

Constructing Legitimacy Through Paratext in Omid Majd's Versified Qur'an Translation

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Abstract

This study examines how paratextual features contribute to the construction of legitimacy in Omid Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*. Drawing on Genette's (1997) theory of paratext and Bourdieu's (1993) conceptualization of legitimacy as socially constructed recognition, the study qualitatively analyzes the translation's peritextual apparatus. The analysis examines key peritextual features and how they frame the translation in relation to the Qur'anic source, translator, readership, and religious and literary traditions. The findings indicate three forms of paratextual positioning: religious and cultural association, authorial and literary positioning, and institutional and scholarly recognition. Facing-page presentation of the Arabic source and Persian versified translation maintains a visible relationship with the sacred source, while introductory materials and external endorsements provide complementary literary, religious, scholarly, and institutional recognition. The study argues that paratexts actively frame, position, and present the translation as a credible and culturally acceptable engagement with the Qur'anic text. The study demonstrates the value of a paratextual perspective for examining legitimacy in translating and presenting sacred texts.

Keywords: Legitimacy, paratext, Qur'an translation, religious translation, versified translation

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1. Introduction

Paratext has become a well-established area of inquiry within Translation Studies, particularly in research concerned with how texts are framed, interpreted, and received. Following Genette's (1997, p. 5) foundational definition, paratext refers to the ensemble of verbal and material elements that accompany a text and guide its interpretation. These elements are divided into *peritexts*, which are physically attached to the text (e.g., titles, covers, prefaces), and *epitexts*, which circulate externally (e.g., interviews, reviews, correspondence).

While Genette's framework clarifies what paratexts are and how they function, it does not by itself explain the broader social processes through which such framing acquires authority; to address this, the present study turns to the concept of legitimacy. Here, legitimacy is understood not as an inherent quality of a translation, but as a socially and culturally constructed position through which a translation is presented as authoritative, credible, and acceptable within a particular religious and literary context. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1993) conceptualization of cultural production, legitimacy is approached as a form of recognition that emerges through processes of authorization, symbolic positioning, and association with established cultural and institutional structures. In the context of Qur'anic translation, such processes are particularly significant because translation engages with a sacred source whose interpretation is closely associated with religious authority and established traditions. Accordingly, the present study examines how paratextual features contribute to the construction of legitimacy by associating Majd's translation with religious tradition, Persian literary culture, and forms of institutional and scholarly recognition. Legitimacy is therefore treated as a relational and paratextually mediated phenomenon: rather than residing solely in the translated text, it emerges through the ways in which the translation is framed, presented, endorsed, and positioned in relation to the Qur'anic source, its translator, and relevant religious, literary, and institutional authorities.

Extant scholarship has extensively examined paratextual practices in secular translation contexts, demonstrating their role in shaping ideological positioning, mediating cultural transfer, and influencing reader reception (e.g., Chen, 2024; Pellatt, 2013). However, the role of paratexts in the translation of sacred texts remains comparatively underexamined. This is particularly significant because religious translation is not merely a process of linguistic transfer but an interpretive practice situated within theological, institutional, and sociocultural frameworks. In such contexts, paratexts may contribute to the framing of translated sacred texts by shaping their presentation, interpretive orientation, and relationship to established forms of religious authority.

Few studies have addressed aspects of this issue, providing fragmented but valuable insights. In biblical and Christian traditions, Den Hollander et al. (2003) conceptualize paratextual and megatextual layers as interdependent systems of doctrinal transmission, while Kloppenburg (2006) demonstrates that paratexts in Bible translations into Beninese languages carry theological and political meanings that significantly influence reception. Yarchin (2019) further describes paratexts as hermeneutic scaffolding, emphasizing their role in directing interpretation beyond the semantic boundaries of the source text. Similarly, Wallraff and Andrist (2015) show that in Greek manuscript traditions, paratextual devices such as chapter divisions and reading aids are integral components of scriptural interpretation rather than external additions.

In Islamic and Qur'anic studies, a parallel but fragmented body of research has begun to foreground the interpretive significance of paratextual phenomena. Salmani and Parvini (2025) extend the concept of paratext by identifying intratextual rhetorical shifts in the Qur'an as implicit interpretive cues. Markazi et al. (2024) examine visual paratexts in printed Qur'ans, showing how typography, ornamentation, and layout construct spiritual meaning. Hamdiyati et al. (2021) highlight the interpretive function of manuscript features such as ink color and marginal annotations in preserving layered religious meanings. From a translational perspective, Haroun (2022) argues that the omission

of paratextual elements in Qur'anic translation can result in significant interpretive distortion, while Saad (2020) critiques the removal of traditional paratexts in Edip Yuksel's English translation as undermining doctrinal continuity and interpretive reliability.

Nevertheless, a critical gap remains. The paratextual dimension of versified Qur'anic translation has not been investigated. This omission is theoretically significant because Qur'anic translation operates at the intersection of language, theology, aesthetics, and authority, where legitimacy is continuously constructed and contested. In contexts such as post-revolutionary Iran, religious translation is situated within broader ideological, institutional, and cultural frameworks. In such a context, examining paratexts can provide insight into how translations are presented in relation to religious authority, cultural traditions, and established forms of recognition. Versified translation—understood as an attempt to reproduce or reconfigure the Qur'an's rhythmic, rhetorical, and aesthetic dimensions—has not been examined through a paratextual lens.

Existing studies on versified Qur'anic translation remain limited to textual and stylistic dimensions. Farhangi (2017) analyzes Majd's versified translation, focusing on rhyme, rhythm, and syntactic parallelism as aesthetic and emotive strategies. Poshtdar (2010) examines Qur'anic intertextuality in Rumi's *Mathnavi*, highlighting a long-standing tradition of poetic engagement with scripture in Persian literature. While these studies provide valuable insights into stylistic and intertextual dynamics, they do not address how paratextual mechanisms contribute to framing, legitimizing, and authorizing versified translations.

This absence points to a clear conceptual and empirical problem: the lack of a paratextually informed account of how legitimacy is constructed in versified Qur'anic translation. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the paratextual apparatus of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*, focusing on how peritextual elements construct and reinforce claims of legitimacy and authority. The study situates this inquiry within the socio-religious context of post-revolutionary Iran, where translation is not only a linguistic practice but also a site of ideological negotiation and religious authorization. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research question:

How do the paratexts in Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an* construct and reinforce its legitimacy?

By addressing this question, the study makes three main contributions. First, it extends paratextual theory by situating it within sacred-text translation, where issues of authority and legitimacy are particularly salient. Second, it advances Qur'anic Translation Studies by focusing on versified translation as an underexplored translational form. Third, it contributes to broader discussions on religious authority by demonstrating how legitimacy is discursively and materially constructed through paratextual design. In doing so, the study argues for a more theoretically integrated and analytically precise approach to paratextuality in sacred-text translation research, particularly in contexts where translation functions as a site of ideological and theological contestation.

2. Methodology

This study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach grounded primarily in Genette's (1997) conceptualization of paratext, with particular focus on peritext, that is, the verbal, visual, and material elements associated with a published work that frame its presentation and reception. Within this framework, the study examines the peritextual apparatus of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*, treating these features as integral components of the published volume rather than as peripheral additions to the translated text.

The corpus consists of the principal peritextual materials contained within the volume, including the front and back covers, title and authorial designations, introductory and prefatory materials,

endorsement documents, visual and decorative features, typography, and page layout. These materials were selected because they directly participate in the presentation of the translation and provide textual, visual, or institutional information through which the work is framed for its readers.

For the purposes of this study, legitimacy is operationalized as the presentation of the translation as authoritative, credible, culturally appropriate, or worthy of recognition through paratextual framing. More specifically, the analysis considers three interrelated dimensions of legitimacy: religious and cultural association, authorial and literary positioning, and institutional or scholarly recognition. Religious and cultural association refers to paratextual features that connect the translation with established Qur'anic, Islamic, or Persian literary traditions. Authorial and literary positioning concerns features through which Majd presents himself and his translation in relation to poetic practice, literary tradition, and the difficulty or significance of translating the Qur'an. Institutional and scholarly recognition refers to endorsements, certificates, commendatory notes, and other forms of recognition that associate the translation or its translator with established religious, scholarly, literary, or governmental authorities.

The analysis proceeded through close qualitative reading and visual examination of the identified peritextual materials. Verbal elements were examined for statements concerning the translation, its relationship to the Qur'anic source, the translator's motivations and qualifications, and the anticipated readership. Visual features—including calligraphy, typography, color, ornamentation, imagery, and page layout—were examined in terms of their framing and symbolic functions. Endorsement documents were analyzed with particular attention to the identity and institutional or scholarly position of the endorsers, the language of recognition, and the placement of the documents within the volume.

The analysis then considered how these individual features interact and whether they repeatedly associate the translation with recognized religious, literary, or institutional frameworks. Rather than treating any single paratextual feature as sufficient evidence of legitimacy, the study examines the cumulative effect of these features across the volume. Recurring patterns were identified through comparison of the different peritextual components and were subsequently interpreted in relation to the socio-religious and literary context in which Majd's translation was produced and presented.

3. Results

The results are presented according to the main categories of peritextual features identified in Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*. The analysis is organized around the three dimensions of legitimacy defined in the methodology—religious and cultural association, authorial and literary positioning, and institutional and scholarly recognition—while individual paratextual features are discussed according to their primary functions. Because several paratexts perform more than one function, the categories are not treated as mutually exclusive. Each subsection therefore examines how the relevant features contribute to the cumulative construction of legitimacy and authority within the volume.

3.1. Front and Back Covers and Calligraphy

The covers of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an* combine calligraphy, color, and ornamental design to frame the translation within recognizable Persian and Islamic visual traditions. As shown in Figure 1, the front cover is dominated by the Persian title «قرآن مجید» (*Qur'ān Majīd*), presented in an elaborate calligraphic style, together with green and gold tones and geometric and arabesque motifs. These visual features associate the volume with established conventions of

Qur'anic and Islamic book design and establish a religious frame before the reader encounters the translated text. The use of calligraphy is particularly significant because it visually connects the contemporary printed translation with longstanding traditions of Qur'anic and Persian manuscript culture. In this sense, the cover does not merely identify the book but contributes to positioning the translation as a work situated within an established religious and literary tradition.

The back cover retains the same principal visual elements, including the green and gold color scheme, calligraphy, and ornamental patterns (see Figure 2). Its central circular design contains the name of the publisher, «انتشارات امید مجد» (*Intishārāt-e Omīd Majd*), in prominent golden calligraphy, surrounded by two hemistiches from the opening of Majd's *Dībācheh* (Prologue): «به نام کسی کافرید از عدم» (*Be-nām-e kasi kāfarīd az 'adam*) [In the name of the One who created (all) from nothingness] and «به انسان عطا کرد فکر و قلم» (*Be-ensān 'atā kard fekr o qalam*) [(The One who) granted human beings thought and the pen]. The placement of these lines alongside the publisher's name connects the material identity of the book with the author's own presentation of the translation project. Rather than functioning solely as decorative material, the verses introduce a religiously framed representation of the translator's undertaking, foregrounding God as the source of creation and human intellectual and expressive capacities. Their placement on the back cover therefore extends the religious framing established by the front cover into the authorial presentation of the work.

The use of the opening verses of the *Dībācheh* is also significant because the prologue itself presents the translation as a deliberate and demanding engagement with the Qur'anic text. Majd describes the difficulties involved in rendering Qur'anic verses into Persian poetry and refers to the time and effort devoted to completing the translation. By selecting its opening lines for the back cover, the book foregrounds this authorial account before the reader enters the main text. The resulting framing combines religious invocation with an explicit presentation of the translator and his undertaking.

Taken together, the front and back covers establish a coherent paratextual frame for the translation. Calligraphy and Islamic and Persian ornamental conventions associate the volume with established traditions of religious textual presentation, while the invocation of God and the inclusion of the author's *Dībācheh* connect the translation to a devotional and authorial framework. These elements therefore contribute to the construction of legitimacy by presenting Majd's translation not simply as a new literary rendering of the Qur'an, but as a work visually and textually aligned with established religious and cultural traditions.

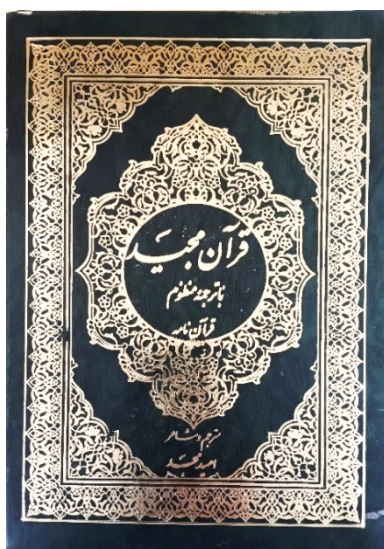


Figure 1. Front Cover of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*

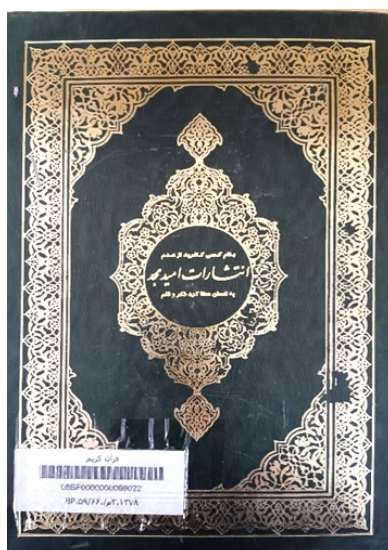


Figure 2. Back Cover of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*

3.2. Title and Authorial Designation

The title on the front cover presents the work as «قرآن مجید» (*Qur'ān Majīd*), followed by (*bā tarjomeh-ye manzūm*) [with versified translation]. This wording immediately identifies the work as a Qur'anic translation while specifying the distinctive form of its rendering. The designation «با ترجمه منظوم» therefore foregrounds the translator's decision to reproduce the Qur'anic verses in poetic form and distinguishes this volume from translations presented primarily in prose.

The title is accompanied by the term «قرآن نامه» (*Qur'ān-nāme*), which further frames the work as a literary and interpretive engagement with the Qur'an. Rather than presenting the volume solely as a translation, this designation associates it with a broader textual and literary undertaking. The title, the reference to versified translation, and the term «قرآن نامه» are visually grouped within a green circle outlined and inscribed in gold on the front cover, giving these textual elements particular visual prominence.

Below the ornamental design, Majd is identified as «مترجم و شاعر» (*motarjem o shā'er*) [translator and poet]. This designation explicitly combines two roles in the presentation of the work: that of translator of the Qur'an and that of poet. By foregrounding both identities on the cover, the paratext positions the translation simultaneously within a religious and literary framework. The title and accompanying designations therefore contribute to the construction of legitimacy by presenting Majd's work as both a translation of a sacred text and a poetic rendering produced by an identified literary author.

3.3. Endorsement Certificates

Four endorsement certificates were identified in Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*: one appears at the beginning of the volume and three at the end. These endorsements constitute a significant component of the translation's peritextual apparatus because they associate the work and its translator with forms of institutional and scholarly recognition. Their potential contribution to legitimacy is therefore examined in relation to the position of the endorsers, the language of recognition, and the placement of the documents within the volume. The analysis therefore examines the content and positioning of these endorsements to determine how they contribute to the construction of authority around Majd's translation.

3.3.1. Front Endorsements

One endorsement certificate appears at the beginning of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*. Signed by Seyyed Mohammad Musavi, then Deputy of Cultural Affairs, the certificate is dated January 24, 2000 (4 Bahman 1378 SH) and begins with a quotation from Sūrat al-Hijr, verse 9:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ.

[Indeed, we have sent down the Reminder, and We will surely preserve it.]; Qur'an 15:9, Sahih International

The certificate then provides detailed information about the published volume, identifying Uthman Taha as the calligrapher and Majd as the translator, and specifying the edition, format, number of lines per page, place of publication, printing house, and print run. As shown in Figure 3, these details are presented in a formal documentary format and situate the translation within a clearly identified process of textual production and publication.

The certificate is significant to the construction of legitimacy because it brings institutional and documentary forms of authorization into the presentation of the translation. The identification of both the Qur'anic calligrapher and the Persian translator distinguishes the two textual roles involved in the volume, while the production details establish the material and bibliographic identity of the edition. The Qur'anic quotation at the beginning further places this documentary information within an explicitly religious frame.

The position of the certificate at the beginning of the volume is also significant. As one of the first paratextual documents encountered by the reader, it introduces institutional recognition and detailed publication information before the main translated text. Its combination of Qur'anic citation, official endorsement, and bibliographic specifications therefore frames Majd's translation within a religious and institutional context, contributing to its presentation as an authorized and established translation rather than solely as an individual literary undertaking.



Figure 3. Front Endorsement by Seyyed Mohammad Musavi

3.3.2. Back Endorsements

Three endorsement documents appear in the concluding paratexts of Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*. Unlike the endorsement presented at the beginning of the volume, these documents appear after the main text and include an official *lawḥ-e taqdīr* [Certificate of Commendation] issued by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and two scholarly *taqrīz* [commendatory notes]. Their position and content provide different forms of institutional and scholarly recognition that contribute to the construction of the translation's legitimacy.

The first back endorsement is a *lawḥ-e taqdīr* [Certificate of Commendation] issued by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and signed by Seyyed Ata'ollah Mohajerani, then Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Figure 4). The certificate begins with a Qur'anic verse from Sūrat al-Mujādilah, verse 11:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ.

[God will raise those who believe among you, and those who have been granted knowledge, by degrees; and God is fully aware of what you do]; Qur'an 58:11

The certificate identifies Majd as the recipient and explains that recognition is being granted in connection with his contribution to Islamic and Iranian culture and his scholarly and intellectual activities. It also refers to Research Day and expresses the Ministry's appreciation for his efforts in the fields of knowledge and research. The combination of the Qur'anic citation, official institutional language, and the ministerial signature places the recognition within both religious and governmental frameworks.

The visual organization of the certificate further reinforces its official character. The title *lawḥ-e taqdīr* appears prominently, while Majd's name, «برادر ارجمند، جناب آقای امید مجد» (*barādar-e arjmand, jenāb-e āqā-ye Omīd Majd*, [the esteemed Mr. Omid Majd]), is distinguished typographically within the document. The certificate therefore contributes to the translation's legitimacy by presenting Majd's work as receiving formal recognition from a state cultural institution and by associating his literary and intellectual activity with the broader cultural and religious responsibilities articulated in the document.



Figure 4. Back Endorsement 1 by Seyyed Ata'ollah Mohajerani

The second back endorsement is a «تقریظ» *taqrīz* [commendatory note] by Mohammad Mehdi Fouladvand, a prominent Qur'an translator and scholar, dated April 27, 1997 (1 Ordibehesht 1376 SH) (Figures 5 and 6). Fouladvand's note is significant because, rather than offering unqualified praise, it acknowledges both the ambition of Majd's project and the difficulties inherent in rendering the Qur'an in Persian verse. He describes the complete versified rendering of the Qur'an as an unusual and ambitious undertaking in Persian literary history and draws attention to the constraints imposed by poetic meter, particularly *baḥr-e motaqāreb*, the meter associated with Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmeḥ*.

Fouladvand illustrates these limitations through the following verse:

نگنجد بحر اندر کاسه خرد
نباشد هیچ باده خالی از درد

[The ocean cannot be contained in a cup of reason, nor is any wine free from dregs.]

He further notes that the requirements of rhyme and meter may require additions or adjustments in the poetic rendering, thereby creating unavoidable distance from the precise wording and nuances of the source text. His recognition of these limitations is important to the function of the endorsement: the legitimacy it provides does not depend on presenting the translation as flawless, but on acknowledging the difficulty of the undertaking while recognizing its literary value.

Fouladvand subsequently praises Majd for undertaking the project at a young age and for following the literary path associated with Ferdowsi. He expresses hope for the publication and reception of the work. His endorsement therefore contributes a form of scholarly legitimacy grounded in critical evaluation, positioning the translation as an ambitious literary engagement with the Qur'an while explicitly recognizing the constraints involved in such an undertaking.



Figure 5. Back Endorsement 2 by Mohammad Mehdi Fouladvand (p. 1)



Figure 6. Back Endorsement 2 by Mohammad Mehdi Fouladvand (p. 2)

The third back endorsement is by Baha'odin Khoramshahi, a scholar of Persian literature and Qur'anic studies, dated May 30, 1997 (9 Khordad 1376 SH) in Tehran (Figure 7). Khoramshahi places Majd's translation within the broader development of Persian Qur'anic translation in post-revolutionary Iran and identifies it as a particularly eloquent versified rendering. He specifically praises its simplicity,

fluency, and stylistic qualities, while also noting that the work had undergone critical scrutiny by Mohammad Mehdi Fouladvand.

This reference to Fouladvand is particularly relevant to the construction of legitimacy because it connects Khoramshahi's literary evaluation with the scholarly assessment already provided by another Qur'anic specialist. The endorsement thus establishes a chain of recognition in which the translation receives approval from figures associated with both Qur'anic scholarship and Persian literary culture. Khoramshahi concludes with a reference to Hafez:

مقبول طبع مردم صاحب نظر شود

[May it become agreeable to the taste of discerning people.]

The reference to Hafez further places the translation within a recognizable Persian literary tradition and links its anticipated reception to the judgment of literary readers.



Figure 7. Back Endorsement 3 by Baha'odin Khoramshahi

Taken together, the three back endorsements provide complementary forms of legitimacy. The Certificate of Commendation introduces institutional recognition, Fouladvand's *taqrīz* provides a critical and scholarly evaluation of the difficulties and literary ambition of the project, and Khoramshahi's endorsement connects the translation to Persian literary culture and Qur'anic scholarship. Their placement at the end of the volume allows these forms of recognition to function as a concluding frame around Majd's translation, reinforcing its presentation as a work that occupies both religious and literary domains.

3.4. Layout

The internal arrangement of a text constitutes an important part of its paratextual presentation, shaping how readers navigate and perceive the relationship between its different textual components (Genette, 1997). In Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*, the layout places the original Arabic Qur'anic text and its Persian versified translation on facing pages, creating a visually structured relationship between the source text and its translation (Figures 8 and 9).

The Arabic text is presented with numbered verses, carefully arranged calligraphy, and clearly defined margins and spacing. The verse numbering provides a direct structural correspondence with the

Qur'anic text and facilitates the identification and comparison of individual verses. The calligraphic presentation and the careful use of diacritical marks further distinguish the Arabic text visually and preserve the conventional visual form associated with the Qur'an.

The Persian versified translation appears on the facing page, corresponding to the Arabic text in a parallel arrangement. This positioning enables readers to move between the source and the translation and to compare the two texts visually and sequentially. At the same time, the poetic form of the Persian translation is visually distinguishable from the Arabic original through its lineation and verse structure. The layout therefore makes both the relationship between the two texts and the distinct form of the translation immediately visible.

The facing-page arrangement also establishes a visual hierarchy between the Arabic source and the Persian translation. While the Arabic text retains the conventional visual characteristics associated with the Qur'anic source, the Persian text is presented as a separate but directly corresponding textual layer. This distinction allows the translation to remain visibly connected to the source while simultaneously marking it as a mediated and poetically structured rendering.

Thus, the layout contributes to the construction of legitimacy by maintaining a clear visual relationship between the Qur'anic source and Majd's translation. Rather than presenting the Persian text independently, the facing-page design continuously situates it alongside the Arabic original, making its relationship to the source text visible and facilitating direct comparison. In this way, the visual organization of the pages reinforces the translation's status as a mediated yet formally structured engagement with the sacred source.



Figure 8. Opening Verses of the Qur'an



Figure 9. Translation of the Opening Verses.

3.5. Illustrations and Decorations

Visual ornamentation constitutes an important part of the paratextual presentation of Qur'anic texts, as it can associate the work with established religious and artistic traditions. In Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*, the opening page provides a particularly clear example of this function. As shown in Figure 10, the page presents the Persian calligraphic phrase قرآن الکریم (*Qur'ān-e Karīm*) [the Noble Qur'an] at the center of a highly decorated frame, creating a visual threshold before the reader encounters the translated text.

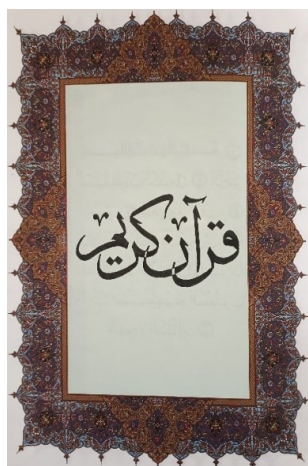


Figure 10. Calligraphic Design on the Opening Page

The central inscription is rendered prominently in black calligraphy against a light background, making it the principal visual focus of the page. It is surrounded by an elaborate rectangular border containing symmetrical floral, vegetal, and geometric motifs in several colors, including gold, green, blue, and burgundy. The contrast between the relatively open central area and the densely ornamented border draws attention to the Qur'anic designation while visually separating it from the surrounding decorative field.

The decorative framework also connects the volume to established conventions of Islamic and Persian book design. The use of repeated vegetal and geometric patterns, together with calligraphic presentation and symmetrical composition, places the opening page within a recognizable visual tradition associated with the presentation of Qur'anic texts. These elements therefore contribute to framing the work as a religious artifact rather than as an ordinary literary publication.

The absence of the Persian translation on this opening page is also significant in terms of its paratextual function. Before encountering Majd's poetic rendering, the reader is first presented with the Qur'an identified and visually framed through calligraphy and traditional ornamentation. The page consequently establishes a religious and aesthetic context for the translation that follows.

Taken together, the calligraphic inscription and decorative design contribute to the construction of legitimacy by visually associating Majd's translation with established conventions of Qur'anic presentation. The opening page thus functions as a threshold between the sacred source and the translated text, providing a visual frame through which the subsequent poetic rendering is encountered.

3.6. Introductions

For Genette (1997), introductory texts function as paratextual bridges that prepare readers for the work that follows. In Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*, two introductions perform this function in different ways: a poetic prologue (*dibācheh*) at the beginning of the volume and an autobiographical introduction at the end. While the first establishes the literary and spiritual aims of the translation, the second provides information about Majd's background, motivations, and the circumstances surrounding the production of the work.

The first introduction is a 37-line poetic prologue in which Majd reflects on the difficulty of rendering the Qur'an in Persian verse. He emphasizes the complexity and depth of the Qur'anic text and presents the translation as an undertaking requiring both poetic ability and reverence for the source. He also describes his determination to complete the project within a limited period and expresses his hope

that the work will constitute a meaningful contribution to existing Qur'anic translations (Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 11. First Introduction by Majd (p. 1)



Figure 12. First Introduction by Majd (p. 2)

The prologue therefore establishes the central terms through which Majd's translation is presented to the reader: its poetic form, the difficulty of the task, and the translator's reverence for the Qur'anic source. Its opening line also appears on the back cover, creating a connection between the book's external and internal paratexts and reinforcing the spiritual and literary orientation established by the prologue.

The second introduction appears at the end of the volume and provides a more detailed autobiographical account of Majd's translation and the development of his translation (Figure 13). Dated August 25, 1998 (3 Shahrivar 1377 SH), the introduction was written in response to readers who, following the first and second editions, had requested further information about the translator's life and the process through which the work had been produced.

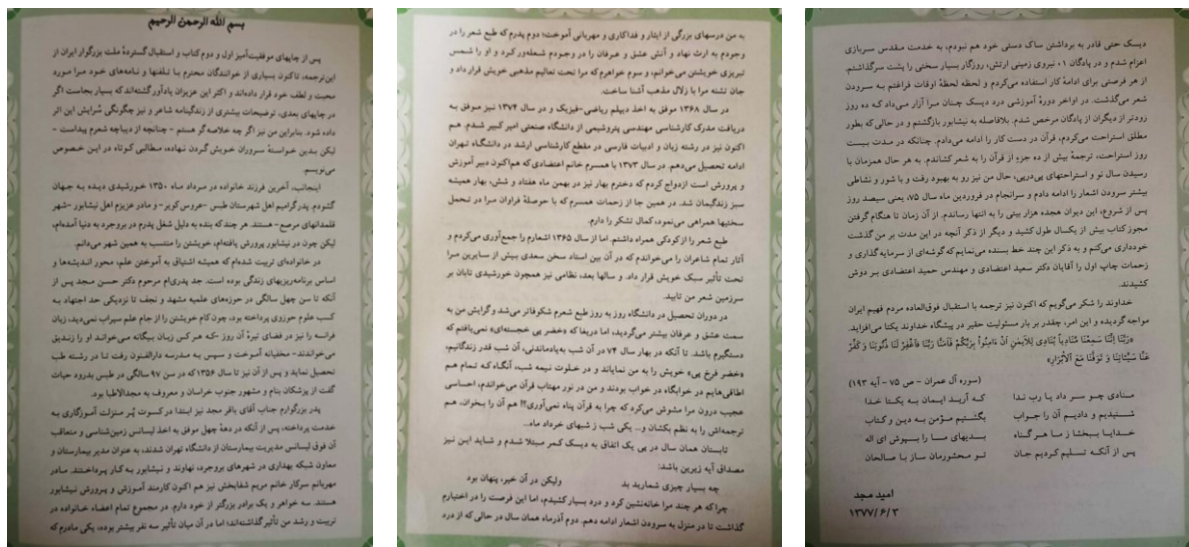


Figure 13. Second Introduction by Majd

Majd begins by discussing his family and educational background and describes the influence of Persian classical poets, particularly Sa'di and Nezami, on his poetic development. He then recounts a significant

experience in 1995 (1374 SH), when, while reading the Qur'an in his university dormitory, he describes experiencing an inner call to read the Qur'an and render its meaning into verse. He associates this experience with his encounter with Khezr and presents it as the starting point of his project.

Majd subsequently describes the personal difficulties he experienced during the composition of the translation, including a serious back injury and the demands of mandatory military service. He explains that the period of physical confinement following his injury provided him with an opportunity to devote more time to the project. He ultimately states that he completed the *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an* in 300 days, producing approximately 18,000 poetic lines.

Toward the end of the introduction, Majd refers to a Qur'anic passage from Sūrat Āl 'Imrān, verse 193:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا.

[Our Lord, indeed we have heard a caller calling to faith, (saying, "Believe in your Lord," and we have believed]; Qur'an 3:193)

He then provides a poetic rendering of the passage:

منادی چو سر داد یا رب ندا
که آرید ایمان به یکتا خدا
شنیدیم و دادیم آن را جواب
بگشتیم مؤمن به دین و کتاب
خدایا ببخشا ز ما هر گناه
بدی‌های ما را بیوش ای اله
پس از آنکه تسلیم کردیم جان
تو محشورمان ساز با صالحان

When a caller proclaimed, "O Lord, heed the call,
Believe in the One God, the God of all."
We heard and answered that call with assent,
And became believers in faith and Scripture.
O Lord, forgive us each and every sin,
And conceal our wrongs, O Divine One.
After we have surrendered our souls to You,
Gather us among the righteous.

This autobiographical account adds a personal dimension to the presentation of the translation. By explaining the circumstances that led to the project and describing the effort required to complete it, Majd presents the translation as the outcome of a sustained personal, literary, and religious commitment. The introduction therefore contributes to the construction of legitimacy not through institutional endorsement, as in the certificates discussed above, but through the translator's self-presentation and account of his motivations and creative process.

Taken together, the two introductions establish complementary forms of paratextual framing. The poetic prologue emphasizes the literary and spiritual dimensions of the project, while the autobiographical introduction provides a personal account of its origins and production. Both contribute to the presentation of Majd's translation as a deliberate and committed engagement with the Qur'anic text.

4. Conclusion

This study examined how paratextual features contribute to the construction of legitimacy in Majd's (2000) *Persian Versified Translation of the Holy Qur'an*. Drawing on Genette's (1997) theory of paratext and a qualitative analysis of the volume's peritextual apparatus, the study examined covers, titles, introductions, endorsement documents, layout, calligraphy, and decorative features as interconnected components of the translation's presentation.

The findings indicate that legitimacy is constructed cumulatively through several complementary forms of paratextual framing. Religious and cultural legitimacy is supported through calligraphy, Qur'anic visual conventions, decorative motifs, and the continuous visual association between the Arabic Qur'anic text and the Persian translation. Authorial and literary legitimacy is constructed through the designation of Majd as both translator and poet, as well as through the poetic prologue and autobiographical introduction, which present the translation as the outcome of sustained literary, personal, and religious engagement. Institutional and scholarly legitimacy is reinforced through the endorsement certificates and commendatory notes, which associate Majd and his translation with governmental, scholarly, and literary forms of recognition.

These findings suggest that the legitimacy of a sacred-text translation cannot be examined solely through the linguistic or stylistic characteristics of the translated text. In Majd's volume, the paratextual apparatus repeatedly positions the translation in relation to established religious traditions, Persian literary culture, and recognized forms of institutional and scholarly authority. The different paratextual elements therefore operate cumulatively: visual framing establishes a religious context, authorial materials provide a personal and literary rationale for the project, and endorsements supply external forms of recognition.

The study contributes to Translation Studies by extending paratextual analysis to an underexplored form of Qur'anic translation, namely versified translation. It also demonstrates how the concept of legitimacy can provide a useful analytical lens for examining the relationship between paratext, authority, and the presentation of sacred-text translations. At the same time, the study is limited to the peritextual materials contained within a single edition of Majd's translation and therefore does not directly measure reader reception or the broader circulation of the work. Future research could address these dimensions by examining epitextual materials, reception data, different editions, and comparative cases of Qur'anic translation.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that paratexts do more than accompany Majd's translation. They provide a framework through which the translation is presented as simultaneously religious, literary, and culturally situated, thereby contributing to the construction of its legitimacy within the context of Persian Qur'anic translation.

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