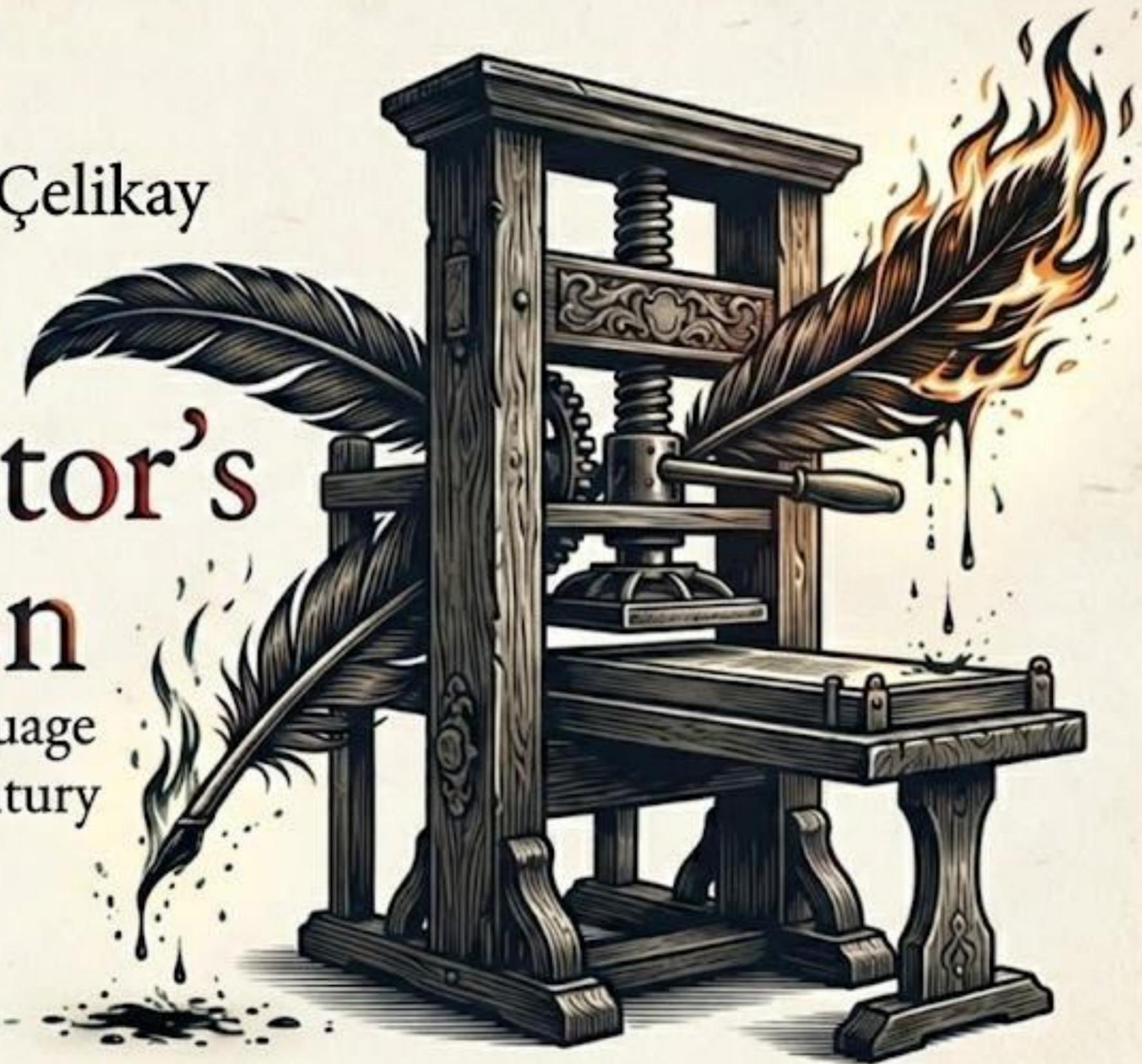


Çağ University

Asst. Prof. Dr. M. Kartal Çelikay

The Translator's Burden

Life, Risks, and Language
in the 16th Century



A collision of forces rewrites the rules of information

Information scales rapidly. Texts bypass institutional bottlenecks.



Gutenberg's invention democratized knowledge, making texts widely accessible and bypassing traditional gatekeepers, fueling an information explosion.

A return to classical texts and the elevation of human intellect.



A renewed focus on classical antiquity and human potential shifted the intellectual landscape, emphasizing reason, ethics, and individual achievement.

Direct challenges to religious authority and orthodoxy.



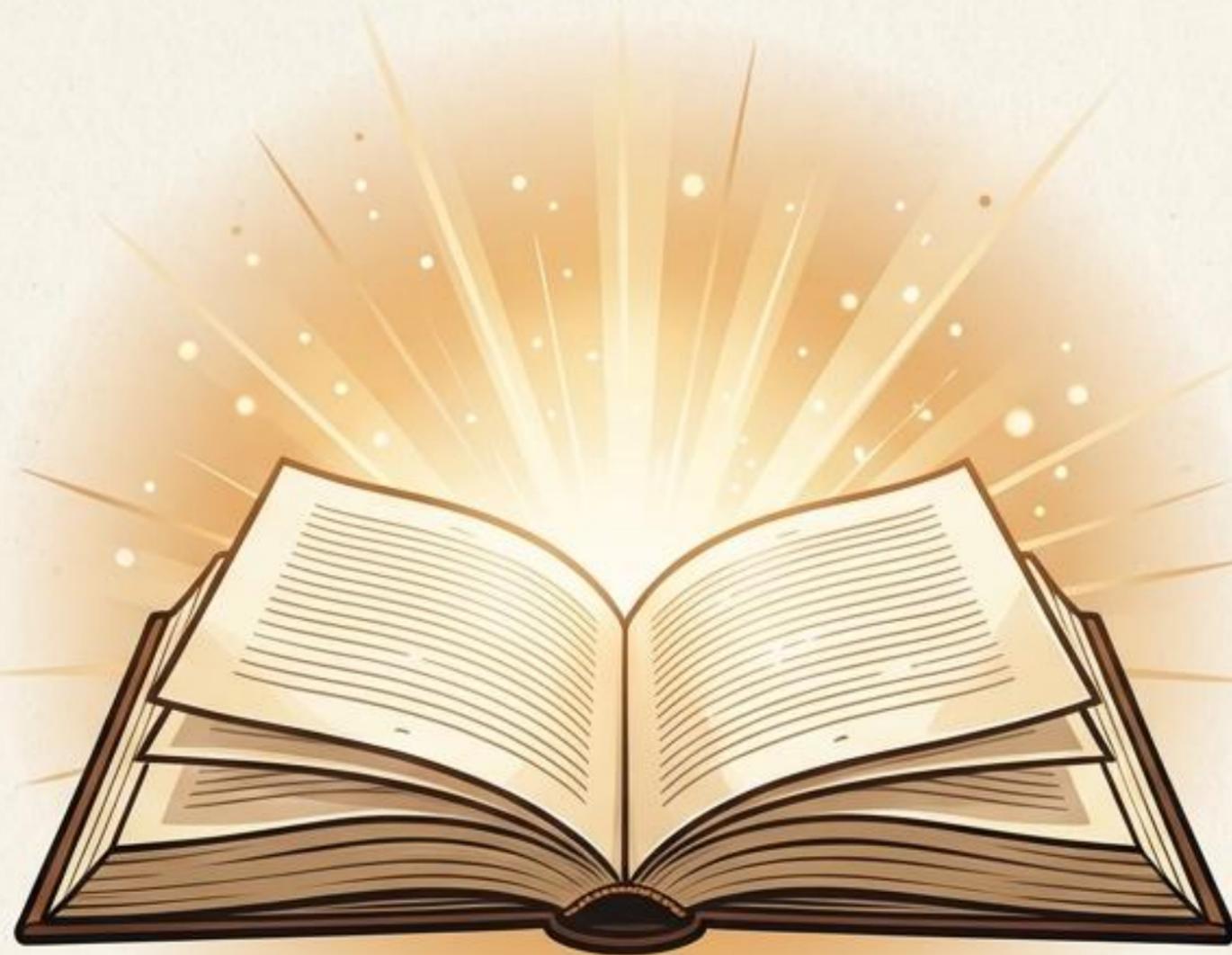
Martin Luther's 95 Theses and subsequent movements fractured the religious monolith, initiating profound shifts in power, faith, and societal structure.

Translators become targets in a war for control



The Threat

Unauthorized translations into local languages directly threaten institutional authority.



The Penalty

Altering a single word in a sacred or philosophical text leads to accusations of heresy, treason, and **execution**.

The Role

Translators operate as key players in high-stakes religious and political conflicts.

Etienne Dolet codifies the first systematic rules of translation



Identity

French humanist, scholar, and printer (1509–1546).

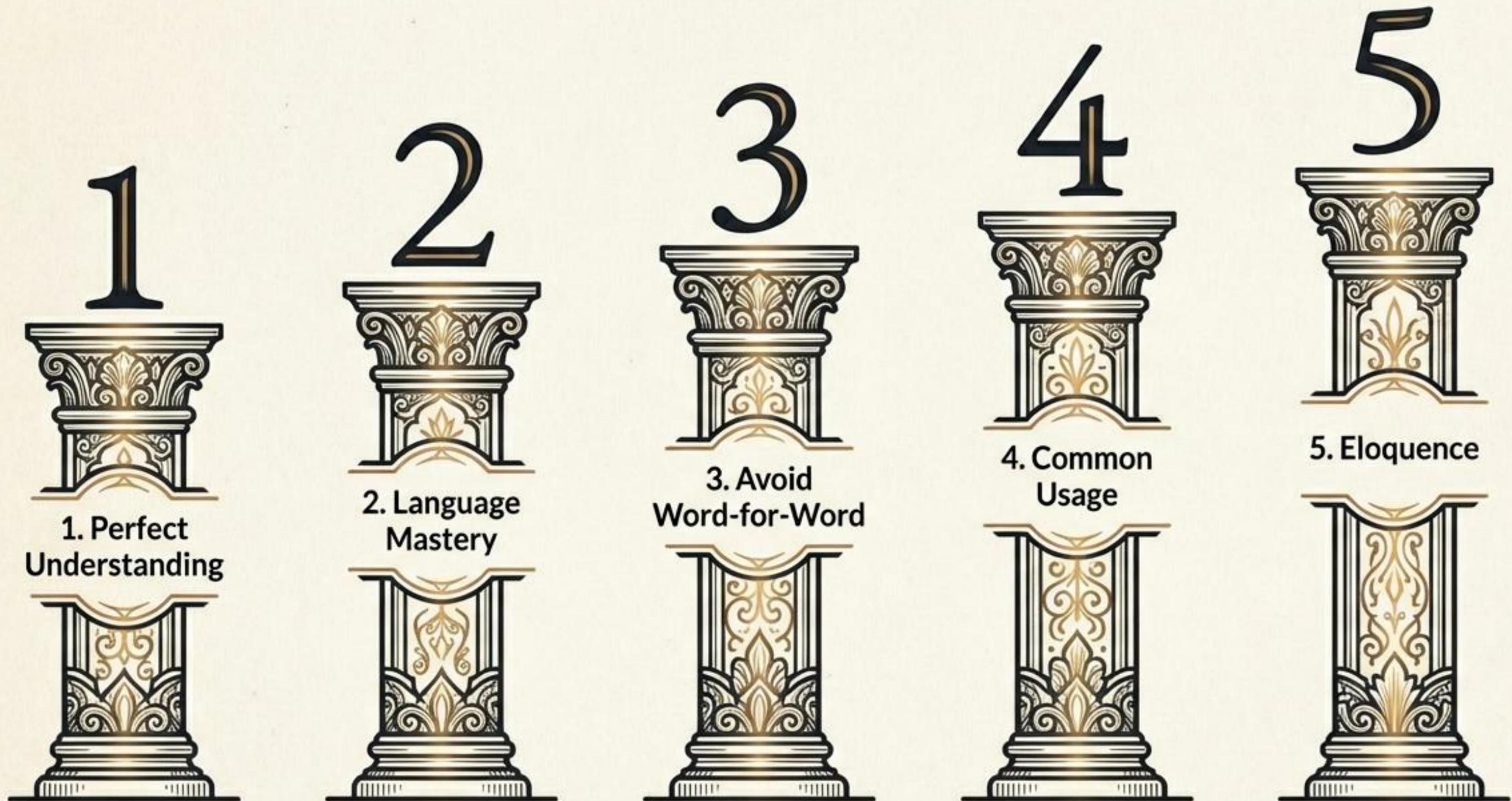
The Milestone (1540)

Publication of *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre* (The Way to Translate Well from One Language into Another).

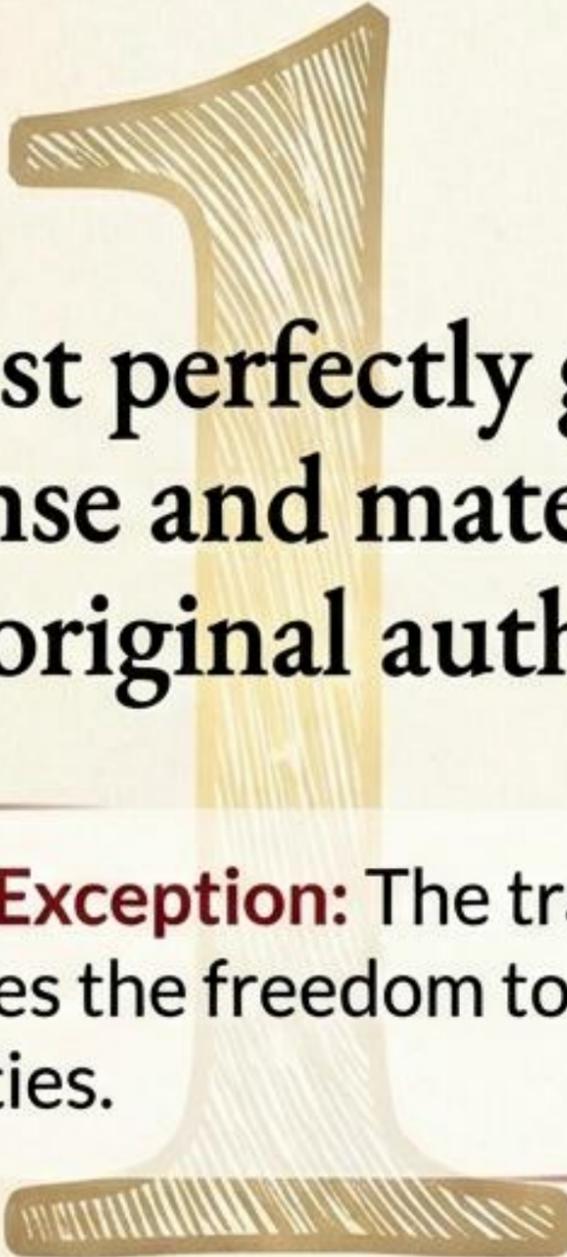
Impact

A groundbreaking, short treatise establishing the first systematic rules for translators disseminating classical texts.

Dolet's 5 Principles of Translation

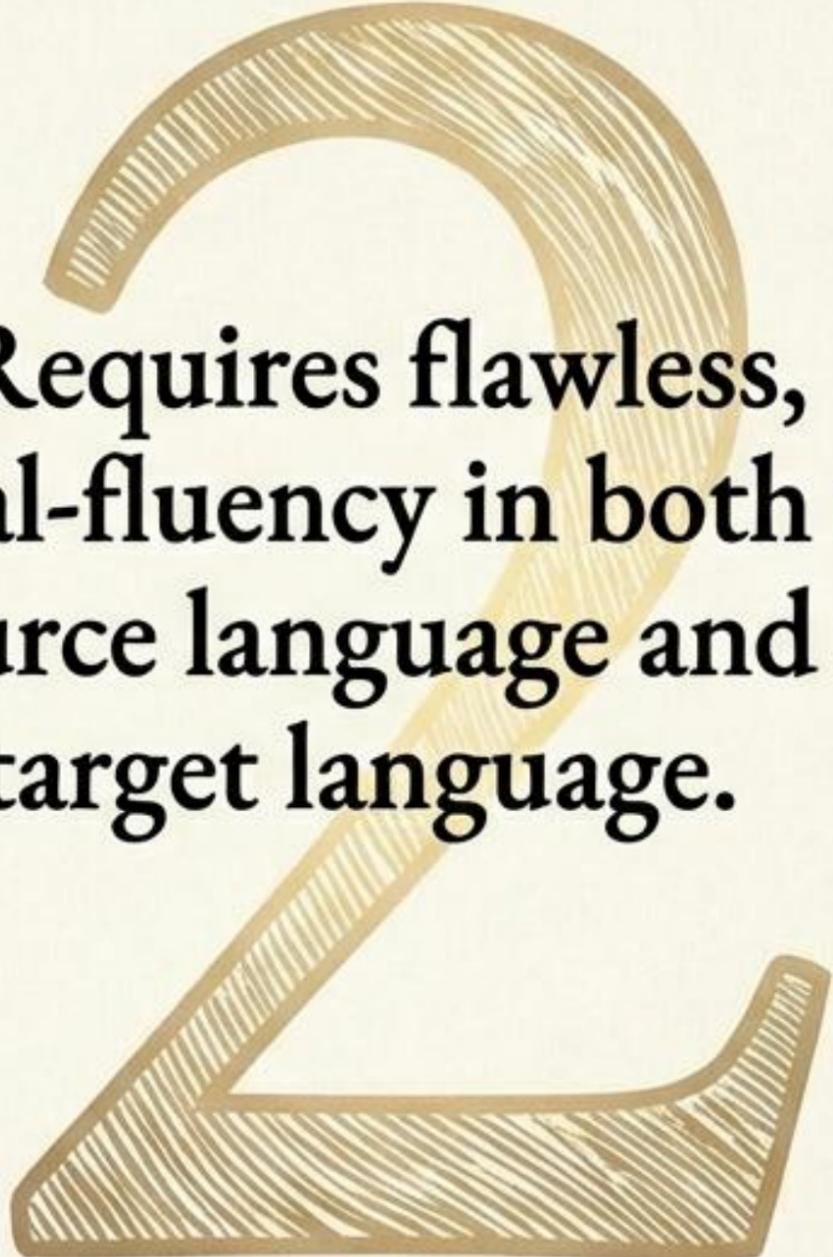


The translator must master both the material and the medium



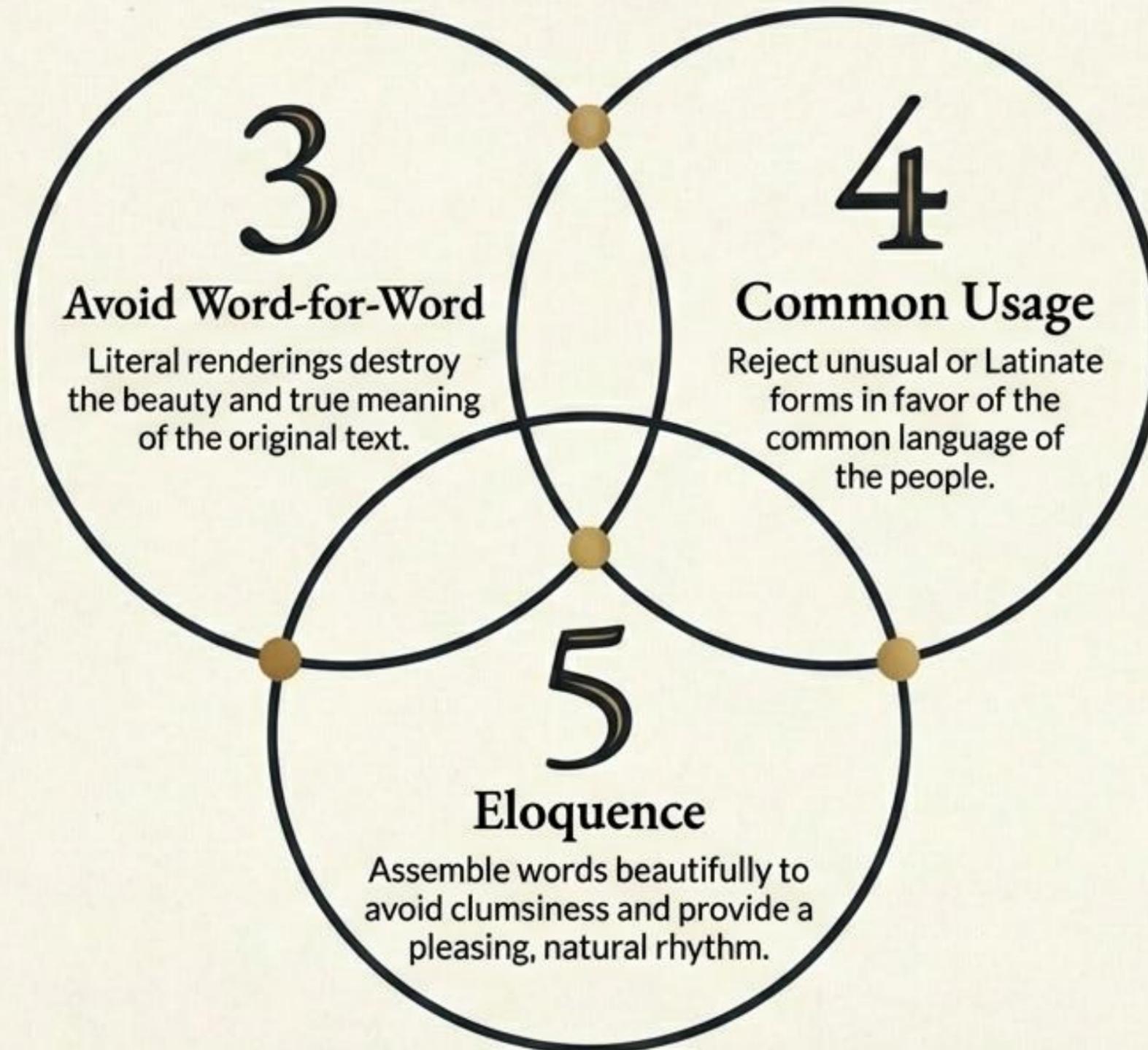
1. Must perfectly grasp the sense and material of the original author.

Crucial Exception: The translator possesses the freedom to clarify obscurities.



2. Requires flawless, dual-fluency in both the source language and the target language.

Prioritizing the art and rhythm of the vernacular



A fatal commitment to sense over literal words

Plato's *Axiochus*



Α Ἐμμεγενή ἡς ἀπὸ πίναλο, ἐχραϊώ
τεὶ οἷς ἐντίει τὰ πῶν ὅτι
ἐχ ἰς οἰμπιστὶ ἀπὸ ἄς βῆπτε
ποῖς ἐέχαντί, τοὶ πμο ὀ
τὴν δονα ἀνὰ τὸν γά
αθγας ἡ π
τέργι

rien du tout

After death you will
be **nothing at all.**

Dolet adds the phrase to clarify the Greek text, applying his principle of perfectly conveying sense.

The Sorbonne answers a linguistic clarification with the stake

The Charge

The theological faculty at the Sorbonne interprets *rien du tout* as a deliberate denial of the immortality of the soul.

The Verdict

Severe heresy.

The Execution (Paris, 1546)

Dolet is arrested, tortured, strangled, and burned at the stake along with his books. The ultimate symbol of the translator's burden.



Martin Luther bypasses the clergy to reach the people directly



Martin Luther (1483–1546)

The Objective

Absolute accessibility. Bring the Bible directly to the ordinary person without relying on Latin-speaking clergy.

The Output

The New Testament (1522) and the complete Bible (1534) translated into the German vernacular.

The philosophy of *Verdeutschen* (Germanizing)

The Concept

A translation should never read like a translation.



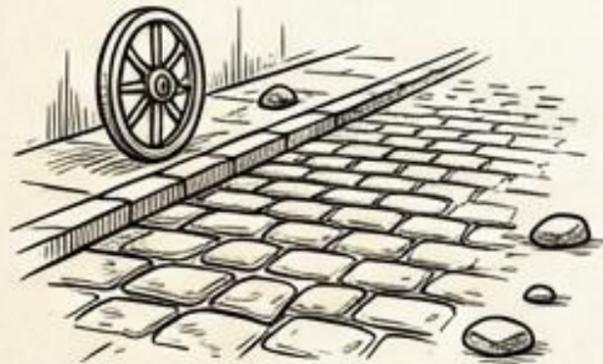
The Execution

Making the text sound naturally and authentically German, fully adapted to local linguistic rhythms.

Looking to the streets, not the Latin letters



Look at the **mother** in the home,
the **children** on the street, the
common man in the marketplace,
and look at their mouths to see
how they speak, and translate
accordingly.



The Allein Controversy: Romans 3:28



The Core Issue: Luther translates justified by faith as justified by faith *alone* (*allein*).



The Attack

The Catholic Church accuses Luther of altering the Holy Word to fit Protestant *sola fide* doctrine.

The Defense

Luther argues *linguistic necessity*—the German language requires *allein* to make the contrast idiomatic and convey Paul's forceful meaning.

A permanent shift toward the reader

The Theoretical Shift

Translation permanently moves away from strict, literal Church dogma.

The Communicative Approach

Both Dolet and Luther force a target-text-oriented philosophy prioritizing the reader's understanding.

The Cultural Legacy

Standardized vernaculars reshape entire cultures. The translator's burden becomes the catalyst for mass literacy.

