

How Paratexts Influence the Reader's Experience of English Translations of La Fontaine's *Fables*

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ABSTRACT

La Fontaine's *Fables* were published in three volumes, in 1668, 1678–79 and 1694. They belong to the genre of the moral fable and use animals as allegories to deliver a moral of didactic and philosophical value. In a corpus of 25 translations of La Fontaine's *Fables* into English, published in Great Britain and the United States, between 1754 and 2014, I examined the micro- and macro-functions of paratextual elements. I focus here on four translations from this corpus. According to Genette (1997), paratexts are elements that frame the content and facilitate the reader's access to it (e.g.: book covers, prefaces). This definition is adapted to the case of translation to better understand how paratexts influence the reader's experience of these translations. By analyzing the paratexts from the perspective of translator's visibility, this paper shows how translator visibility influenced artistic aspects or the informative/academic value of the work, thus influencing the experience of reading the *Fables* in English.

KEYWORDS: La Fontaine's *Fables*, paratextual micro- and macro-functions, translator status, reader experience, translation history