 54r has blank spaces where the Arabic script should be. On the manuscript transmission of the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*, see Cecini, “Germanus de Silesia’s Qur’an Translation in the MS K-III-1,” 135–36; on the redaction stages of the work and the versions contained in MSS *E*, *M* and *B* see Cecini, “Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Approach to the Qur’an,” 256.

8 “Az-Zamaksharī and al-‘Amādī say: Among them were two leading individuals, Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umar [sic] and Suwayd ibn Ḥarmala, grandsons of Cossi [scil. Quṣayy], an important man among the Arabs, who was the first among them to make a treaty with Muḥammad, and always remained his friend, often assisting him with advice and support. However, he could never be persuaded to embrace his faith.” Cf. az-Zamaksharī, *al-Kashshāf*, ad Q. 8:23 (Source: www-altafsir.com, accessed April 8, 2025): Thumma qāla { wa-law asma‘a-hum la-tawallaw } ‘an-hu. Ya’nī wa-law laṭāfa bi-him la-mā nafa‘a fī-him al-laṭf, fa-li-dhālika mana‘a-hum alṭāfa-hu. Aw wa-law laṭāfa bi-him fa-ṣadd-aqū la-rtaddū ba‘da dhālika wa-kadhhabū wa-lam yastaqīmū. Wa-qīla hum Banū ‘Abd ad-Dār ibn Quṣayy lam yuslim min-hum illā rajulān Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr, wa-Suwayd ibn Ḥarmala. . .” (Then He said: {And if He had made them hear, they would have turned away} [Q. 8:23] from it. Meaning, even if He had shown kindness to them, that kindness would not have benefited them, and so He withheld His kindness from them. Alternatively, even if He had shown kindness and they believed, they would have returned afterward to disbelief, lied, and not remained steadfast. It is said that they were the people of Banū ‘Abd ad-Dār ibn Quṣayy, from whom only two men embraced Islam: Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr, and Suwayd ibn Ḥarmala. . .).

An occurrence of the parenthetical sentence can be observed in the *scholium* analyzing *Textus* 4, 6 (corresponding to Q. 5:77–93), which is presented in the manuscripts as follows:⁹

Ex his autem erant maior pars ^a Iudaei et Christiani, ideo (inquit Cqeta-	الزمخشري
dae apud Elzamchasciari) descendit oraculum quo Deus illum conso-	قتادة
latus est de aduentu aliorum ex eisdem nationibus ^b qui cum lachrymis	
recipient fidem, audientes ^c Alcoranum, qui iam tunc praesentes erant ^d	
in Maedina ^e , uti septuaginta uiri ex Aetyopia ^f , quibus cum praele-	جعفر ابن ابي طالب
geret Giaäfer eben Abi Thaleb textum de Maria, lachrymantes plau-	
suque manuum prae deuotione et laetitia ^g fidem professi sunt. Simi-	
liter et ^h nuntii Nagiasci, Regis Naubitarum, eundem textum audientes	
fecerunt ⁱ . Item alii triginta uiri ^j qui uenerant ex partibus Damasci, Iu-	نجعشي
dae et Christiani, audiendo ^k legere textum طه, <i>Tha hae</i> . ¹⁰	

⁹ E: fol. 112v; M: fol. 98r–v; B: 236v–237r.

¹⁰ “Among these [i.e. people who converted, but went back to their former religion when the Prophet left Medina for a while] the majority were Jews and Christians. Therefore (as reported by Qatāda in az-Zamakhshari’s commentary) a revelation descended by which God consoled him [the Prophet] regarding the arrival of others from the same nations [i.e. religions] who would accept faith [i.e. Islam], breaking into tears upon hearing the Qur’an, and who at that moment were already present in Medina, such as the seventy men from Ethiopia, who confessed their faith [i.e. Islam], weeping and clapping their hands in devotion and joy, when Ja’far ibn Abī Ṭālib recited to them the text [i.e. the sura] about Mary [i.e. Q. 19]. Similarly, the emissaries of the Negus, the king of the Naubites [=Nubians?], did the same upon hearing the same passage. Additionally, thirty other men, who came from the regions of Damascus—Jews and Christians—accepted the faith after listening to the reading of the text *Ṭā-hā*.” This fragment comments in particular on Q. 5:83–86 (English translation by Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* [London: Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1955,] vol. 1, 141: “Thou wilt surely find the most hostile / of men to the believers are the Jews / and the idolaters; and thou wilt surely find / the nearest of them in love to the believers / are those who say ‘We are Christians’; that, / because some of them are priests and monks, and / they wax not proud, / and when they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of the truth they recognize. They say, ‘Our Lord, / we believe; so do Thou write us down / among the witnesses. / Why should we not believe in God and the / truth that has come to us, and be eager / that our Lord should admit us with / the righteous people?’ / And God rewards them for what they say / with gardens underneath which rivers flow, / therein dwelling forever; / that is the recompense of the good-doers. / But those who disbelieve, and cry lies / to Our signs—they are the inhabitants of Hell.”). Cfr. az-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshāf, ad locum* (Source: www.altafsisr.com, accessed April, 2, 2025): “wa-waṣāfa-hum Allāh bi-riqqat al-qulūb wa-anna-hum yabkūna ‘inda istimā’ al-qur’ān, wa-dhālika naḥwa mā yuḥkā ‘an an-Najāshī raḍiya Allāh ‘an-hu anna-hu qāla li-Ja’far ibn Abī Ṭālib ḥina ijtama’a fī majlisi-hi al-muhājirūna ilā al-Ḥabasha wa-al-mushrikūna la’anū wa-hum yaghrūna-hu ‘alay-him wa-yataḥallabūna ‘anata-hum ‘inda-hu hal fī kitābi-kum dhikr Maryam? qāla Ja’far fi-hi surat tunsabu ilay-hā, fa-qarāa-hā ilā qawli-hi { dhā-

a Ex his – pars] Et quia ex his titubantibus maior pars erant *EM* | *b* nationibus] sectis *EM* | *c* audientes] *add.* legere *EM* | *d* praesentes erant] erant praesentes *EM* | *e* in Maedina] *s.l.* *EM* | *f* ex Aetyopia] Aethyopes *EM* | *g* prae – laetitia] *s.l.* *EM* | *h* et] *om.* *EM* | *i* eundem – fecerunt] quibus praelegere iussit textum de Maria *EM* | *j* Item alii triginta uiri] et aliis 30. uiris *EM* | *k* audiendo] *om.* *EM*

Dominicus further reinforces his engagement with the original texts of Muslim commentators by incorporating Arabic transcriptions that correspond to the Latin versions found in the *scholia*. These transcriptions may appear as isolated words¹¹, expressions¹², or short excerpts extracted from a larger quotation, either within

lika ʿĪsā ibn Maryam } wa-qarāa sūrat Ṭā-hā ilā qawli-hi { wa-hal atā-ka ḥadīth Mūsā } fa-bakā al-Najāshī wa-ka-dhālika fa’ala qawmu-hu alladhīna wafadū ‘alā Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ‘alay-hi wa-sallam wa-hum sab’ūna rajulan ḥīna qarāa ‘alay-him Rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ‘alay-hi wa-sallam sūrat Yā-sīn fa-bakaw.” (God described them as having tender hearts that shed tears upon hearing the Quran. This is similar to what is narrated about the Negus (the King of Abyssinia, may God be pleased with him), who asked Ja’far ibn Abī Ṭālib—when the emigrants to Abyssinia and the idolaters gathered in his presence, enticing him against them [i.e. the Muslims] and requesting him to be harsh against them—Is Mary mentioned in your book? Ja’far replied: “There is a sura named after her.” Then he recited until he reached the verse { That is Jesus, son of Mary } [Q. 19:34,] and also recited from Surah Ṭā-hā until the verse, { Has the story of Moses reached you? } [Q. 20:9]. The Negus wept, as did his people. Likewise, seventy men who came to the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) wept when he recited sura Yā-Sīn to them. They cried.) Differences between az-Zamaksharī and the Latin version begin to emerge; in the former, Qatāda is omitted, as is the origin of the seventy—rather than thirty—men who also wept upon hearing the Qur’an.

11 See e.g. the Arabic transcription of place names in the *scholium* to *Textus* 1, 10 (Q. 2:97–103), thematically related to the content of the previously seen *scholium* to Q. 5:83–86, in the MS *K*, fol. 74v: “الزمخشرى” et alii quos citat: Cum reuersus esset Maedinam ex fuga in Aethyopiam ubi moratus fuerat, alii dicunt duobus, alii tribus annis, in prouincia نجران, Nageran, circa confines يمان Iaman, secumque adduxisset 70. uiros, maiori ex parte clericos, sacerdotes et religiosos – quod ei magnam reputationem conciliauit apud Arabes et maxime Maedinenses” (“Az-Zamaksharī and others whom he cites: When he returned to Medina from his flight to Ethiopia, where he had stayed (some say two, others say three years), in the province of *Nageran* (*Najrān*), near the borders of Yemen (*Yamān*), he brought with him 70 men, mostly clerics, priests, and religious figures. This earned him a great reputation among the Arabs and particularly the people of Medina.”)

12 For the transcription of a whole expression, see e.g. the beginning of the *scholium* to *Textus* 1, 13 (Q. 2:124–52,) MS *K*, fol. 87v: “Hanc confusam farraginem fabulis futilibus atque scurrilibus, puero indignis, plenam, quibus se putat sat superque satisfacere Iudaeorum et Christianorum obiectionibus in antecedenti collectione, uocant Alcoranistae: مخزن البراهين القاطعة القرآنية, ‘Penu demonstratorium irrefragabilium alcoranicarum’, eo quod super his ceu fundamentis conseruant sua argumenta, quibus se posse enuerare atque funditus destruere Iudaeorum atque Christianorum oppositas auctoritates de suis libris allatas, existimant.” (“This confused medley, full of trivial and ridiculous fables unworthy of a child, which he believes more than sufficient to address the objections of the

the main text or as marginal annotations.¹³ Additionally, entire passages from commentaries are sometimes embedded in the main text, likely for excerpts Dominicus deemed particularly significant or difficult for the reader to accept without direct citation.¹⁴

These Arabic transcriptions serve as a valuable foundation for analyzing Dominicus' use of his exegetical sources. While Latin translations require back-translation into Arabic followed by a search for a corresponding match in the *tafāsīr* that Dominicus cites, the Arabic transcriptions ostensibly represent direct quotations—already in their original language—accompanied by explicit references to their commentators. Ideally, if Dominicus adheres precisely to his stated method, tracing his source texts, understanding his implementation of them, and examining his translations should be a straightforward process. However, as will become evident, his engagement with these sources proves to be more complex.¹⁵

Jews and Christians in the preceding collection [i.e. the preceding *Textus* of sura 2], is called by the Qur'anists: *makhzan al-barāhīn al-qāṭi'a al-qur'āniyya*, 'the treasury of irrefutable qur'anic demonstrations', because they preserve their arguments on this as foundations, by which they think they can weaken and utterly destroy the opposing authorities of the Jews and Christians cited from their books.") The verses Q. 2:124–52 connect the faith preached by Muḥammad to an originary, Abrahamic monotheism, whose spiritual center was the Ka'ba, thus proposing Muḥammad as a prophet for Jews and Christians, too. Cfr. Alessandro Bausani, ed., *Il Corano* (Milano, Rizzoli, 1st ed. 1988, 15th ed. 2004), 509, note on vv. 124ff.

13 An extract from the commentary of as-Samarqandī as long marginal note can be found in MS K, fol. 78v, in the *scholium* to *Textus* 1, 10 (Q. 2:97–103,) which we will see in more detail below.

14 An example of the latter case may be found in the first *scholium* to *Textus* 16 (MS E, fols. 242v–245r; MS M, fols. 229r–231r. The long quotation in Arabic is found in MS E, fols. 243r–v). This *scholium* comments on the vv. 1–10 of sura 17, i.e. the sura of the night journey (an analysis of the beginning of this *scholium* is presented further below in this study, § 3.3.) The extensive quotation in Arabic about Muḥammad's night journey is introduced by the following words (MS E, 243r; MS M, 229v): "Est autem incredibile dictu et indignum auditu quanta absurda quamque nugatoria hic afferant, tam de exitu de Maekka, quam de progressu in itinere et ingressu in Ierusalem, et maxime Elgiorgiani et Elsamarcandi, quorum uerba formalia hic apponere iudicau, ut censuram ficti in aliis quoque effugiam." ("It is indeed incredible to say and unworthy to hear how many absurdities and frivolities they bring forth here, regarding both the departure from Mecca, the progress of the journey and the entry into Jerusalem, especially the al-Jurjānī and as-Samarqandī, whose actual words I have decided to add here, so that I may avoid the criticism of [what will be considered] fiction elsewhere as well.") For the relevance of the subject and amplitude of the quotation, I will dedicate a later publication to this *scholium*.

15 The following presents the findings derived from observations made during the ongoing effort to produce a critical edition of the scholia in Dominicus' *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*. Although the project is well advanced—at the time of writing, approximately 90% of the scholia have been transcribed—it remains provisional. Nonetheless, the analysis and focused investigation of Dominicus' sources undertaken in this study have revealed the complexity of the material and have led to

3 Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's Incorporation of Islamic Sources in the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*

3.1 A Poem with a Programmatic Intent

I begin my analysis with a previously unpublished text found on the title page of the work, which I interpret as a programmatic statement and a prime illustration of Dominicus' methodology. Like many—both scholarly and literary—works, Dominicus' *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis* opens with a poetic quotation. In most manuscripts, an Arabic-Latin composition appears on the verso of the front page, with the exception of the Montpellier manuscript, where it is located at the bottom of the recto.¹⁶

[In Arabic script] *Abū Tālib 'inda Abū Hayyān*
 [In Arabic Script] *'Ariftu sh-sharri lā li-sharri lakin li-tawaqqī-hi*
 [In Arabic Script] *Man lam ya'rif al-khayr min ash-sharri yaqī'u fī-hi*

Noui malum non ad malum, sed ut fugiam illud
Qui nescit distinguere bonum a malo, incidit in illud.
Abu Thaleb. apud Abu Hhaian

Quo sequer, mala non noui, fugiturus at illa.
Impie, te gladio confodioque tuo.
Annitā neruis, quo moles tota fatiscat:
Hoc nisi per te ipsum, non tamen erro simul.
Fr. Dominicus Germanus

First, two verses in Arabic, which can be translated as: “I knew evil not for the sake of evil, but to be wary of it / Who cannot distinguish good from evil, will fall into it [i.e. evil].” Initially, they are rendered into Latin through a word-for-word translation, after which they are paraphrased and incorporated into the opening line of a Latin poem, composed according to classical metrical principles. This poem, consisting of two elegiac couplets, was authored by “Frater Dominicus Germanus.” The final Latin poem can be translated as follows:

I did not learn evil things so as to follow them, but to flee from them.
 O wicked one, I stab thee with your own sword!

the formulation of significant working hypotheses, which will guide the finalization of the edition and subsequent research.

¹⁶ An image of the composition, as it appears in MS *K*, fol. 7v, can be found online at the URL given above, note 5.

I will strive with all my strength to let the entire structure part asunder:
And this [I will do] only by means of yourself; however, I will not go astray by doing that.

This manuscript page provides a comprehensive overview of Dominicus' intellectual agenda and methodological approach. His primary objective is to systematically refute the Qur'an by employing texts recognized within Islamic scholarship that delineate its proper interpretation and the contextual circumstances underlying its revelations—commonly referred to as the causes of revelation (Ar. *asbāb an-nuzūl*). By demonstrating the lack of validity inherent in these sources, Dominicus seeks to undermine the credibility of the Qur'an itself.

To explain this agenda, he applies the same methodology, incorporating an Arabic poem that emphasizes the necessity of understanding and engaging with evil in order to effectively avoid it. In his concluding poem, Dominicus further asserts that his objective extends beyond mere avoidance; he actively seeks to combat his opponent, utilizing their own intellectual and literary tools—symbolized here by the Arabic poem he translates. By transforming this poem into a Latin composition, structured according to classical metrical conventions, he reinforces his identity as a Western Christian deeply embedded within the Latin intellectual tradition.

However, a closer analysis of the Arabic poem cited by Dominicus reveals several inconsistencies, particularly regarding the rigor of his methodology. In a way that is consistent with his established practice, he references his source in both Arabic and Latin: “Abū Ṭālib ‘inda Abū Ḥayyān”, “Abu Thaleb apud Abu Hhaian”: “Abū Ṭālib [quoted] in [the work by] Abū Ḥayyān.” This citation mirrors the previously observed citation in the *scholium* to *Textus* 4, 6: “inquit Cgetadae apud Elzamchasciari”. Consequently, an inquiry into a poem attributed to an unspecified Abū Ṭālib—potentially the uncle of the Prophet and father of his cousin and future fourth caliph, ‘Alī—within the *tafsīr* of the 8th century AH exegete (14th century CE) Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī t-tafsīr*, was deemed necessary. However, this investigation yielded no definitive results.¹⁷

Further investigation into the entirety of Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī's corpus, beyond the *tafsīr*, similarly proved fruitless. Attempts to locate the poem within the works of the 4th/5th-century AH author (10th/11th century CE) Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī¹⁸ also failed. Shifting focus to other *tafāsīr*, the poem appears in the

¹⁷ For the subsequent searches, I utilized the online platforms “altafsir.com” and “shamela.ws.”

¹⁸ On Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī, the “philosopher of cultured men, and a man of culture among philosophers” (*ḥalaysūf al-udabā wa-adīb al-falāsifa*) (b. 310–320/922–932, d. 414/1023 CE) see Marc Bergé, “Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī,” in *Abbasid Belles Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 112–24 (The quotation is from p. 113).

commentaries of az-Zamakhsharī, Ibn 'Ādil, al-A'qam¹⁹, and Abū Sa'ūd. Notably, none of these sources attributed the poem to Abū Ṭālib. Instead, they introduced the quotation with generic phrases such as “he said” (Ar. “qāla,” as found in Ibn 'Ādil and Abū Sa'ūd) or “[as] the poet said” (Ar. “qāla ash-shā'ir,” as found in al-A'qam) in instances where attribution is provided at all.²⁰ This raises questions about Dominicus' attribution: was it an error, or did he rely on a different source? Could it be that his source diverged from the modern edition of Abū Ḥayyān, and indeed contained the verses, or might he have been quoting an entirely different work?

Regardless, it is essential to analyze the context in which Muslim commentators employ these verses. Identified as the work of the 4th/10th-century Syrian poet Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī,²¹ the verses appear primarily in commentaries on Q. 2:102. This verse is situated within a section generally understood by the commentators to address the Jews, and the lines are cited in discussions concerning the term “siḥr” (magic or sorcery).²² The Jews would have refused the Qur'an, despite it confirming what was contained in the Bible, as outlined in the preceding verse Q.

19 The available biographical information on Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-A'qam al-Ānīsī, the author of this concise *tafsīr*, is limited. It is known that he passed away in the 10th century AH (16th century CE) and that his exegetical work is deeply rooted in Zaydi thought. His *Tafsīr al-A'qam* was published in Ṣan'ā by Dār al-Ḥikma al-Yamāniyya in 1411 AH (1990 CE). On Zaydi theology, see Wilferd Madelung, “Zaydiyya,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, ed. Peri J. Bearman (Leiden / Boston: Brill, first online, April, 24, 2012,) accessed April, 17, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1385.

20 For example, az-Zamakhshari, as we will see below.

21 On al-Ḥamdānī (b. ca. 320/932, d. 357/968) see Abdullah El Tayib, “Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī,” in *Abbasid Belles Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 315–27.

22 Arabic text of Q. 2:102: “Wa-ttaba'ū mā tatlu sh-shayāṭīn 'alā mulki Sulaymān. Wa-mā kafara Sulaymān wa-lākinna sh-shayāṭīn kafarū yu'allimūna n-nāsa s-siḥr wa-mā unzila 'alā l-malakayn bi-Bābil Hārūt wa-Mārūt. Wa-mā yu'allimāni min aḥadin ḥattā yaqūlā innamā naḥnu fitnatun fa-lā takfur. Fa-yata'allamūna min-humā mā yufarriqūna bi-hi bayna l-mar'i wa-zawji-hi. Wa-mā hum bi-ḍārrīna bi-hi min aḥadin illā bi-idhni l-lāhi. Wa-yata'allamūna mā yaḍurru-hum wa-lā yanfa'u-hum. Wa-laqaḍ 'alimū la-mani shtarā-hu mā la-hū fī-l-ākhirati min khalāqīn. Wa-la-bi'sa mā sharaw bi-hi anfusa-hum law kānū ya'lāmūn.” English translation by Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, 40–41: “and they follow what the Satans recited / over Solomon's kingdom. Solomon disbelieved not, / but the Satans disbelieved, teaching / the people sorcery, and that which was sent down / upon Babylon's two angels, Harut and Marut; / they taught not any man, without they said, / 'We are but a temptation; do not disbelieve.' / From them they learned how they might divide / a man and his wife, yet they did not hurt / any man thereby, save by the leave of God, / and they learned what hurt them, and did not / profit them, knowing well that whoso buys it / shall have no share in the world to come; / evil then was that they sold themselves for, / if they had but known. / Yet had they believed, and been godfearing, / a recompense from God had been better, / if they had but known.”

2:101,²³ and turned to practices associated with sorcery, taught by demons (Arabic: “ash-shayāṭīna”) and the two angels Hārūt and Mārūt. However, according to verse 102 and its commentators, these two angels did not advocate the use of magic but rather presented knowledge of it as a test, challenging individuals to uphold their faith: “They taught not any man, without they said, ‘We are but a temptation; do not disbelieve,’” or, according to az-Zamakhsharī: “What was sent down to them was the science of sorcery, [sent] as a test from God to men. Whoever learned it from them and acted upon it is a disbeliever. But whoever avoided it or learned it not to practice it, but to guard against it and not be deceived by it, is a believer.” After which az-Zamakhsharī quotes the verse: “I knew evil not for the sake of evil, but to be wary of it”.²⁴

What is here referred to as sorcery is taken by Dominicus out of context and applied as a programmatic statement on his own work on the Qur’an. Thus, he implicitly draws an equivalence between the Qur’an and evil, a parallel that Dominicus makes explicit in his *scholium* to *Textus* 1, 10, which encompasses verses 97 to 103 of sura 2 (*al-baqara*, ‘the cow.’). After discussing the Jewish rejection of the Qur’an, Dominicus states: “Some, however, like the Arab Idolaters, call it [i.e. the Qur’anic revelation] ‘sorcery’ and ‘seedbed of the worst innovations.’” He then expands upon this assertion, declaring: “And I add: it is a volume wrapped in the darkness of ignorance, a collection of abominable sayings and unheard-of tales, unworthy of being listened to, sacrilegious and blasphemous statements about God and Angels. These things Muḥammad inserts into those two invented and deceitful revelations about Solomon and the two Babylonian Angels”, i.e. Hārūt and Mārūt.²⁵

²³ Arabic text of Q 2:101: “Wa lammā jā’a-hum rasūlun min ‘indi l-lāhi muṣaddiqun li-mā ma’a-hum nabadha fariqun min al-ladhīna ūtū l-kitāba kitāba l-lāhi warā’a zuhūri-him ka’anna-hum lā ya’lamūna.” English translation by Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, 40: “When there has come to them a Messenger from God / confirming what was with them, a party of them / that were given the Book reject the Book of God behind their backs, as though they knew not.”

²⁴ Arabic text (source: www.altafsir.com, accessed April, 11, 2025): “wa-llaḏī unzila ‘alay-him huwa ‘ilmu s-siḥri ibtilā’un min Allāhi li-n-nāsi. Man ta’allama-hu min-hum wa-’amila bi-hi kāna kāfiran, wa-man tajannaba-hu aw ta’allama-hu lā li-ya’mala bi-hi wa-lākin li-tawaqqā-hu wa-li-allā yaghurra bi-hi kāna mu’minan ‘araftu sh-sharra lā li-sh-sharri lakin li-tawaqqī-hi.”

²⁵ MS E, fol. 14v, MS M, fol. 22r, MS B, fol. 147v, MS A [= El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS L-I-3 [fols. 1–113r], fol. 36v, MS K, fol. 75v: “Alii autem, ut Arabes Idolatrae, ‘Artem Magicam’ et seminarium pessimorum nouitatum uocant. Et ego addo: uolumen inuolutum ignorantiae tenebris, collectio nefandorum dictorum atque fabularum inauditarum, indignarum auditu, asserta sacrilega et blasphema de Deo et Angelis. Quae inserit his duabus a se confictis et mendacibus reuelationibus de Salomone et duobus Angelis Babylonicis.”

Subsequently, Dominicus recounts narratives—purportedly derived from Qur'anic commentaries—concerning King Solomon and the two angels referenced in verse 102. As the verse states, “Solomon disbelieved not, but the Satans disbelieved,” these narratives seek to demonstrate that the attribution of sorcery to Solomon was, in fact, the result of deliberate falsification carried out by demonic entities. Dominicus introduces these accounts as follows:

For this reason (they say) this apologetic revelation descended, by which he [i.e. the Prophet] thinks that he could discharge and justify Solomon, and he thinks so foolishly. Rather, he accuses God and demonstrates Him guilty of the charge. I leave it to anyone who employs correct reasoning and sound judgment to make their own conclusion, based on what I here adjoin, which I report according to the letter and the intention of theirs (i.e. of the commentators).²⁶

Towards the conclusion of the *scholium*, he further incorporates the perspectives of commentators to substantiate his polemical argument, asserting:

[. . .] Many others say that these two [i.e. Hārūt and Mārūt] were not angels, but great Jewish men, sorcerers and enchanters. 'Alī [in Arabic script], according to *Abū Ḥayyān* [in Arabic script], says: “They did not teach sorcery. Rather, they restrained people from its use, explaining its wickedness and abominable effects.

This is sufficient for Dominicus to draw the following conclusion: “In this way his closest companions, above all others, denounce Muḥammad as a false prophet and impostor.”²⁷ This highlights the intertwined roles of both polemical discourse and exegetical explanation within Dominicus' intellectual framework. However, his engagement with polemics is seldom explicit, instead manifesting indirectly through or within commentaries. As a result, a thorough examination of Dominicus' approach to sources is essential for understanding his methodological stance.

²⁶ MS E, fols. 14v–15r; MS M, fol. 22r; MS B, fol. 148r; MS A, fol. 36v; MS K, fol. 76v: “Hanc ob causam (aiunt) descendit hoc oraculum apologeticum, quo se Salomonem excusare et iustificare putat, et stulte autumat. Deum potius accusat et reum culpae demonstrat. Omni recta ratione fruendi et iudicio sano conclusionem facere committo, ex his quae ad litteram ac mentem ipsorum hic subiungo.” Particularly noteworthy is the statement that he is referring to not only the “mens,” i.e. the intention, but also the “littera”, i.e. the exact wording of the commentators.

²⁷ MS E, fols. 16v; MS M, fol. 23v; MS B, fol. 149v–150r; MS A, fol. 38v; MS K, fol. 79v: “[. . .] alii plures dicunt hos duos non fuisse Angelos, sed uiros Iudaeos magnos magos et incantatores. ابو عليّ ait: Ipsi non docebant Artem Magicam, immo coercerant homines ab eius usu, declarantes eius malitiam et abominabiles effectus. Atque hoc modo isti sui intimi prae omnibus aliis secretarii condemnant Mohhammaedum esse falsum Prophetam et impostorem.”

3.2 A Fairly Reliable Quotation, Yet. . .

In the same *scholium* to *Textus* 1, 10, one of the manuscripts contains a marginal note in Arabic that corresponds to a Latin passage within the main text:

As-Samarqandī: When Solomon died, the demons told the people that Solomon’s knowledge was [the following]: Every day, when a new day began, he saw a plant before him and he would say to it: ‘For which illness are you [i.e. which illness could you cure]?’ It would say: ‘I have such and such property [Arabic: *Innī dhū l-kadhā wa-kadhā*] and my name is such’, then Salomon used to write it down. One day a plant sprouted before him and Solomon said to it: ‘What’s your name?’ It said: ‘*Kharnūb* [i.e. Carob]’. Solomon said to it: ‘For which illness are you?’ It said: ‘I am for the destruction [Arabic: *Kharāb*] of the Land of the Temple [Arabic: *arḍ al-masjid*].’ Solomon understood then that his time had come, as he knew the Temple would not be destroyed during his lifetime. He had a notebook where he recorded the names of the medicines, which he then put in his treasure chest. However, the demons wrote down some spells and placed them in that location. When Solomon died, these spells were found among his writings, leading some people to follow them. And this is what is [meant] in God’s saying: ‘Solomon did not disbelieve, but the demons disbelieved, teaching people sorcery’ (Q. 2:102)²⁸

In the Latin text, presented in the manuscript alongside the Arabic marginal note, the narrative is conveyed with remarkable consistency, albeit with minor modifications. The table 1 below juxtaposes the two texts, with specific sections annotated in both versions by letters that correspond to references in the commentary provided subsequently.

28 MS K, fol. 78r; *in margine* [in Arabic script]: “as-Samarqandī. Lammā māta Sulaymān qālat ash-shayāṭīna li-n-nāsi inna ‘ilma Sulaymān kāna idhā aṣḥāba kulla yawmin ra‘ā nabātan bayna yaday-hi fa-yaqūlu la-hu li-ayyi dā’in anta fa-yaqūlu innī dhū l-kadhā wa-kadhā wa-inna ismī kadhā wa-kadhā wa-kāna yaktubu dhālika fa-nabata yawman min al-ayyām nabatan bayna yaday-hi fa-qāla-hu Sulaymān mā smu-ka qāla kharnūb fa-qāla la-hu li-ayyi dā’in anta fa-qāla innī li-kharāb al-arḍi l-masjidi fa-‘alima Sulaymān anna-hu qad jā’a ajalū-hu li-annahū ‘alima anna l-masjid lā yukharrabu fī ḥayāti-hi wa-kāna la-hu ṣaḥīfa yaktubu fī-hā ism al-adwiyā wa-yaḍa’u-hā fī l-khizāna wa-katabat ash-shayāṭīna siḥran wa-waḍa’ū-hu fī dhālika al-mawḍi’ fa-lammā māta Sulaymān wajaḍū dhālika fī kutubi-hi fa-ittaba’a-hu ba’ḍu n-nās fa-dhālika qawlu-hu wa-mā kafara Sulaymān wa-lākinna ash-shayāṭīn kafarū wa-yu’allimūna an-nāsa s-siḥr.” On as-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), see Ahmad Pakatchi, and Azar Rabbani (trans.), “Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī,” in *Encyclopaedia Islamica Online*, ed. Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary (Leiden / Boston: Brill, First online: October 16, 2015; Last updated: June 17, 2021), doi: 10.1163/1875-9831_isla_COM_0099.

Tab. 1: The Latin Text of *scholium* to *Textus* 1, 10 vs. the Marginal Note in Arabic.

Dominicus Germanus de Silesia, <i>Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis</i>, 1, 10, <i>scholium</i> (MS K, fol. 78r)	Ms. Escorial, K-III-1, f. 78r, <i>in margine</i>
<p>[. . .] ^aAlio quoque die, deambulans super idem litus, ^boffendensque^b aliquam herbam seu plantam eam interrogabat de suo nomine et uirtute medicinali ei insita, quae plantae illi respondebant, manifestabantque sua nomina et ad quid ualerent uel officere possent^c, ^didemque faciebant animalia, uolatilia et serpentina etc.^d ^fContigit semel 'offendere' ^gCeroniam arborem^g, uulgò Charub. Cui ait: Quod est nomen tuum et ad quid uales? Quae respondit: Ego uocor sic et sic et sum bona ad destruendum ⁱterram sanctamⁱ. Quo audito (aiunt) intellexit statim finem uitae suae iam esse proximum. Sciebat enim destructionem templi^k ^lquod aedificauerat^l minime futuram ipso uiuente.^f Et quoniam ^mista secreta^m in libris particularibus ^econscripta^e in suo sacriscrinio conseruata habebat, ^bDaemon ille^b suus familiaris, ⁿsimiles in omnibus libris confecitⁿ, et eis Artis Magicae praecepta et indicationes conscripsit, occulteque in scrinium illud Regionum monumentorum iniecit. ^oMortuo autem Salomone, hominibus manifestauit et explicauit.^o ^oQuorum studio potius se dedicauerunt, quam oraculis propheticis Salomonis.^o Et hoc (inquiunt) est quod ait textus: Quia Salomon nihil contra fidem docuit nec scripsit, sed Daemones. [. . .]²⁹</p>	<p>As-Samarqandī. ^aLammā māta Sulaymān qālat ^bash-shayāṭīna^b li-n-nāsi^o inna 'ilma Sulaymān kāna 'idhā aṣbaḥa kulla yawmin ra'ā nabātan bayna yaday-hi fa-yaqūlu la-hu li-ayyi dā'in anta fa-yaqūlu innī dhū l-kadhā wa-kadhā wa-inna ismī kadhā wa-kadhā^c ^ewa-kāna yaktubu dhālika^e ^ffa-nabata yawman min al-ayyām nabatan bayna yaday-hi fa-qāla-hu Sulaymān mā smu-ka qāla kharnūb fa-qāla la-hu li-ayyi dā'in anta fa-qāla innī li-kharāb /al-arḍi l-masjidⁱ fa-'alima Sulaymān anna-hu qad jā'a ajalū-hu li-annahū 'ālīma anna l-masjid^k lā yukharrabu fī ḥayāti-hi^l wa-kāna la-hu ṣaḥīfa yaktubu fī-hā ^mism al-adwīya^m wa-yaḍā'u-hā fī l-khizāna wa-katabat ash-shayāṭīna siḥran wa-waḍā'u-hu fī dhālika al-mawḍi' fa-lammā māta Sulaymān wajaḍū dhālika fī kutubi-hi fa-ittaba'a-hu ba'ḍu n-nās fa-dhālika qawlu-hu wa-mā kafara Sulaymān wa-lākīna sh-shayāṭīn kafarū wa-yu'allimūna n-nāsa s-siḥra.</p>

²⁹ English translation: “[. . .] On another day, walking along the same shore and coming across a certain herb or plant, he would ask it about its name and the medicinal virtue embedded within it, and the plants would respond, revealing their names and explaining what they could benefit or harm. The same was done by animals, birds, and serpents, etc. It happened once to encounter the *Ceronia* tree, commonly called *Charub* [i.e. Carob tree, or Saint John's bread]. To which he said: What is your name and what are your properties? It replied: I am called such-and-such and I am good for destroying the Holy Land. Upon hearing this (it is said), he immediately understood that the end of his life was near. For he knew that the destruction of the temple he had built would not happen while he lived. And because he had these secrets written in particular books and kept them in his sacred chest, that familiar demon of his made similar books in every respect and inscribed in them the precepts and instructions of the Art of Sorcery, secretly placing them in the royal archive chest. When Solomon died, he revealed and explained them to people. They devoted themselves to this study rather than to Solomon's prophetic oracles. And this (they say) is what the text means: 'Because Solomon taught or wrote nothing against the faith, but the demons did.' [. . .]”

(a) Dominicus places the initial sentence (“When Solomon died the Demons said to the people”) at the conclusion of the passage, potentially to ensure a more seamless integration of the story into the narrative flow. The term “daemon” (b) appears in the singular form, rather than the plural as in the original, possibly because Dominicus had already referenced one single demon earlier in the text. In his paraphrased account of the dialogue between Solomon and a generic plant (c), Dominicus includes references to various types of animals (d), whereas the Arabic original mentions only plants; moreover (e), some parts of the Arabic text are missing and are introduced later (“then Salomon used to write it down”, Ar. “wa-kāna yaktubu dhālika,” Lat. [further below in the text] “ista secreta in libris particularibus *conscripta*”). In the subsequent description of the encounter with the Carob tree (f), a significant degree of correspondence with the original text is evident. However, Dominicus adds the classical term for the Carob tree, *Ceronia arbor* (g). The name *Ceronia*, or *Ceraunia*, is documented in Pliny.³⁰ Similarly, the term *offendere* (h, i), not employed in its usual sense of ‘to offend, hit, thrust,’ but rather in the meaning of ‘to come upon, meet with, or find’, is both classic and well-documented in Cicero.³¹

³⁰ Plin. *Nat. hist.*, 13, 16, 59 (*Pliny Natural History in ten volumes. With an English Translation by H.[arris] Rackham*. Vol. 4 [London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968], 132, 134): “Similis est quam Iones ceroniam vocant, trunco et ipsa fertilis – pomum siliqua – ob id quidam Aegyptiam ficum dixere errore manifesto; non etiam in Aegypto nascitur, sed in Syria Ioniaque et circa Cnidum atque in Rhodo. . .” (English translation: *Pliny Natural History*, 133, 135: “Another similar tree is the one called by the Ionians the ceronia, which also buds from the trunk, the fruit being a pod, which has consequently been called by some the Egyptian fig. But this is clearly a mistake, as it does not grow in Egypt, but in Syria and Ionia, and also in the neighbourhood of Cnidus and on the island of Rhodes. . .”) Pliny is an author whom Dominicus is well acquainted with and holds in high regard, as attested by a direct quotation found approximately two decades prior to the *Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis*. This quotation appears in the dedication to the reader of Dominicus’ *Antitheses fidei*, one of the few works by him to be printed. There, Dominicus, without explicitly naming the source, refers to Pliny as ‘the Father of Roman eloquence.’ The quotation, presented as follows, aligns precisely with the original. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia, *Antitheses Fidei*, Roma: Propaganda Fide, 1638, 1, (my emphasis): “Ad benignum lectorem. Res ardua valde est; (vt cum eloquentiae Romanae Patre loquar) vetustis nouitatem dare, nouis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubijs fidem, omnibus verò naturam, & naturae suae omnia.” (English translation: “To the kind Reader. It is an exceedingly difficult task (if I am to speak with the Father of Roman eloquence) to bring novelty to the ancient, authority to the new, refinement to the obsolete, clarity to the obscure, charm to the tedious, credibility to the doubtful, and, above all, to give everything its true nature and to nature all that belongs to it.) Cfr. Plin. *Nat. Hist.*, *Praef.*, 15: “Res ardua vetustis novitatem dare, nouis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubijs fidem, omnibus vero naturam et naturae suae omnia.” (*Pliny Natural History* Vol. 1, [London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967], 10).

³¹ Cic. *Rab. Post.* 11, 29 (quoting Ennius): “si te hic offendero, moriere” (*Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*. Vol. 14 [*Pro C. Rabirio Postumo*]. With an English Translation by N.[evile] H.[unter] Watts

This verb is used to render the more general Arabic term *ra'ā* ("to see") in a stylistically elevated manner. In its second occurrence (*i*) its usage may reflect an analogy with the situation of the first instance (*h*), considering that the Arabic employs there the verb *nabata* ("to sprout, to grow") and not *ra'ā*. As observed earlier in the discussion of Dominicus' Latin poem composed in classical meter, this instance too underscores his dedication to demonstrating his classical education.

Continuing the analysis of the Latin *scholium* in comparison with the Arabic marginal note, it is significant to observe that the expression (*j*) "al-arḍ al-masjid" is rendered as "terra sancta." While in Islamic Arabic 'masjid' is commonly associated with a mosque, it literally means 'place of prostration', hence it is employed here in the context of the age of Solomon to designate the temple. Indeed, in the following line, Dominicus uses the term "templum" (*k*), which raises the question of why 'terra sancta' was used in this instance. It is plausible that the inclusion of "al-arḍ," meaning "the land," led Dominicus to render it literally as "terra," prompting the use of the familiar expression "terra sancta" and later clarifying that the reference is to Solomon's temple. Additionally, he specifies that it is the temple "that he had built" ("quod aedificauerat") (*l*), a detail absent from the Arabic version.

The final section shows significant similarity to the original, aside from a few notable differences. Among these is the previously discussed shift from plural to singular in reference to the number of demons involved (*b*). In the Arabic text, the phrase "the name of the medicines" ("ism al-adwiya,"), which Solomon records in his books, is rendered in the Latin translation as "these secrets" (*m*). Additionally, Dominicus appears to introduce an interpretative detail, suggesting that the demon crafts an identical copy of Solomon's book to include spells—a feature absent in the Arabic source (*n*). Similarly, the Latin translation includes the notion that the people devote

[London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972], 392; English translation, 393: "If [. . .] I find thee here, / Thou diest!"; *Cic. Fam.* 2, 3 (*Cicero. The Letters to His Friends. With an English Translation by W[illiam] Glynn Williams* Vol. 1 [London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965], 98): "imparatum te offendam" (English translation, *Cicero. The Letters*, 99: "I shall take you unprepared"); *Cic. Fam.*, 1, 9, 17 (*Cicero. The Letters*, 68): "Non offendes eundem bonorum sensum [. . .] quem reliquisti" (English translation, *Cicero. The Letters*, 69: "you will not find the political sentiments of loyal citizens the same as you left behind you"); *Cic. Verr.* 2, 4, 28, 64: (*Cicero. The Verrine Orations. With an English Translation by L[eonard] H[ugh] G[raham] Greenwood*. Vol. 2 [London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967], 358) "nondum perfectum templum offenderant" (English translation, *Cicero. The Verrine Orations*, 359: "finding the temple building not yet completed"); *Cic. Rep.* 1, 38, 59 (*Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*. Vol. 16 [*De Republica*]. *With an English Translation by Clinton Walker Keyes* [London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970], 88): "cum [. . .] omnia aliter offendisset ac iusserat" (English translation, *Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*. Vol. 16, 89: "when he found [. . .] that all his orders had been disobeyed".)

themselves to the magical content of Solomon’s book rather than (“potius. . .quam”) his “prophetic oracles,” (*o*) a term that is entirely absent from the Arabic text as well.

Let us now examine in table 2 the Arabic text transcribed by Dominicus in comparison with a modern edition of as-Samarqandī’s *tafsīr*, with key differences highlighted in bold.

Tab. 2: Edition of *Tafsīr as-Samarqandī* vs. Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s marginal note.

<i>Tafsīr as-Samarqandī</i> (Source: www.altafsir.com)	Ms. Escorial, K-III-1, fol. 78r, in <i>marginē</i>
<p>Fa-lammā māta Sulaymān qālat ash-shayāṭīn li-n-nās inna ‘ilm Sulaymān madfūn fī mawḍī’ kadhā wa-kadhā, fa-ḥafarū dhālika al-mawḍī’ wa-akhrajū min-hu kutuban kathīra. Wa-qāla ba’ḍu-hum: ma’nā-hu anna Sulaymān kāna idhā aṣḥaḥu kulla yawm ra’ā nabātan bayna yaday-hi fa-yaqūlu la-hu: li-ayyi dawā’ anta? Fa-yuqūlu: innī dawā’ li-kadhā wa-kadhā wa-inna ismī kadhā kadhā fa-kāna Sulaymān yaktub dhālika wa-yadfinu-hu fa-nabata yawman min al-ayyām nabāt bayna yaday-hi fa-qāla la-hu Sulaymān: mā smu-ka? Fa-qāla: kharnūb. Fa-qāla la-hu: li-ayyi dawā’ anta? Fa-qāla: innī li-kharāb al-masjid, fa-‘alima Sulaymān anna-hu qad jā’a ajalū-hu li-anna-hu ‘alima anna al-masjid lā yakhṛub fī ḥayāti-hi, wa-kāna la-hu ṣaḥīfa fī-hā yaktub asmā’ al-adwiyat wa-yaḍa’u-hā fī al-khizāna fa-katabat ash-shayāṭīn siḥran wa-waḍa’ū-hu fī dhālika al-mawḍī’, fa-lammā māta Sulaymān wajadū dhālika fī kutubi-hi fa-ittaba’a-hu ba’ḍu n-nās fa-dhālika qawlu-hu {wa-mā kafara Sulaymān wa-lākinna sh-shayāṭīn kafarū yu’allimūna n-nāsa s-siḥra}.³²</p>	<p>as-Samarqandī. Lammā māta Sulaymān qālat ash-shayāṭīna li-n-nāsi inna ‘ilma Sulaymān kāna idhā aṣḥaḥa kulla yawmin ra’ā nabātan bayna yaday-hi fa-yaqūlu la-hu li-ayyi dā’in anta fa-yaqūlu innī dhū l-kadhā wa-kadhā wa-inna ismī kadhā wa-kadhā wa-kāna yaktubu dhālika fa-nabata yawman min al-ayyām nabatan bayna yaday-hi fa-qāla-hu Sulaymān mā smu-ka qāla kharnūb fa-qāla la-hu li-ayyi dā’in anta fa-qāla innī li-kharāb al-arḍi al-masjidi fa-‘alima Sulaymān anna-hu qad jā’a ajalū-hu li-annahu ‘alima anna l-masjid lā yukharrabu fī ḥayāti-hi wa-kāna la-hu ṣaḥīfa yaktubu fī-hā ism al-adwiyā wa-yaḍa’u-hā fī l-khizāna wa-katabat ash-shayāṭīna siḥran wa-waḍa’ū-hu fī dhālika al-mawḍī’ fa-lammā māta Sulaymān wajadū dhālika fī kutubi-hi fa-ittaba’a-hu ba’ḍu n-nās fa-dhālika qawlu-hu wa-mā kafara Sulaymān wa-lākinna sh-shayāṭīn kafarū wa-yu’allimūna n-nāsa s-siḥra.</p>

³² English translation: When Solomon died, the devils said to the people, “Solomon’s knowledge was buried in such-and-such place. The people dug in that place and unearthed from there many books. And some said that its meaning [i.e. of the verse] was that Solomon in the morning of each day would see a plant before him, and he would ask it: “For what medicine are you intended?” It would respond, ‘I am medicine for such-and-such, and my name is such-and-such.’ So Solomon would write that down and bury it. One day, a plant grew before him, and Solomon asked it: ‘What is your name?’ It replied: ‘Carob.’ Solomon then asked it: ‘For what medicine are you intended?’ It replied: ‘For the destruction of the temple.’ Solomon knew then that his end had come, because he knew that the temple would not be destroyed during his lifetime. Solomon had a scroll in which he recorded the names of medicines, and he would place it in the treasury. The devils wrote spells and placed them in that location. When Solomon died, they found that in his writings, and some people followed it. That is the meaning of God’s saying: {And Solomon did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic.}

For the majority of the text, there is complete correspondence, except for one passage that is omitted. In the modern edition, the demons state that “Solomon’s knowledge was buried in such-and-such place. The people dug in that place and unearthed from there many books. And some said that its meaning [i.e. of the verse] was that Solomon used to see in the morning of each day. . .and so on”. Dominicus omits the passage detailing the demons’ revelation about the books’ burial site and instead allows the demons to recount the story of Solomon interrogating the plants. While this omission is not particularly consequential, it is noteworthy that Dominicus, despite his overall fidelity to his source, does not hesitate to make cuts, even in the transcription. In the translation, we observe certain additions, such as the reference to other animals. Since Dominicus does not seem to fabricate the material he incorporates, it is plausible that he introduced these additions from another source addressing the same subject, though the exact origin remains unidentified. Thus, while Dominicus is largely faithful to his source, he adapts it to suit his objectives, which complicates the task of tracing his exact sources.

3.3 A Crafted Quotation?

On other occasions, Dominicus engages with his sources in an even more flexible manner:

I reproduce here the beginning of the *scholium* to the first *Textus* of sura 17, the sura of the “night-journey”, commenting on the first word of verse 1, “subḥāna”, i.e. Glory be to him, as it appears in manuscript *E* (fol. 242v):³³

Scholium

الزمخشري	Dicunt. Quoniam in hac tam mirabili ac subitanea translatione il-
العمادى	lius de oratorio, id est de phano Maekkeni, in templum de Hieru-
الكاشانى	salem, Deus tam magna tamque mirabilia ei reuelauit cordique
السمرقندى	ipsius intime impressit, nimirum esse suum purum, simplex, longe
موسى بن طاحه	remotum ab omni consortio alicuius alterius, neque per genera-
على بن ابي طالب	tionem, neque per susceptionem alicuius attributionis factae ab
ابو سعيد الخدرى	inimicis Dei, qui non est nisi unus solus, nec potest habere parem,
ابن عباس	apogesis ab ipso excelso, genus, persona et relatio alicuius stirpis, per

³³ Arabic text of Q. 17:1: “Subḥāna l-ladhī asrā bi-‘abdi-hī laylan min al-masjidi l-ḥarām ilā l-masjidi l-aqṣā l-ladhī bāraknā ḥawla-hū li-nuriya-hū min āyāti-nā inna-hu huwa s-samī‘u l-baṣīru” (English translation, Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, 302: “Glory be to Him, who carried His servant by night / from the Holy Mosque to the Further Mosque / the precincts of which We have blessed, / that We might show him some of Our signs. /He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.”)

ابو بكر modum cultus diuini, qui numquam omnino est mutabilis a sua pura
انس بن مالك simplicitate et perfectione ob excellentiam naturae suae. Ita Elkas-
الزهرى ciani, Elaamadi, Elzamchasciari et Elsamarcandi, aliique quos citat.

سبحانه دلّ على التنزيه من جميع القبايح اى انزهه عن اللواحق المادية والنقايس التشبيهية
تصفها اليه اعداء الله المتنزّه عن الجنس والشخص والاضافة الى قبيل ما فى مقام العبودية
الذى لا يصرف اصلاً عن التجرد والكمال لكون شأنه تعالى

The translation of the Latin text is the following:

They say that during this most marvelous and sudden translation of him [i.e. the Prophet] from the prayer-house [oratorium,] i.e. the temple of Mekka, to the temple of Jerusalem, God revealed to him such great and wondrous things, which he engraved in the depth of his heart: namely, his pure being, simple, and far removed from any association with any other [deity], either by generation or through the adoption of any attribution made by the enemies of God. He is but only one and cannot have an equal: a distancing made by him, as most high being, concerning kind [genus], person [persona] and relation of any lineage [stirps], by the way of divine worship, He who is never changing from his pure simplicity and perfection due to the excellence of His nature. Thus wrote al-Kāshānī, al-‘Imādī, az-Zamakhsharī, and as-Samarqandī, along with others he cites.

Subsequently, he presents the Arabic text that he purportedly quotes. However, based on my research thus far, this exact text does not exist in its given form; rather, it appears to be a compilation derived from excerpts of various commentators, namely az-Zamakhsharī, al-Kāshānī, al-‘Imādī, and as-Samarqandī.

In the following analysis (see Tab. 3), I will juxtapose Dominicus’ purported “quotation” with its presumed sources in order to illustrate the correspondences and discrepancies between them. The distinct segments that constitute this textual assemblage will be highlighted through underlining.

Tab. 3: Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Quotation and Its Alleged Sources.

Dominicus Germanus de Silesia’s Quotation	Tafāsīr
Subhāna-hu: <u>dalla ‘alā t-tanzīh min jamī</u> <u>al-qabā’ih, ay anzaha-hu ‘an al-lawāhiq</u> <u>al-mādiyya wa-n-naqā’is at-tashbīhiyya</u> <u>taṣifu-hā ilay-hi a’dā’ l-lāh</u> al-mutanazzih ‘an al-jins wa-sh-shakhs wa-al-idāfa ilā qabīlin mā fī maqām al-‘ubūdiyya l-ladhī lā yuṣrafu aslan ‘an al-tajarrud wa-l-kamāl li-kawn shā’nu-hu ta’ālā.	az-Zamakhsharī on Q. 17:1 ad “Subhāna”³⁴ Subhāna ‘alam li-t-tasbīh ka-‘Uthmān li-r-rajul, wa-ntiṣābu-hu bi-fi’l muḍmar matrūk izhāru-hu, taqdīru-hu asabbiḥu Allāh subhāna, thumma nuzzila subhāna manzilat al-fi’l fa-sadda masadda-hu, wa-dalla ‘alā al-tanzīh al-balīgh min jamī al-qabā’ih allatī <u>yudfuhā ilay-hi a’dā’ Allāh.</u>

³⁴ This and the following *tafāsīr* have been quoted and transliterated from www.altafsir.com (accessed April 14, 2025.)

Tab. 3 (continued)

Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's Quotation	<i>Tafsīr</i>
<p>English Translation: Glory be to Him: it indicates transcendence of all forms of imperfections, meaning that He is exalted above material attributes and anthropomorphic deficiencies ascribed to Him by the enemies of God. He is beyond kind (<i>jins</i>), person (<i>shakhṣ</i>), and any association with a particular sort in the context of worship, which is never diverted from absolute transcendence and perfection due to His exalted nature.</p>	<p>English Translation: “Subḥāna” is a proper name signifying ‘glorification’, analogous to how “‘Uthmān” serves as a name for a person. Its accusative case arises from an implied verb whose expression is omitted, with the intended meaning being “I glorify God, Subḥāna.” Subsequently, “subḥāna” assumes the role of a verb, effectively replacing it. <u>This term conveys profound transcendence, free from all imperfections that the enemies of God attribute to Him.</u></p>
	<p>al-Kāshānī on Q. 17:1 <i>ad</i> “Subḥāna:”</p> <p>Ay: anzahu-hu ‘an al-lawāhiq al-mādiyya wa-al-naqā’is at-tashbīhiyya bi-lisān ḥāl al-tajarrud wa-al-kamāl fi maqām al-‘ubūdiyya l-ladhī lā tusrafu fi-hi aslan.</p>
	<p>English Translation: This means: <u>I exalt Him above material attributes and anthropomorphic deficiencies through the expression of absolute transcendence and perfection in the context of worship, which is never diverted in any way.</u></p>
	<p>Abū Sa’ūd al-‘Imādī, on Q. 17:1 <i>ad</i> “Subḥāna:”</p> <p>{Subḥāna l-ladhī asrā bi-‘abdi-hī} Subḥāna ‘alam li-t-tasbīḥ ka-‘Uthmān li-r-rajul wa-ḥaythu kāna al-musammā ma‘nan lā ‘aynan wa-<u>jinsan lā shakhsan lam takun idāfatu-hu min qabīl.</u></p>
	<p>English Translation: “Glory be to Him who transported His servant by night”. The term “subḥāna” is a proper name signifying glorification, analogous to how “‘Uthmān” serves as a name for a person. As the named entity is an abstract concept (<i>ma‘nan</i>) rather than a physical entity (<i>‘aynan</i>), and is a <u>general category (<i>jinsan</i>) rather than an individual instance (<i>shakhṣ</i>), its association is not of the type commonly found in relational attribution.</u></p>

Tab. 3 (continued)

Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's Quotation	<i>Tafāsīr</i>
	<p>as-Samarqandī on Q. 17:1 <i>ad</i> “Subhāna:”</p> <p>Qāla Ibn ‘Abbās fi qawli-hi ta’ālā: {Subhāna} yaqūlu: ‘ajabun min amri Allāh al-ladhī asrā. Wa-yuqālu: <u>tanzīh</u> li-l-lāh ta’ālā.</p> <p>English Translation:</p> <p>Ibn ‘Abbās said regarding God’s statement: {Subhāna}, that it signifies “a wonder from the command of God who transported [His servant].” It is also said to denote the <u>transcendence</u> of God, exalted be He.</p>

Dominicus’ first source is az-Zamakhsharī, although he omits the initial portion of the latter’s commentary on “Subhāna”, which is more focused on grammatical aspects. He closely follows az-Zamakhsharī’s phrasing,³⁵ only excluding the adjective “al-balīgh” (far-reaching, deep, profound), while also incorporating the opening segment of al-Kāshānī’s explanation. The two remaining sections of al-Kāshānī are placed later, though their order is reversed, after a passage from Abū Sa’ūd al-Imādī that has been modified and truncated to integrate into the sentence. The final segment of Dominicus’ reported statement remains without a definitive source.³⁶

The insertion from Abū Sa’ūd is particularly significant, as it alters the original focus of the fragment within its initial context. In Abū Sa’ūd’s text, the emphasis is on explaining that ‘Subhāna’ should be understood as a “general concept” (Ar. “ma’nan”) in contrast to a “tangible body” (Ar. “aynan”), and as a “general category” (Ar. “jinsan”)—which it is—as opposed to an “individual instance” (“shakhṣan”)—

³⁵ The shifting from “yuḍifu-hā” (from “aḍāfa,” to attribute, to attach to) to “taṣifu-hā” (from “waṣāfa,” to qualify, to attribute characteristics to) can be explained by a misreading of “ḍ” (ض) as “ṣ” (ص), since these letters are differentiated only by the presence or absence of a point. One cannot, however, rule out the possibility that the point may have been missing from Dominicus’ source manuscript, as it can be for the missing points of the “yā” (ي) between “ḍ” and “ṣ,” and the inverted position of the two dots that changed the “yā” (ي: dots below the letter) to a tā’ (ت: dots above the letter.) The semantic similarity between the two verbs may also support the plausibility of the verb “waṣāfa” appearing in the source manuscript.

³⁶ In the margin, Dominicus references additional sources beyond those explicitly cited in the main text. However, these constitute secondary sources, all of which are encompassed within the four principal ones mentioned, as indicated by the expression “alique quos citat.”

which it is not. However, Dominicus omits the first term of the initial opposition and instead integrates both “jins,” translated as “genus,” and “shakhṣ,” rendered as “persona” (hence my translation as “person” in this context), as negated attributes in the expression referring to God: “[Allāh] al-mutanazzih ‘an al-jins wa-sh-shakhṣ wa-al-īdāfa ilā qābilin,” which, in the new context, conveys the meaning “transcendent from kind, person, or relation [or association].” The addition of “al-mutanazzih ‘an” (“transcendent from”) has probably been propitiated to Dominicus by the initial “at-tanzih,” (“transcendence, negation of any anthropomorphism,”) which is also found in as-Samarqandī’s parallel fragment.

This adaptation renders the sentence markedly more antitrinitarian than its original formulation, not only affirming the absolute transcendence of God but also rejecting any categorization related to kind, person, or relational association (represented by the negation of “īdāfa”). While the translations of “jins” and “shakhṣ” as “genus” and “persona” are not inaccurate, as these terms can carry such meanings, in this specific context they acquire a particular connotation relevant to the antitrinitarian debate, given their strong associations in Christian theological discourse. Similarly, the rendering of “qābil” in the phrase “īdāfa ilā qābil” (“association to a certain qābil [=kind]”), subtly modified from “īdāfa min qābil” (“association of a certain kind”), as “relatio alicuius stirpis” (“relation of a certain lineage”) reinforces the notion of lineage and, consequently, a generational relationship between the *personae* of the Trinity. The presence of this theme in Dominicus’ thinking is further supported by an additional phrase he incorporated a few lines earlier, which does not appear in the Arabic ‘quotation,’ and is emphasized here in italics: “and far removed from any association with any other [deity], *either by generation* or through the adoption of any attribution made by the enemies of God.”

While antitrinitarianism can indeed be identified as one of the arguments present in Islamic refutations of Christianity, the focus here is on Dominicus’ approach to validating his argument. He asserts that his claims are based on direct quotations from qur’anic commentaries in Arabic, rather than on a mere summary or interpretation. By presenting his argument as a direct citation, he seeks to substantiate his position through the supposed verbatim words of the commentators. However, in reality, he constructs a source that does not exist in its reported form, rendering it not only more polemical but also more explicitly anti-Christian than the original texts. This process involves selectively cutting and rearranging passages, both in the Latin text and in the Arabic transcription, to fabricate a composition that, despite its reliance on existing fragments, does not correspond to any genuine source in its entirety. While this manipulation might be framed as a form of summarization, it is not explicitly acknowledged as such. Furthermore, although

it is conceivable—albeit unlikely—that an actual source contains the exact phrasing attributed to it by Dominicus, no explicit reference to such a source is provided.

4 Conclusion

The passages presented illustrate several ways in which Dominicus engages with the Arabic sources he cites. In translation, he generally remains close to the original texts, though he sometimes adapts them so that they better conform to their surrounding context within the translation itself and serve the intended argumentative purpose, as seen in the quotation from *as-Samarqandī*. He may incorporate his own commentary within the quotations themselves or append it afterward, and this commentary can at times take on a polemical tone.

Similarly, his transcriptions do not strictly reproduce the sources verbatim; rather, he intervenes by omitting certain passages to render the transcription as concise and essential as possible for supporting his argument. This practice can extend to the point where he constructs a quotation by assembling excerpts from various commentaries on the same verse, drawn from multiple authors. While the textual integrity of the individual authors is largely maintained, the resulting quotation itself does not exist as such in the original sources.

Nonetheless, in the cases examined, the material does have a counterpart in the original texts, albeit manipulated and interpreted for polemical purposes. Therefore, when a passage or attribution remains elusive despite our search, it is worth considering the question: where did Dominicus derive the material? Given his approach, the answer may not always be readily identifiable.

These observations raise questions about the scholarly rigor that Dominicus projects in the layout and presentation of his work and they prompt further inquiry into whether this is yet another instance in which philology—despite its sophistication and the author’s evident expertise in the sources—serves as a “smokescreen for polemics,” a phenomenon frequently encountered in seventeenth-century scholarship.³⁷ Only time and continued research may provide a definitive answer.

³⁷ The characterization of philology as a “smokescreen for polemics” was explored in a talk by Jan Loop and Paul Babinski, “Philology as Common Ground: The Case of the Qur’an,” which I had the pleasure of attending at the conference “Scriptural Readings and Reasonings. Philology and Religious Encounter in Medieval and Early Modern Times.” This event, organized by Jan Loop, Christopher Ocker and Taneli Kukkon, took place at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, from October 9 to 11, 2023. In their presentation, Loop and Babinski illustrated this notion with several 17th-century examples.

List of Abbreviations

Ar.: Arabic

Lat.: Latin

s.l.: *supra lineam*

om.: *omisit / omiserunt*

add.: *addidit / addiderunt*

Bibliography

Manuscripts

El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS Árabe 1624.

El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS K-III-1.

El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS L-I-3.

Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, MS H 72.

Literature

Arberry, Arthur J. *The Koran Interpreted*. 2 vols. London: Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Bausani, Alessandro, ed. *Il Corano*. Milano, Rizzoli, 1st ed. 1988, 15th ed. 2004.

Bergé, Marc. "Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī." In *ʿAbbasid Belles Lettres*, edited by Julia Ashtiany, T. M.

Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Serjeant, 112–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Bobzin, Hartmut. "Ein oberschlesischer Koranglehrter: Dominicus Germanus de Silesia, O.F.M. (1588–1670)." In *Die oberschlesische Literaturlandschaft im 17. Jahrhundert*, edited by Gerhard

Koselleck, 221–31. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2001.

Brockelmann, Carl *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*. Vol. 2. Berlin: Emil Felber, 1902.

Brockelmann, Carl *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur. Supplementband II*. Leiden: Brill, 1938.

Cecini, Ulisse. "Germanus de Silesia's Qur'an Translation in the MS K-III-1 of the Escorial Library: Newly Discovered Revised Versions." In *The Iberian Qur'an. From the Middle Ages to Modern Times*, edited by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard A. Wiegers, 133–48. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022.

Cecini, Ulisse. "Dominicus Germanus de Silesia." *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, general editor Johanna Pink, University of Freiburg. Accessed April 2, 2025. doi: 10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_059256. First published online: 2023.

Cecini, Ulisse. "Dominicus Germanus de Silesia in Rome: The Roman Prodomes of a Future Qur'an Translator." In: *The Qur'an in Rome. Manuscripts, Translations, and the Study of Islam in Early Modern Catholicism*, ediyed by Federico Stella and Roberto Tottoli, 263–85. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2024.

Cecini, Ulisse. "Dominicus Germanus de Silesia's Approach to the Qur'an." *Studia Islamica* 119 (2024): 244–97.

Cecini, Ulisse. "The Qur'an Translation by Germanus de Silesia OFM (ca. 1650–1670): Observations About Its Inedited Sections." In *Documenta Coranica Christiana. Christian Translations of the*

- Qur'an. Preliminary Considerations of the State of the Art*, edited by Manolis Ulbricht. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming.
- Cicero in Twenty-Eight Volumes*. Vol. 14 [*Pro C. Rabirio Postumo*]. With an English Translation by N.[evile] H.[unter] Watts. London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972; Vol. 16 [*De Republica*]. With an English Translation by Clinton Walker Keyes. 1970.
- Cicero. The Letters to His Friends*. With an English Translation by W.[illiam] Glynn Williams Vol. 1. London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- Cicero. The Verrine Orations*. With an English Translation by L.[eonard] H.[ugh] G.[raham] Greenwood. Vol. 2. London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Devic, Marcel. "Une traduction inédite du Coran." *Journal Asiatique* 8/1 (1883): 343–406.
- El Tayib, Abdullah. "Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī." In *ʿAbbasid Belles Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Serjeant, 315–27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- García Masegosa, Antonio. *Germán de Silesia. Interpretatio Alcorani Litteralis. Parte I: La traducción latina; introducción y edición crítica*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2009.
- Germanus de Silesia, Dominicus. *Antitheses Fidei*. Roma: Propaganda Fide, 1638.
- Glazer, Sidney, and Thomas Emil Homerin. "Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, July 1, 2008; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0287.
- Harb, Lara. "Al-Jurjānī, ʿAbd al-Qāhīr." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, December 1, 2019; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_32887.
- Ibn ʿAdil al-Ḥanbalī, Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar. *Al-Lubāb fī ʿUlūm al-Kitāb* [The Essence of the Sciences of the Book.] Edited by ash-Shaykh Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿwaḍ. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya: 1419/1998.
- Lane, Andrew J. *A Traditional Muʿtazilite Qurʾān Commentary: The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhshari (d. 538/1144)*. Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2006.
- Lory, Pierre. "ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, October 1, 2009; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_22929.
- Madelung, Wilferd. "Zaydiyya." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, edited by Peri J. Bearman. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, April 24, 2012. Accessed April 17, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1385.
- Melchert, Christopher. "Al-Bukhārī." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, June 1, 2012; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24024.
- Ménage, Victor Louis. "Kemāl Pasha-Zāde." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, edited by Peri J. Bearman. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, April 24, 2012. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0480.
- Mokrani, Adnane. "Religions in al-Ḥarāllī's Sufi Hermeneutics: An Apologetic Understanding of the Qurʾān." *Religions* 14/11 (2023): 1381. Accessed April 16, 2025. doi:10.3390/rel14111381
- Pakatchi, Ahmad, and (translated by) Azar Rabbani, "Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī." In *Encyclopaedia Islamica Online*, edited by Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary. Leiden / Boston: Brill, First-online: October 16, 2015; Last-update: June 17, 2021. doi: 10.1163/1875-9831_isla_COM_0099.

- Pliny Natural History in ten volumes. With an English Translation by H.[arris] Rackham.* Vol. 1. London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967; Vol. 4. London: William Heinemann / Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Repp, Richard C. "Abū I-Su'ūd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, October 1, 2009; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23159
- Richard, Francis. "Le Franciscain Dominic Germanus de Silésie, grammairien et auteur d'apologie en persan." *Islamochristiana*, 10 (1984): 91–107.
- Saleh, Walid. "Al-Biqā'ī." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, October 1, 2010; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23717.
- Saleh, Walid. "Al-Bayḍāwī." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online*, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Devin J. Stewart. Leiden / Boston: Brill, first-online, October 1, 2017; last-update, July 19, 2021. Accessed April 16, 2025, doi: 10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_25267.
- aṭ-Ṭabbākh, Muḥammad Rāghib. "Tarjamah Mafqūdah" [A Missing Biography.] *Revue de l'Académie Arabe de Damas* [Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī], 20 (1945): 381–83.
- Tafsīr al-A'qam.* Ṣan'ā: Dār al-Ḥikma al-Yamāniyya, 1411/1990.
- Zimolong, Bertrand. *P. Dominic Germanus de Silesia O. F. M. Ein Biographischer Versuch.* Breslau: Otto Borgmeyer, 1928.
- Zimolong, Bertrand. "Neues zu dem Leben und zu den Werken des P. Dominic Germanus de Silesia O. F. M." *Franziskanische Studien* 21 (1934): 151–70.
- Zimolong, Bertrand. "Nochmals P. Dominic Germanus de Silesia O. F. M." *Franziskanische Studien* 23 (1936): 426–31.
- Az-Ziriklī, Khayr ad-Din. *Al-A'īām.* Beirut: Dar al-'ilm li-l-Malayīn, 2002¹⁵.

