

# Being a Saudi Before Becoming One: Al Biqā'ī's Capitalisation of Paratexts in His Translations of French Books About Arabia

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**Abstract**—This paper examines the paratexts of Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī's translations of French books about Saudi Arabia into Arabic as a socially-situated activity. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice, it analyses Al Biqā'ī's paratextual zone, with particular focus given to prefaces as a site of self-promotion in terms of capital. The Syrian-born translator has recently acquired Saudi citizenship and national prizes of high symbolic capital due to his individual efforts in the field of translation. Al Biqā'ī stands out as one of the few eminent specialists from different fields who have been naturalised as a Saudi citizen by a royal decree in the first wave of such naturalisations in 2021, which offers a unique case for the study of the capitalisation of translation. It is argued here that Al Biqā'ī successfully capitalised the paratexts of his translation products, namely French books about Saudi Arabia, to show how Saudi he is even before acquiring Saudi citizenship. Through an analysis of Al Biqā'ī's paratextual elements (from 2001 to 2020), this study identifies and critically examines the mechanisms of capital through which the translator, then a Syrian national, attempted to promote and distinguish himself and his works. The findings illuminate how paratexts are used as a tool by translators to draw a certain image of themselves.

**Index Terms**—Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī, social capital, symbolic capital, paratexts, sociology of translation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Translators are mostly invisible and lost between the lines of translations where the source authors' voices are the only voices heard. Hence, paratexts provide translators with a public space through which their voices are raised and heard outside the lines of their translation products, making them, to use Venuti's (1995) words, 'visible'. Therefore, in the contemporary field of Translation Studies (TS), the notion of paratexts—those supplementary elements that frame a text, such as introductions, footnotes, glossaries, and authorial comments—has garnered increasing scholarly attention. Traditionally, paratexts have been viewed as mere aids to comprehension, providing readers with necessary contextual information and a description of the translation choices taken by translators. However, such a perspective overlooks a crucial dimension of paratexts: their role as a site for the sociological dynamics of translation. Very few have investigated the means by which paratexts become places where translators can signal their agenda, their ideological sympathies, or antipathy towards the author or text (Batchelor, 2018). Paratexts also become venues where the personal interests of translators are exposed.

This article is set out to develop a new reading of paratexts, as a dynamic site of capital employed by a translator to promote a certain image of himself, based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice. To this end, the study critically examines the then-Syrian translator Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī's paratexts of his translation products of French books about Saudi Arabia (from 2001 to 2020, published inside and outside the Kingdom) as a socially-situated activity. Al Biqā'ī, who has recently acquired Saudi citizenship, dedicates a significant part of the paratextual elements of his translation products about Saudi Arabia to portray himself as loyal to the Kingdom, even before acquiring Saudi citizenship. This study illuminates how translators embed their personal stakes within the paratexts, thereby leveraging them as strategic tools for self-promotion and capital accumulation. Al Biqā'ī offers a unique case of such a capitalisation of translation through paratexts where it has paid dividends to him by acquiring Saudi citizenship in 2021.

The following sections present an overview of translational paratexts, drawing on Bourdieu's sociology, and reconceptualise translation as an investment capitalised by translators. Then, a biographical account of Al Biqā'ī is provided to help gain an understanding of how paratexts can serve translators' interests. Finally, an investigation of his paratextual elements is carried out to identify the mechanisms of capital employed by the translator to promote an intended image of himself.

## II. TRANSLATIONAL PARATEXTS

The translator's investment in a translation is played out first and foremost in the 'paratextual' zone, which surrounds the text. According to Genette (1997), paratextual elements can be classified into two main categories: peritext and epitext.

The former includes: elements inserted into the core of the text, such as a book's framing, the presentation of a book, the preface, and the notes; while the latter describes "distanced elements" that are the messages located outside the book such as the interviews, letters, diaries (Genette, 1997, p. 5). In TS, Pellatt (2013, p. 2) defines paratext as "any material additional to, appended to or external to the core text which has functions of explaining, defining, instructing, or supporting, adding background information, or the relevant opinions and attitudes of scholars, translators and reviewers".

Genette's concept of the paratext has proved influential in TS. Within the field, paratexts are considered valuable records or artefacts "*because of what they tell us about something else*" (Batchelor, 2018, p. 168). Examining paratexts of the translations has usefully supplemented the understanding of translation as a socially situated activity. The work of Elgindy (2013), Hanna (2016), Ali (2018), and Khalifa (2020) are telling examples demonstrating the importance of scrutinising paratexts when studying translators' interestedness in their work, and their endeavour to distinguish their positions and products in the field. It is through paratexts the (co)producers of translations (i.e., translators, publishers, blurb writers, and cover designers) interfere in different places and through different devices to ensure a dominant position for themselves and their works within the field (Elgindy, 2013). This means that paratexts are powerful tools at the translator's disposal, as they can deliver a certain message and/or portray an intended image of the translator and their products. This said, existing literature, such as Batchelor (2018), asserts that there is still much more to be done in terms of investigating paratexts. To date, most of the research in paratexts is carried out in literary translation, with few endeavours investigating other genres; and hardly any scholars have dealt with research in paratexts (Batchelor, 2018). Hence, the present paper seeks to fill this gap in the field by investigating the paratexts of non-literary texts.

Genette's paratexts and Bourdieu's sociology have proven to be interconnected conceptual frameworks as investigating paratexts is mostly done, in TS, in light of Bourdieu's sociology.

### III. RE-CONCEPTUALISING TRANSLATION: A BOURDIEUSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Translation products have been generally seen as filling a gap in the knowledge of cultures or as a representation of the wide success of a source text in a given culture. In this view, translation is the act of producing a cultural product independently of any and all personal interests of the translator themselves. This idea has been generally held by asserting that cultural products and activities are based on 'disinterestedness' (Bourdieu, 1986). This means that all cultural activities, including translation, are purposeless and free from interests other than intellectual and cultural. Claims such as 'value-free research' and 'art for art's sake' are at the core of this idea (Collins, 1998, p. 725).

Several translation scholars have tried to overcome this traditional reductive view of translation, mainly by using Bourdieu's sociological model as an analytical lens. The main conceptual apparatus adopted to achieve this aim is his concept of *capital*. It helps scholars to focus on the translators' personal investment in the translation they produce and their interestedness in the field of translation (to name but a few, see: Alkhamis, 2012; Elgindy, 2013; Hanna, 2016). In TS research, paratextual elements of translations are the main zone that exhibit the stakes motivating the production of translators and reveal their appreciation of the game and its stakes, or in Bourdieu's words, the *illusio*.

Based on a review of the literature cited above, it is true to say that understanding translation as a site of self-promotion, where the translator's personal interests are evinced, resonates with Bourdieu's sociology.

#### *Bourdieu's Concepts of Capital and Illusio*

To adopt a Bourdieusian lens is to see translation, like other fields, not as "just simple games of chance" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241), but as a conscious act motivated by its producers' interests. Bourdieu's theory, particularly his concepts of capital and *illusio*, is a vital analytical tool in order to help us to examine the dynamic motivations of agents in translation fields (Hanna, 2016). To achieve this, the process of euphemisation or, in Bourdieu's (1986, p. 243) terms, "dissimulation", needs to be identified. This is the process by which the material interests motivating the sociocultural practices of translators are disguised in claims of disinterest made by them (Hanna, 2016). Disinterested claims in the field of translation can appear in various forms in the translators' statements, such as: serving the translation field, informing readers of successful foreign works, and enriching libraries with valuable works. At the core of these claims lie identifiable forms of capital that translators invest in and pursue in the field. These must be recognised in sociological research to justify the practices in the field under investigation (Hanna, 2016).

The downside of economically focused interpretation of capital is, as suggested by Bourdieu (1986, p. 242), that it reduces the "universe of exchanges to mercantile exchange, which is objectively and subjectively oriented toward the maximisation of profit, i.e., economically *self-interested*". It has implicitly defined the other forms of exchange as non-economic, and therefore *disinterested*". Accordingly, Bourdieu has extended the concept of capital to encompass forms other than the traditional economic sense historically associated with it. Bourdieu (1986) classifies capital into three distinguishable types: *economic capital*, which is money and other material assets; *social capital*, which is social networks and contacts; and *cultural capital*, which is official knowledge of one kind or another. *Symbolic capital* is a fourth form of capital postulated by Bourdieu (1986) as the manifestation of the three previous forms when they are naturalised on their own terms. In other words, it is the resources available to an agent on the basis of prestige or social honour. This classification of capital has been established by Bourdieu to include "monetary and non-monetary, as well as tangible and intangible forms" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Such an understanding helps in defining the practices of any field as oriented not only towards the attainment of economic resources but towards various forms of capital. The importance of capital among agents stems from the fact that power depends on the agent's position in the field, which is obtained through the

amount of capital they possess (Webb et al., 2002). Therefore, the more capital possessed by an agent, the more confidence they have to compete in the field, and the more likely they are to succeed (Webb et al., 2002). Capital is also "accumulated labour" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241), which means that assembling capital takes time, and it typically cannot be gained at once. The accumulation of capital usually requires continuous work by an agent and struggles with other agents over said capital in order to function and be recognised as a legitimate occupier of an available position in the field.

Another vital concept of Bourdieu that needs to be considered in this paper is the concept of *illusio*. It is a Latin term derived from *ludus* [game] to denote: "the fact of being in the game, of being invested in the game, of taking the game seriously" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 76). *Illusio* is thus the agent's belief that the game is "worth playing and that the stakes created in and through the fact of playing are worth pursuing" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77). Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *illusio* further challenges the idea of disinterestedness that has been traditionally associated with the agents of the fields of cultural production. That is to say, *illusio* postulates that "what happens matters to those who are engaged in it, who are in the game" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77).

With reference to the subject of this paper, Al Biqā'ī's translations of French writings about Saudi Arabia manifest this Bourdiesian understanding of capital in his accompanying paratexts and practices on the field.

#### IV. MUHAMMAD KHAIR AL BIQĀ'Ī TRANSLATING FRENCH BOOKS ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA: SETTING THE SCENE

Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī is a Syrian academic and translator. He was born in the city of Homs in 1956. He got his Bachelor's degree in Arabic Language and Literature from Damascus University in 1979-1980, and his MA (in 1986) and PhD (in 1994) in Linguistics from the University of Lyon in France. He moved to Saudi Arabia in 1996 and has worked as a Professor of Linguistics and Literary Criticism at King Saud University for over 20 years (Alweeam, 2021). He translated a huge volume of French works about literary criticism and Arabian history into Arabic. He is a very active agent in the field of translation, particularly the sub-field of translating Orientalists' books about Saudi Arabia (Alharthi, 2021).

For his individual efforts in translation, Al Biqā'ī was granted the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Award for Translation in 2019 (KAAIAT, n.d.). This award enjoys a special status in the field for the substantial amount of material and symbolic resources granted to its winners. Namely, winners gain significant economic capital, with the prize being considered the world's largest for translation (Bloch, 2012). The symbolic capital attached to the award can be also seen as valuable. Besides the large sum of money, the winners receive a commemorative medal that can symbolise the legitimisation and consecration of their cultural production in the field by the members of the award's board of trustees. Awards can, in general, serve as effective means through which cultural producers may internalise collective social norms about what is consecrated and what is irreverent, and who are insiders and who are outsiders (Anand & Watson, 2004; Rossman et al., 2010).

The other form of symbolic capital attained by Al Biqā'ī through this specific award stems from its association with the Saudi field of power i.e., King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, the former King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bourdieu defines the field of power as the: "meta-field or macro-concept to describe the way in which individuals and institutions in dominant fields (such as government, the law and business) relate to one another and the whole social field. The field of power operates as a configuration of capital (economic, cultural, and symbolic) that shapes relations and practices within these fields" (Webb et al., 2002, p. xii). Since the majority of Al Biqā'ī's products in the field of translation are translations of French books about Arabia, recognition in the form of an award by the Saudi field of power bestows upon these products formal, national recognition and consecration. That is to say, the award shows how favourably his products were received by the Saudi field of power. This is evident in his page on the database of winners on the award's webpage, where his translations of books about Saudi Arabia are highlighted more prominently than his works in the field of literary criticism (KAAIAT, n.d.).

Although Al Biqā'ī is a professor in Linguistics and Literary Criticism, he has been assigned positions in several committees of Arabian history in Saudi Arabia. The most important committee was King Salman's Centre for Historical and Civilisation Studies of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> He was the only non-Saudi member of the academic committee at the Centre. Being a member of such a committee can be seen as an "institutionalized consecration" of him (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 114). This membership becomes all the more relevant considering that it is the main committee of Arabian history in Saudi Arabia sponsored by the Saudi field of power. This not only consecrates Al Biqā'ī and his products in academic terms, but also confers huge symbolic capital, or what is identified as "nationalist capital"<sup>2</sup> (Alharthi, 2021, p. 66), on him in the sense that he was directly appointed by the Saudi field of power to serve Arabian history.

The other way in which Al Biqā'ī accumulated nationalist capital, which also reveals the great trust the Saudi field of power has placed in him, is his commission by the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives to translate French books and historical documents about Saudi Arabia, held since 2003, as confirmed by the translator himself in a personal correspondence. The Foundation is the most dominant institutional agent in the given sub-field of translation (i.e., the field of translating Orientalists' books about Saudi Arabia), and it is the official representative of the Saudi field of power as it is chaired by King Salman bin Abdulaziz and its board members include other members of the Saudi

<sup>1</sup> As confirmed by Al Biqā'ī himself through a personal correspondence with him in 13-06-2024.

<sup>2</sup> It is a type of capital, which is conceptualised by Alkhamis (2012) and developed further by the researcher herself (Alharthi, 2021), can be attained by agents in the field of translating Orientalists' books about Saudi Arabia when their products are seen as serving the Kingdom.

government (Alharthi, 2021). Alkhamis (2012, p. 64) argues that the Foundation strives to attain a "nationalist capital" for the Kingdom and the Saud dynasty by selecting certain texts that correspond to official historical narratives circulating in the Kingdom about its history and monarchy. This is to say, the Foundation endeavours to accrue nationalist capital considering its service of the state (Alharthi, 2021). Given this supposed nationalist capital of the Foundation, the translators commissioned to translate for the Foundation are seen as "political agents" (Alkhamis, 2012, p. 64). Being chosen directly by the field of power can indicate that the translator is trusted by the Saudi government, particularly when we know that a translator's trajectory is taken into account by the Foundation before being commissioned (Alharthi, 2021). Thus, such a commission may bestow nationalist capital on the translators' positions and translations due to the social context where the translations are done. Cultural capital is "conditioned by both the capacities of the individual agents and the dictates of their social classes" (Hanna, 2016, p. 38), which demonstrates that "it yields profits of distinction for its owner" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245).

In November 2021, Al Biqā'ī was naturalised as a Saudi citizen by a royal decree; the only translator in the first wave of such naturalisations, which included a few eminent specialists from different fields who served the Kingdom during their residency in the country. Obtaining Saudi citizenship by naturalisation is quite difficult, particularly for those born outside the Kingdom to a non-Saudi father or mother (GOV.SA, n.d.), as was the case of Al Biqā'ī. Nevertheless, in November 2021 an unprecedented royal decree was issued granting Saudi citizenship to a number of distinguished people with rare expertise and specialisations (SPA, 2021). According to the Saudi Press Agency, this royal approval of granting citizenship is in response to the royal order "to open the door to naturalise legal, medical, scientific, cultural, sports, and technical specialists in a way that contributes to the promotion of development and benefits the country in various field" (SPA, 2021). This indicates the special status the then-Syrian translator enjoys in the Saudi field of translation, and cultural production in general, insofar as it has reached the Saudi field of power, and has led to him being granted citizenship exceptionally by the royal order.

In light of this, the paratexts of Al Biqā'ī's translations of French books about Saudi Arabia are examined in the following section to explore the mechanisms utilised by the translator to sell a certain image of himself in the field. The investigated peritexts include the translator's prefaces to his translations and the dedications.

## V. CAPITAL AT PLAY: PARATEXTS AS A SITE FOR PROMOTING THE SELF

Traditionally, the paratextual zone used to be seen as a main instrument in marketing for publishers to attract more readers (Genette, 1997). However, recent studies demonstrated that paratexts are also "potential sites of self-reflexivity" for translators (Ali, 2018, p. 91). This is to say, they are one of the few spaces where translators can "truly make themselves visible" (Khalifa, 2020, p. 6). As such, translators' interests in the field of translation often find expression in the paratexts accompanying their texts. This investment is apparently evident in the paratexts of Al Biqā'ī's translations of French books about Saudi Arabia.

The analysis of Al Biqā'ī's paratextual elements below is carried out by examining three mechanisms deployed by Al Biqā'ī to draw a deliberate portrayal of himself (i.e., being loyal to Saudi Arabia).

### A. *Claiming Exclusive Access to the Source Language: Emphasising a Distinction*

Since his first translation of French books about Saudi Arabia in 2001, Al Biqā'ī has attempted to accumulate cultural capital for himself by claiming that he is filling a significant gap in Saudi knowledge concerning what has been written about the Kingdom in French literature since most Saudis do not command the French language. He claims (2001, p. 7):

إن متتبع التاريخ للدولتين السعوديتين، وللمملكة يلاحظ أن الباحثين صرفوا جهودهم إلى معالجة الوثائق البريطانية [...] ولم تلق الوثائق الفرنسية عن الجزيرة العربية عموماً، وعن التاريخ السعودي بأطواره المختلفة خصوصاً، اهتمام الباحثين، وربما كان الحاجز اللغوي هو السبب.

The tracer of the history of the two Saudi States and the Kingdom would notice that researchers have spent their efforts on dealing with British documents. [...] While the French documents about Arabia, in general, and the Saudi history with its various phases, in particular, have not attracted the researchers' attention. This could be attributed to the language barrier.

He further argues that the volume of translated books about Saudi Arabia from French into Arabic is limited (Al Biqā'ī, 2001, 2007). He adds that his translations of French books will contribute to circulating these products among Arab researchers (Al Biqā'ī, 2001, 2007). The attempt to emphasise his distinction in the field is reiterated in his later discourse. In his collection of some French studies about Saudi Arabia in a form of a book published in 2020, Al Biqā'ī argues that these studies have never been tackled before and without his translating and collecting them in his book قد لا تصل إلى أيدي "القراء" [they may not reach the readers] (Al Biqā'ī, 2020, p. 9).

Through these statements, Al Biqā'ī wants to distance his translations from the majority of the Saudi translations, which are mostly from English. This indicates his endeavours to demonstrate his superior knowledge of the French language and familiarity with sources to which most Saudis do not have access. Claiming access to the source language has been considered an asset to the translator and his translation products, and a mark of distinction that sets one translation off from another (Hanna, 2016). Thus, Al Biqā'ī's claims can distinguish his position in the field and add immense value to his translation products. Specifically, such assertions portray him as an irreplaceable translator in the Saudi field of translation; they suggest to the field that no Saudi agent within it can take his place, which endows him with a distinct

position. Highlighting these claims in the prefaces would, in turn, have the potential to show that the translator is providing Saudi Arabia a service that no Saudi is able to do.

### B. Claiming to Have the Saudi Collective Habitus: Capitalising the Habitus for Self-Assertion

Al Biqā'ī's employment of the paratexts of his translations to promote himself is also made visible by his attempts to claim having the Saudi collective habitus. Drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus, it has been previously argued that the Sunni majority of Saudi Arabia shares a collective habitus with regard to their country (Alharthi, 2021). The researcher showed that this collective habitus involves the inculcation of the four main components of Saudi identity through the processes of socialisation and education within the Sunni individuals in the Kingdom: loyalty to the Saud dynasty as the political power, the perception of Sunni Islam as a unifying factor of Saudis, allegiance to Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's Movement, and a proud sense of Arabness (Alharthi, 2021). It is claimed here that Al Biqā'ī does not spare any effort to show that this Saudi collective habitus is also inculcated in his habitus and that he has a sense of belongingness to Saudi Arabia like any Saudi, albeit being a Syrian himself at that time. Such an effort can be called 'capitalising the Saudi collective habitus' since he intentionally signals that he possesses the collective habitus as if it is a resource to be invested in by agents in the field. This is apparent in two main components of Saudi identity the translator claims to have been inculcated into his own habitus.

Firstly, he dedicated his translation of a collection of French studies about Arabia published in 2020 to the King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman bin Abdulaziz. This dedication features at the beginning of the translation after the table of contents and before the translator's preface (Al Biqā'ī, 2020, p. 7):

الإهداء  
إلى خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود، حفظه الله ورعاه  
حارس تاريخ الصرح السعودي العتيق؛  
عاشق التراث العربي؛  
وملاذ المتقنين العرب والمسلمين ومحط آمالهم.

Dedication

To the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, may Allah protect him

The keeper of the long-standing history of Saudi Arabia;

The lover of Arab heritage;

The sanctuary and hope of Arab and Muslim intellectuals.

Genette (1997, p. 135) argues that "the dedication is always a matter of demonstration, ostentation, exhibition: it proclaims a relationship, whether intellectual or personal, actual or symbolic, and this proclamation is always at the service of the work, as a reason for elevating the work's standing or as a theme for commentary". Dedicating the translation product to the head of the Saudi field of power hence announces Al Biqā'ī's symbolic relation to the King as a guardian and subject. In other words, it is an announcement of Al Biqā'ī's loyalty to the Saudi King and a reflection of his political affiliation.

Through this dedication, Al Biqā'ī intends to publicise his loyalty to the Saudi dynasty as the political power represented here by the King. Genette (1997, p. 134) asserts that dedicating a work is a "public act that the reader is, as it were, called into witness". The dedication is hence addressed to both: the dedicatee and the reader. It is a "performative act" as it constitutes the author telling the reader that he is dedicating his book to that person (Genette, 1997, p. 134). That is to say, he wants the readers to know that he is dedicating his work to the Saudi King. Furthermore, it is noticeable that Al Biqā'ī is capitalising the "Saudi collective habitus" through intentionally using the exact doxic words used by Saudis in referring to their King; [the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques] and [may Allah protect him]. This would demonstrate that he blends in the Saudi society and that he uses their terms.

The second element of the Saudi collective habitus that Al Biqā'ī claims to have allegiance to and hence capitalises in his paratexts is Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's Movement. The researcher claimed elsewhere that, as part of their loyalty to the Movement, the Saudi field of power as well as the majority of Saudi Sunnis reject and avoid the term 'Wahhabism' for ideopolitical reasons (Alharthi, 2021; in press). Thus, Al Biqā'ī tends to refer to the Movement by using the doxic terms in Saudi Arabia that are "الدعوة الإصلاحية" [the Reform Dawah] (Al Biqā'ī, 2003, p. 11) and "دعوة الشيخ" [the Shaikh's Dawah] (Al Biqā'ī, 2005, p. 7, 2020, p. 9). Furthermore, as a header of one of his translator's prefaces, Al Biqā'ī adds one of the most famous historical quotes of King Abdulaziz where he rejects the term Wahhabism (Al Biqā'ī, 2005, p. 7). This is also evidence to suggest that Al Biqā'ī consciously employs the paratextual zone of his translations to demonstrate to the readers that he feels loyalty to Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb and his Movement. Accordingly, he wants to indicate that, like any Saudi, the Saudi habitus is inculcated within him.

### C. Claiming Strong Relations With Loyal Saudis: Granting the Self a Membership in the Club

Al Biqā'ī always invests in his own social, as well as symbolic capital by emphasising his connection with prominent Saudis in the given field who helped him in revising, correcting and commenting on his translations (Al Biqā'ī, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2016). In one of his prefaces, Al Biqā'ī (2003, p. 21) states:

ولا يفوتني في ختام هذه المقدمة أن أشكر لشخي أبي عبدالرحمن ابن عقيل الظاهري -حفظه الله- أنه راجع هذا الكتاب وشاه بتعليقه القيمة أبقاه الله ذخرًا للعلم وأهله. [...] والشكر موصول للدكتور عبدالله بن محمد المطوع الذي قرأ الكتاب ودون عليه بعض الملحوظات المفيدة، وللصديق الدكتور عبدالله العسكر الذي يناقشني دائماً في كثير من الأمور بخلق علمي أصيل، وللأخ الصديق عبدالله المنيف على ملحوظاته القيمة.

I cannot fail at the end of this preface to thank Shaikh Abu 'Abd Ar Rahmān Ibn 'Aqīl Adh Dhāhirī -May Allah protect him- to revise this book, and to adorn it with his comments -may Allah preserve him as an asset of knowledge-. [...] My thanks go also to Dr 'Abd Allah bin Muhammad Almutawa who read the book, and wrote some useful notes. I would like also to thank my friend Dr 'Abd Allah Al-Askar who always discusses ethically and scientifically with me various issues, and my brother and friend 'Abd Allah Al Munīf for his valuable notes [...]

He expresses his gratitude to four well known agents in the given field of translation and the field of Saudi history for their contribution in his translation. All of them are known to be loyal Saudi citizens. Adh Dhāhirī is a famous Saudi historian and jurist who worked as a consultant for Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz, the then crown prince and minister of interior (Alfaisal, 2022). Al Mutawa is a professor in the Department of Dawah at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University and known for his cultural products and research supporting Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's movement (Prof Almutawa, n.d.). Finally, Al-Askar and Al Munīf were members of the Shura Council [The Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia] whose members are appointed by the Saudi King from amongst scholars, those of knowledge, expertise, and specialists (The Shura Council, 1992).

In doing so, Al Biqā'ī does not only claim considerable cultural and symbolic value to his own work as being revised by Saudi historians and academics, but also follows the doxa of deconstruction (Alharthi, 2020, 2021). However, he, at the same time, gives value to himself by mentioning his relation to all these figures. Labelling them as "شيخي" [my sheikh] and "الصديق والأخ" [friend and brother] offers him a kind of social capital in the form of a membership to that elite group of Saudis who are known for their allegiance to the Saudi field of power. This, in turn, would let the public know the social network where he operates. In this respect, social capital is "characteristically symbolic" (Hanna, 2006, p. 61) as it functions as symbolic capital since it brings prestige to its holder.

## VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper set out to provide a new interpretation of paratexts of translation products on the grounds of Bourdieu's sociology. In the process, the paper questioned the long-held assumption that translation is value-free. The paper investigated Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī's paratexts of his translations of French books about Saudi Arabia (2001-2020) into Arabic as a social activity riddled with the translator's interests and claims of distinction. Bourdieu argues that all cultural activities do not occur in a disinterested world. Instead, it is produced in a social and political setting, by agents who have vested interests in producing and consuming texts.

The analysis of Al Biqā'ī's paratexts demonstrated that the translator utilises his paratexts to promote a certain image of himself to the public. The then-Syrian translator wanted to show that he was loyal to Saudi Arabia and found that paratexts could be employed as a tool to promote himself. In doing so, Al Biqā'ī revealed that the game, for him, deserves to be played and that the stakes available in the field deserve to be pursued. It is true to say that Al Biqā'ī provided a unique case where the mechanisms adopted by the translator have yielded tangible results in his acquisition of Saudi citizenship by a royal decree in 2021, as one of the experts who loyally served the Kingdom. Overall, the findings of this paper suggest that a Bourdieusian perspective can redefine and enrich our understanding of paratexts in translation as a dynamic site. They also explain that paratexts should not be perceived as a mere marketing tool for publishers to attract a larger audience, but as a site employed by translators for capital accumulation and self-image creation.

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