# ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
## ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY

**29. yıl**

# TRN 218 – INTRODUCTION TO INTERPRETING



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THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

← Alexander's route

Alexander's empire

⚔ Battle

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➢**Origin: The word is rooted in Ancient Greek.**

➢**Word Structure: It consists of the combination of two main words and a suffix:**

➢**"Mesos" (μέσος): Middle, between.**

➢**"Potamos" (ποταμός): River.**

➢**"-ia": A Greek suffix meaning land, realm, or region.**

➢**Exact Meaning: Its literal translation is the "Land Between the Rivers" or "Between Two Rivers." Geographically, it defines the region situated between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.**

➢**Historical Emergence: This name first came into use during the Hellenistic period, following Alexander the Great's Eastern conquests in the 4th century BC. The Greeks did not invent this name out of nowhere; rather, they translated local terms used by the region's people in their own languages (such as the Akkadian Birit Narim or the Aramaic Aram-Naharaim), which also meant "between the rivers," directly into Ancient Greek.**

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THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION: THE FERTILE LANDS OF MESOPOTAMIA

Euphrates and Tigris: The Source of Life
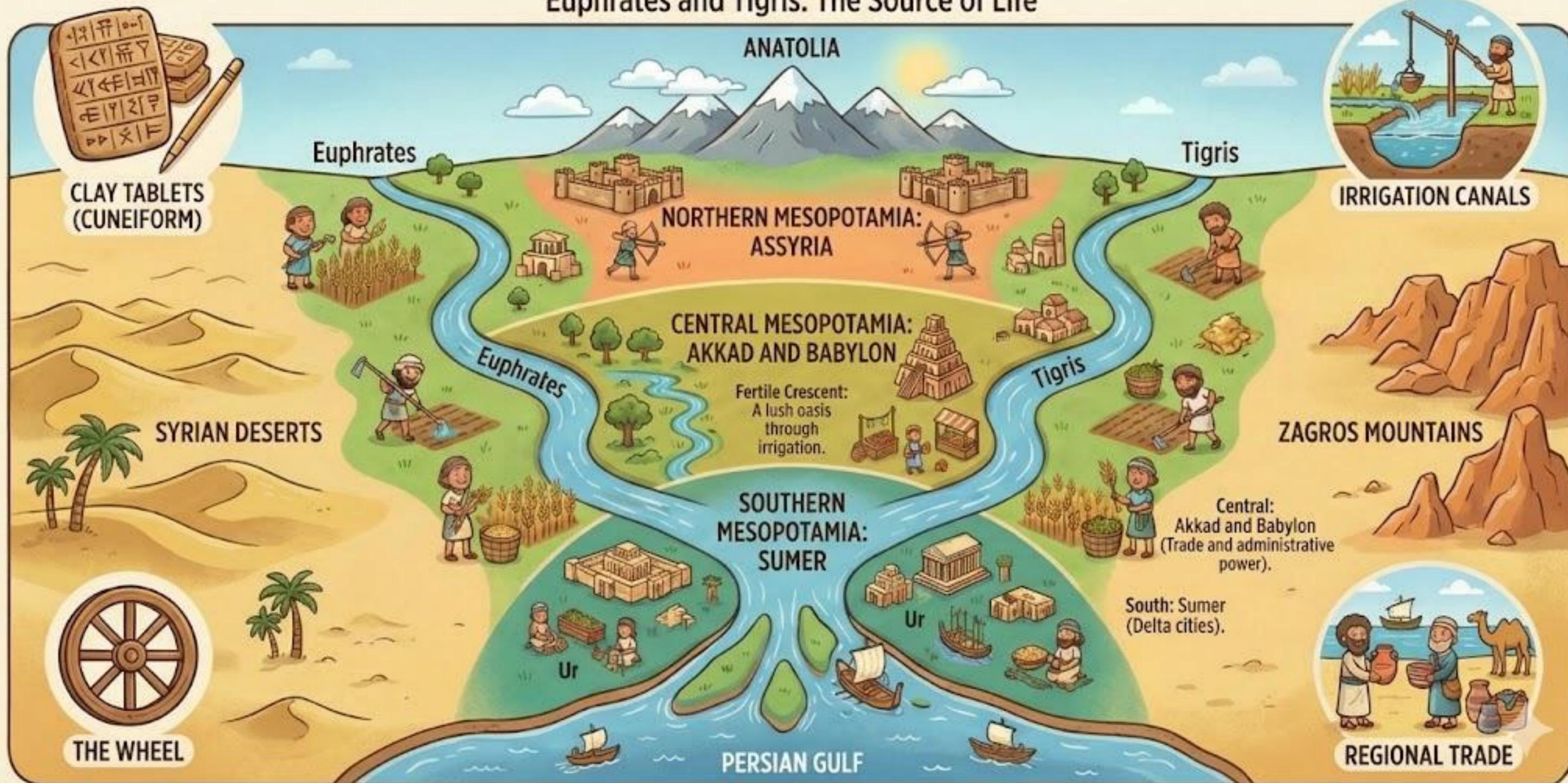
# PIONEERS OF ANTIQUITY: ANATOLIAN AND MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATIONS
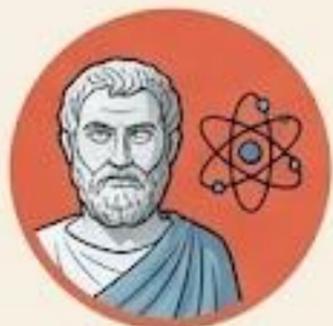
## ANATOLIAN CIVILIZATIONS

### Hittites: The First Written Treaty in History

They signed the Treaty of Kadesh with the Egyptians, which is the first written treaty in history.

### Lydians: The Invention of Money

They invented money, putting an end to the barter system in trade, and built the Royal Road.

### Ionians: The Center of Science and Philosophy

They raised important scientists and thinkers such as Homer, Thales, and Hippocrates.

## MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATIONS

### Sumerians: The Invention of Writing

They initiated the historical periods by inventing cuneiform writing; they also invented the wheel.

### Babylonians: The First Written Constitution

They created the first and most comprehensive written constitution in history with the Code of Hammurabi.

### Assyrians: The First Library and Trade Empire

They established the first library in Nineveh and brought writing to Anatolia through trade.

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# Historical Roots of Interpreting

Interpreting is an ancient human practice which clearly predates the invention of writing and (written) translation. In many IndoEuropean languages, the concept of interpreting is expressed by words whose etymology is largely autonomous from that of (written) translation. Expressions in Germanic, Scandinavian and Slavic languages denoting a person performing the activity of interpreting can be traced back to Akkadian, the ancient Semitic language of Assyria and Babylonia, around 1900 BC. The Akkadian root **targumanu**, via an etymological sideline from Arabic, also gave rise to the 'autonomous' English term for interpreter, **dragoman**.

Muslim World, 1200
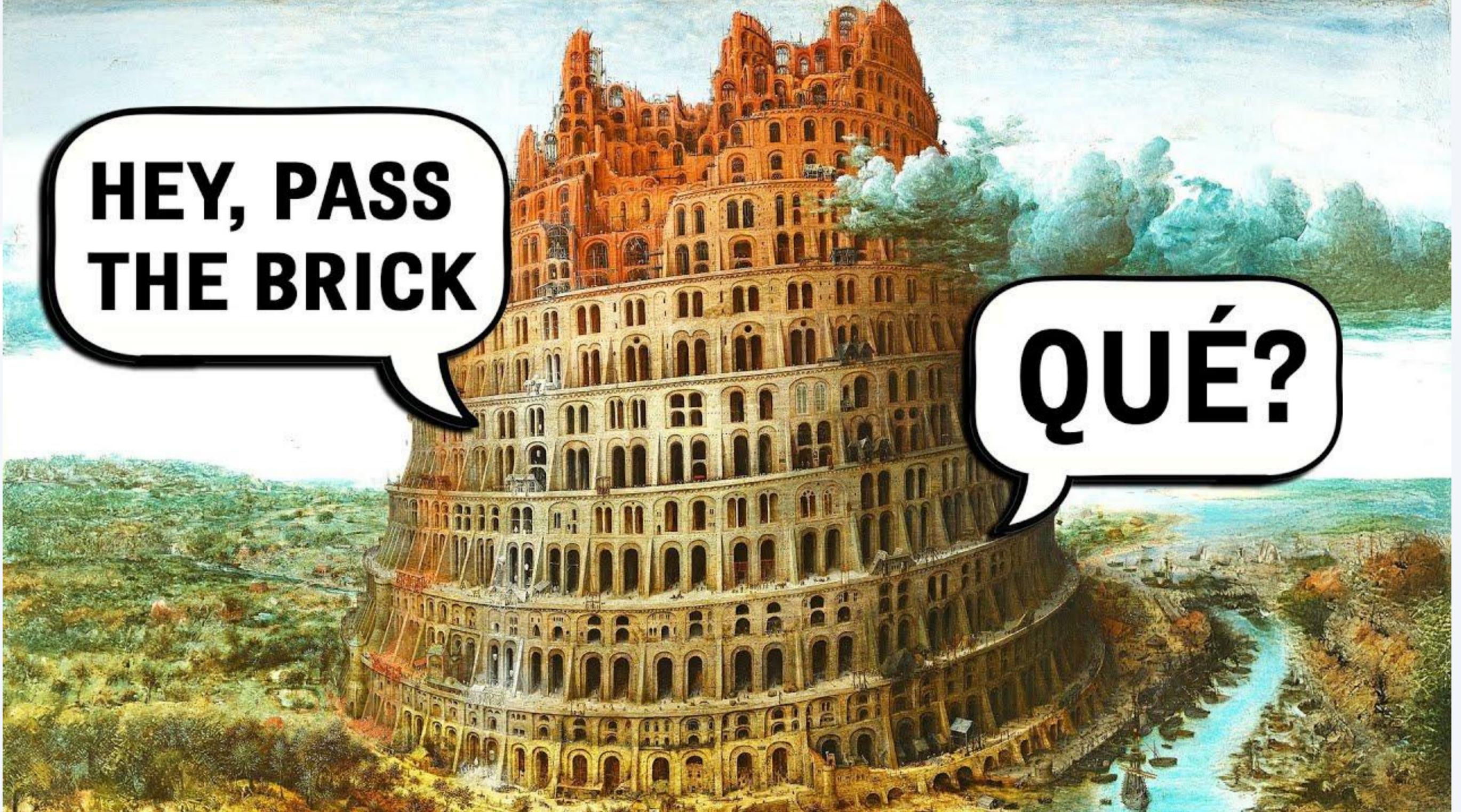
# The House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) and the Translation Movement

The House of Wisdom was a monumental intellectual center, grand library, and translation institute established in Baghdad during the Islamic Golden Age (late 8th to 13th centuries). Initially founded as a private collection for the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid, it transformed into a major public academy under Caliph Al-Ma'mun in the 9th century.

It became the heart of the famous Greco-Arabic translation movement. Scholars, translators, and scientists from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds (including Muslims, Christians, and Jews) worked collaboratively to translate the world's knowledge into Arabic. They meticulously translated ancient texts of Greek, Persian, Indian, and Syriac origins, focusing heavily on philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy (including the works of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, and Ptolemy).

In the history of translation, the House of Wisdom holds a critical place. It was not merely a center for copying texts; it was an institution that preserved classical antiquity that might have otherwise been lost. The massive volume of translated and developed knowledge here eventually migrated to Europe; most notably through the School of Toledo in Spain, laying the intellectual foundations for the Western Renaissance.

# The School of Toledo and Translation

It is no surprise that Spain, the meeting point of Jewish, Islamic/Arabic, and Christian cultures, hosted the first substantial translation school known in detail, lasting for 150 years starting from the 12th century. Translators consisting of Spaniards, Englishmen, converted Jews, and Arabs carried out written and oral translations. The finest example of translation activity is found in the School of Toledo. The School of Toledo is significant in that it revived translation activity in the West and served as its source. Established in the 12th and 13th centuries by taking the preceding House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikmah) as an example, the Toledo School of Translation is a translation center that laid the early foundations of the Renaissance in the West.

The School of Toledo made a great contribution to the introduction of scientific and philosophical knowledge to Central Europe. The writings and critiques of Averroes (Ibn Rushd) and Avicenna (Ibn Sina) on Aristotle, encompassing scientific fields such as medicine, mathematics, and astronomy from the ancient Greek and Arab worlds, led to the establishment of scholastic thought in the universities in the city of Toledo.

# ASTRONOMY OF MUHAMMAD IBN MUSA AL-KHWARIZMI 9TH CENTURY - SCHOOL OF TRANSLATORS OF TOLEDO - 12TH CENTURY
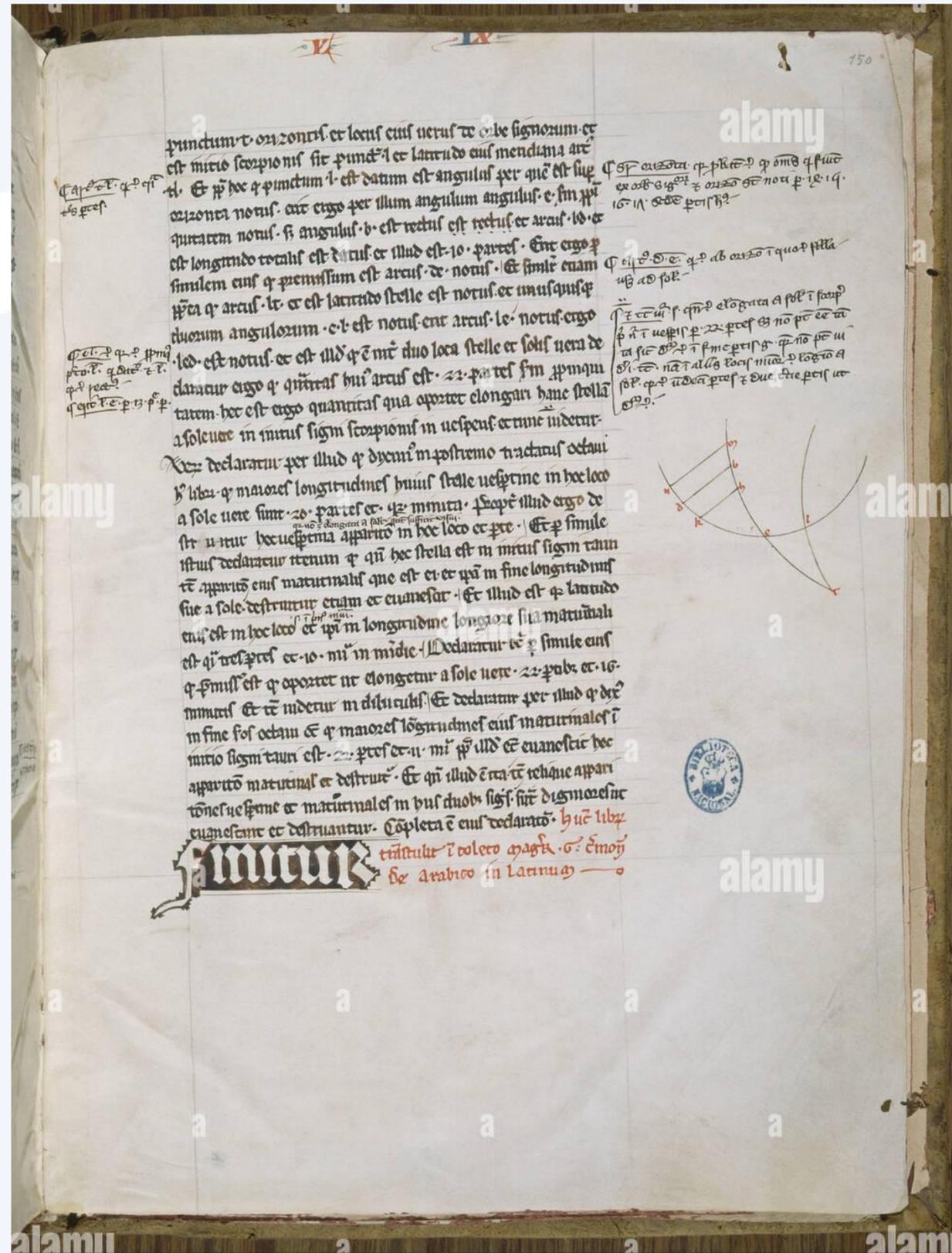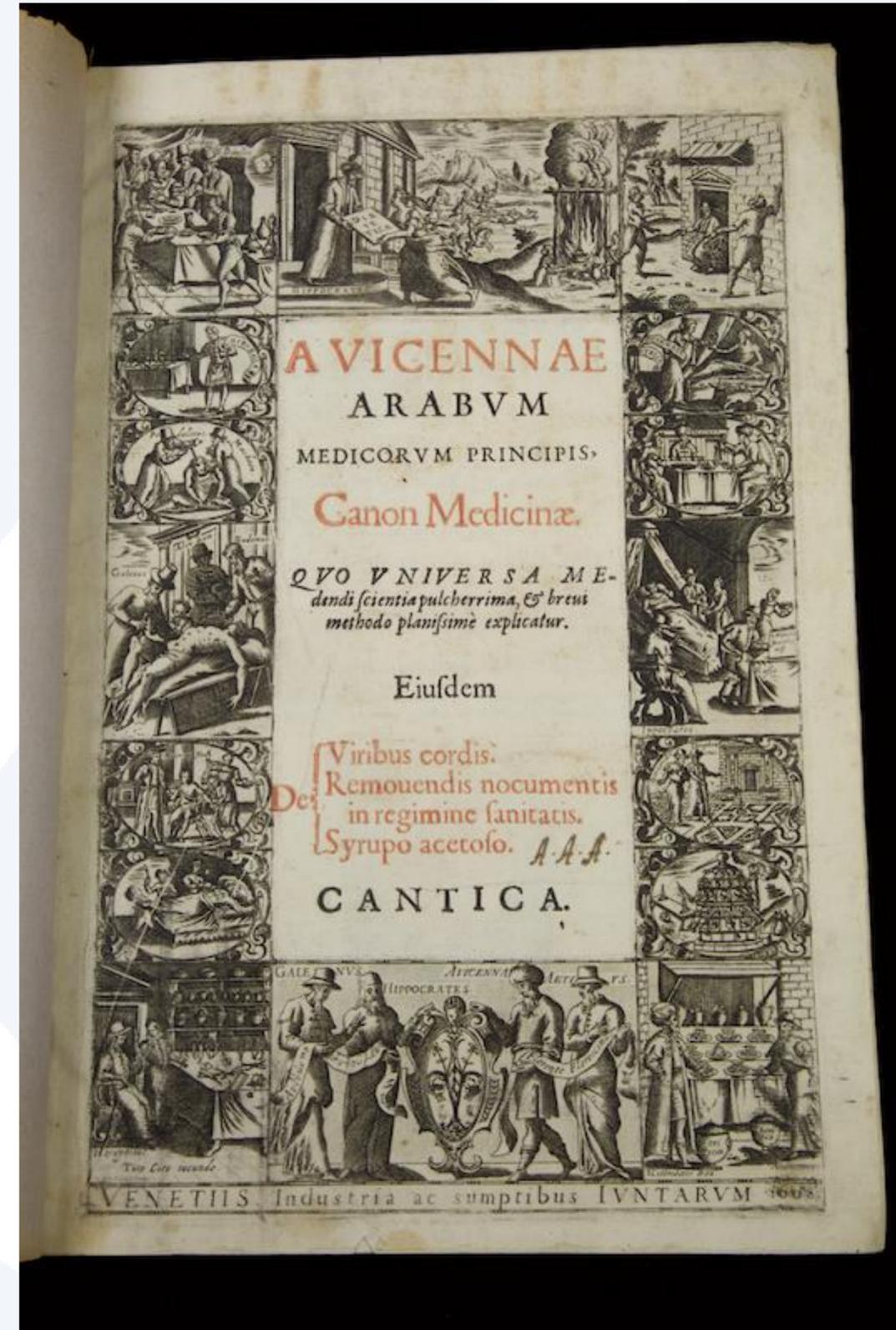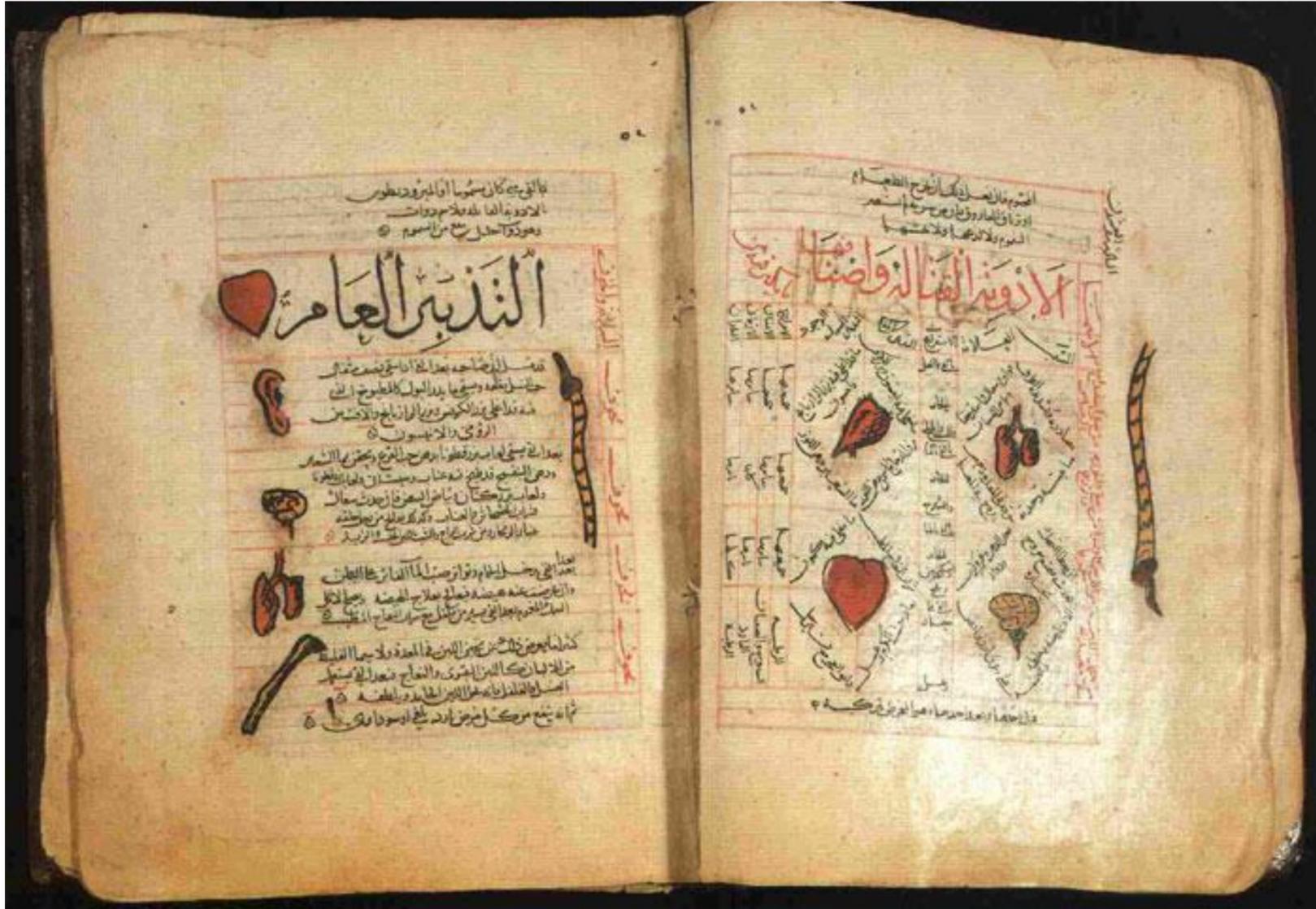
**el-Kanun fi't-Tıp (Tıbb Prensipleri) Ibn Sina**
**The Canon of Medicine Avicenna**

# The Role of Interpreting in the Ottoman Empire: The Era of Dragomans

## A Multilingual and Multicultural Empire

The Ottoman Empire spanned three continents, encompassing dozens of languages and cultures (Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Armenian, Slavic languages, etc.).

Since the empire constantly interacted with both its diverse subjects and European powers, effective administration, trade, and diplomacy relied heavily on highly skilled interpreters.

## The Institution of the Dragoman (Tercümanlık Müessesesi)

The term "dragoman" originates from the Arabic word *turcumān*.

In the Ottoman context, a dragoman was much more than a simple translator. They were powerful diplomatic intermediaries, political advisors, cultural guides, and sometimes even spies.

There were two main types of dragomans:

– Dragomans of the Porte (Divan-ı Hümayun Tercümanları): Official interpreters working directly for the Ottoman state and the Sultan.

– Embassy Dragomans: Interpreters hired by foreign embassies (like the French, Venetian, or British) to facilitate their diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottoman government.

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## The Monopoly of the Phanariot Greeks (Fenerli Rumlar)

For a long period, especially from the 17th century to the early 19th century, Ottoman Muslim elites generally did not learn European languages, considering it unnecessary.

Therefore, the state delegated the crucial task of interpreting and foreign diplomacy to the Phanariots—elite and highly educated Greek families residing in the Fener district of Istanbul. For over a century, the position of the "Grand Dragoman" was held almost exclusively by these families.

## A Major Turning Point: 1821 and the Translation Chamber (Bâbıâli Tercüme Odası)

The outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821 created a severe crisis of trust. The Ottoman state dismissed the Phanariot dragomans due to security and loyalty concerns.

Realizing the critical danger of not having Muslim-Turkish officials who could speak Western languages (primarily French), the state established the Translation Chamber (Tercüme Odası) in 1821.

Why is this important? The Translation Chamber became the first modern bureaucratic and educational institution of the Ottoman Empire. It did not just train interpreters; it educated the future diplomats, grand viziers, and reformist intellectuals who would lead the modernization of the empire (the Tanzimat era).

# The Development of Interpreting in Türkiye in the 20th Century

**The Early Republican Era and Modern Diplomacy (1920s - 1940s)**

A transition occurred from the Ottoman Translation Chamber (Babıali Tercüme Odası) tradition to the foreign affairs bureaucracy of the modern nation-state.

During this period, French maintained its dominance in diplomatic and commercial relations, but English began to come to the forefront toward the middle of the century. Interpreting was not yet an independent profession but rather a duty carried out by diplomats and well-educated bureaucrats.

**Participation in International Organizations and the Birth of Conference Interpreting (1950s)**

Following the Second World War, Türkiye's participation in multinational institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, and the Council of Europe created a major breakthrough in the history of interpreting.

These international meetings revealed the need for simultaneous interpreting in Türkiye, alongside consecutive interpreting, in such an intense and institutional manner for the first time.

## Professionalization and the Establishment of TKTD (1960s - 1969)

In the 1960s, the profession began to be standardized through the efforts of pioneering interpreters, especially those who studied abroad (for example, at the University of Geneva's School of Translation and Interpretation) and returned to Türkiye.

In 1969, The Conference Interpreters Association of Türkiye (TKTD - Türkiye Konferans Tercümanları Derneği) was founded. This institution became the first determinant of working conditions, booth standards, and professional ethical rules (such as confidentiality and impartiality) in Türkiye, transforming interpreting from a master-apprentice relationship into a professional occupation with established standards.

## Academic Institutionalization (1980s and 1990s)

Entering the last quarter of the 20th century, it became apparent that language and literature departments were insufficient to meet the growing need for interpreters, and translation was recognized as an independent field of expertise.

In the academic years of 1982-1983, Türkiye's first Translation and Interpreting undergraduate programs were opened at Hacettepe University and Boğaziçi University.

This step laid the foundations for Translation Studies in Türkiye and brought the systematic, theoretical, and practical education of interpreting under the roof of the university.
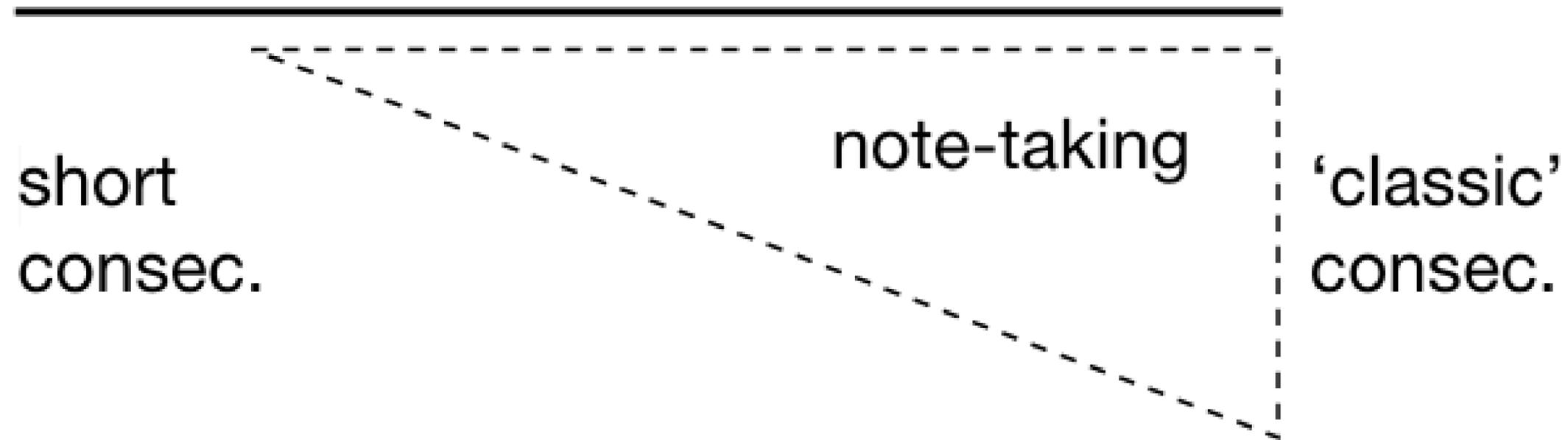
# TYPES OF INTERPRETING

## Types of Consecutive Interpreting

Consecutive interpreting is a mode of interpreting where the interpreter listens to a speech or a segment of a speech in the source language, and then reproduces it in the target language after the speaker pauses or finishes. In this mode, the speaker and the interpreter take turns speaking. The interpreter relies on active listening, short-term memory, and a specialized note-taking system to ensure the accurate transfer of the message.

Long (Classic) Consecutive Interpreting: In this traditional form, the speaker talks for a longer duration (sometimes up to 10-15 minutes, though typically shorter today) before pausing. The interpreter must rely heavily on their specialized note-taking technique to capture the structure, key ideas, and nuances of the speech. It is highly demanding on cognitive processing and memory. This type is often used in high-level diplomatic meetings, formal speeches, and official press conferences.

2. Short Consecutive Interpreting: In this variation, the speaker pauses frequently, usually after every sentence or short paragraph. Because the segments are brief, the interpreter relies primarily on short-term memory rather than extensive note-taking. It is more conversational and is frequently utilized in settings such as medical consultations, business negotiations, police interrogations, and court hearings.

Continuum of consecutive interpreting

# Liaison (Bilateral) Interpreting

Liaison interpreting, also known as bilateral interpreting, is a form of interpreting where the professional acts as a linguistic and cultural link between two or more people who do not speak the same language.

Unlike formal conference interpreting, liaison interpreting typically takes place in more intimate, conversational, or mobile settings. Common scenarios include business negotiations, medical consultations, diplomatic visits, factory tours, or legal interviews.

Key characteristics of liaison interpreting include:

Bidirectional Translation: The interpreter translates in both directions (e.g., from English to Turkish and then Turkish to English) dynamically.

Short Segments: The translation is done sentence by sentence or in very short paragraphs.

Minimal to No Note-Taking: Because the segments are brief and the setting is often informal or involves moving around, interpreters rely heavily on short-term memory rather than note-taking techniques.

Focus on Flow: The primary goal is to maintain a natural, smooth flow of communication and build a direct connection (a "liaison") between the communicating parties.

# Simultaneous Interpreting

Simultaneous interpreting is the process of translating a speaker's words into a target language in real-time, with only a few seconds of delay (known as *décalage* or ear-voice span). Unlike consecutive interpreting, the speaker does not pause to let the interpreter speak; the listening, cognitive processing, and speaking happen almost concurrently.

<u>Key Characteristics of Simultaneous Interpreting:</u>

Specialized Equipment: Interpreters work in soundproof booths (usually located at the back of the conference hall), listening to the speaker through headphones and delivering the translation into a microphone. The audience receives the translation via wireless headsets.

High Cognitive Load: This mode requires intense concentration and divided attention. The interpreter must listen to the incoming message, analyze and translate it, and articulate the target language while simultaneously listening to the speaker's next sentence.

Teamwork: Due to the extreme mental fatigue it causes, simultaneous interpreters almost never work alone. They work in pairs (or sometimes groups of three) inside the booth, taking turns every 20 to 30 minutes to maintain high translation quality and accuracy.

Common Settings: It is the standard mode for large-scale, multilingual events where time is limited. Common contexts include international conferences, multinational organization meetings (such as the UN, EU, or NATO), and live television broadcasts.

# ISO 4043 Standards for Mobile Simultaneous Interpreting Booths

## 1. Dimensions and Space

Width: Minimum 1.60 meters for two interpreters, 2.40 meters for three interpreters, and 3.20 meters for four interpreters.

Depth and Height: Minimum depth of 1.60 meters and a minimum height of 2.00 meters.

## 2. Ventilation and Air Quality

The booth must have a powerful ventilation system capable of renewing the air inside at least 7 times per hour.

The system must operate quietly (maximum 40 dB) so as not to interfere with the interpreting process, and it must not create uncomfortable drafts. Modern standards also highlight the importance of $CO_2$ sensors to maintain air quality.

## 3. Acoustics and Sound Insulation

The interior surfaces must be covered with anti-static, sound-absorbing materials to minimize reverberation and echo.

Complete soundproofing must be ensured between adjacent booths and between the booths and the main conference hall.

## 4. Visibility and Line of Sight

The front and side panels must consist of wide, scratch-free, matte, and non-reflective windows.

This ensures interpreters have an unobstructed view of the speaker, the podium, the stage, and the projection screens. There should be no thick vertical pillars blocking the central field of vision.

## 5. Workspace and Lighting

The working desk must extend across the full width of the booth. It must have a total depth of at least 45 cm (with a net usable depth of 30 cm) and a height ranging between 72 and 76 cm.

Each interpreter must be provided with an independent, adjustable reading lamp providing an illumination of 300 to 600 lux, designed not to cause glare or cast shadows on documents.

The desk design should also include proper cable management to prevent cables from tangling around the interpreters' legs.

## Schjoldager's Simultaneous Interpreting Evaluation Grid

| Evaluation Criteria | Examples |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Listenability (comprehensibility) | if the listener has difficulty listening to the interpreter and cannot understand what they are listening to, other qualities become invalid |
| 1.1. Is the voice flow good? | the interpreter might not be adjusting their distance to the microphone well |
| 1.2. Are the words pronounced correctly? | might have said "KBB instead of KGB" |
| 1.3. Are there disturbing reactions? | like "hah!, oh man, ugh" |
| 1.4. Are there filler sounds? | like "uhhh, ummm, errr" |
| 1.5. Are there strange sounds? | like sighing, coughing, rustling, lip smacking |
| 1.6. Is there anything unnatural in the intonation? | might be saying declarative sentences like interrogative sentences |
| 1.7. Are there excessive self-corrections? | like thinking out loud |
| 1.8. Are there disturbingly unfinished sentences? | "the data obtained from this study uhhh... Also another project..." |
| 1.9. Is the voice quality disturbing? | like muffled, creaky, crying |
| 1.10. Is there an unconvincing tone in the voice? | if they have doubts about the accuracy of their translation, the voice reveals it |

| | |
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| **2. Language** | **if the interpreter's use of language is inadequate, the listener gets disturbed and the interpreter's other qualities become invalid** |
| **2.1. Are there disturbing mispronunciations?** | For example, pronouncing the word "determine" with the pronunciation of the word "mine" |
| **2.2. Are there disturbing grammatical errors?** | for example, noun clause errors like "he asked what did they do?" are often made |
| **2.3. Is there an interference effect?** | the interpreter might be reflecting the syntactic or lexical structure of the source language into the target language |
| **2.4. Do they fail to use appropriate expressions?** | "power tools were carried out by conservative forces." |
| **2.5. Do they use words that sound strange in context?** | uses inappropriate register.. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **3. Cohesion and plausibility** | **if the translation lacks cohesion and logical connections, the listener loses interest** |
| **3.1. Are there abrupt starts?** | the listener thinks a part was not translated at the beginning |
| **3.2. Are there abrupt endings?** | the listener thinks the concluding message was not translated |
| **3.3. Is the translation incomprehensible?** | the message may not make sense |
| **3.4. Is there anything implausible in the message?** | there might be illogical expressions or contradictory sentences in the translation |
| **4. Fidelity** | |
| **4.1. Is the interpreter mocking the speaker?** | laughs at inappropriate times; contempt or subjective attitudes may be felt in their voice |
| **4.3. Are there important omissions?** | |
| **4.4. Are there unacceptable alterations?** | |
| **4.5. Are there unacceptable additions?** | |

## Language and Culture Awareness

Knowing the grammar rules of the mother tongue and foreign language, making discourse analysis and register analysis by considering the differences in perception and expression according to sociolinguistic and sociocultural features and knowing their equivalents in the other language, establishing the connections expressed by ==relevance theory==, evaluating non-linguistic communication elements, taking notes, using dictionaries.

## General Culture

Knowledge of domestic and global institutions and organizations; current issues occupying the world and development processes, the perspectives of countries, relevant people and authorities on them; knowledge of fields such as science, technique, art, and literature.

## World Knowledge

Knowledge of procedures and facts, the ability to use this knowledge during the act of making sense, determining common knowledge with society based on this knowledge, being able to anticipate and predict the spoken topic.

## Memory

The ability to use short-term memory and working memory capacity economically, mental imagery, schematizing and mapping, keeping long-term memory content active, pre-propositional mental representation skill.

## Metacognition

Knowledge of the concept of metacognition; knowing that the thoughts one has during their own cognitive acts have a value and meaning that metacognition is active in that situation; being able to use metacognitive tools such as self-evaluation scales, diaries and portfolios effectively; putting metacognition into action during translation; using metacognitive strategies such as self-criticism, self-control, self-correction.

## Professional Theory Knowledge and Application

Knowledge and application of theories within the scope of communication, translation studies, linguistics, text linguistics.

## Technical Knowledge

Knowledge of technical subject areas and terminology, some technical knowledge about the technical equipment used during the translation process and the use of the booth.

## Subject Area and Terminology Knowledge

Knowledge of the science branch or subject area to be translated, term knowledge, Latin and Greek morphology, knowledge of facts and procedures in the technical field.

## Knowledge of Professional Ethics Rules

Following the decisions and publications of domestic and international associations related to translation; knowledge of the rules aimed at ensuring quality in terms of customer satisfaction and protecting the rights in terms of the interpreter, adhering to the principle of confidentiality regarding the person and subjects being translated, remaining faithful to the essence of the message in the translation, impartiality,

being able to convey the information fully, respecting the opinions of others, the ability to act professionally on issues such as being distant and respectful in addresses and citations.

## Social Behaviors

Being able to act in accordance with the environments one is in; being sociable and outgoing; having professional solidarity skills, as a part of this, having the awareness and skill of in-booth solidarity; applying the psycho-social behaviors necessary to carry out the profession and communication forms within the scope of discourse analysis.

## Affective Characteristics

Always being eager to learn new things; being able to dedicate oneself to the profession; having attributed value to the profession of interpreting; feeling characterized by this value and acting accordingly; not hesitating to take risks; being bold and agile.

These characteristics, expressed in general terms, should be handled and expressed in detail from the perspective of the educational program the students see. The reorganization of educational programs with this endeavor, which requires a separate study in itself, will be possible; and this will make it possible to train manpower with more desirable qualities. The specific objectives of the courses should be redetermined to respond to current needs in the light of academic knowledge accumulation, new information obtained through research, and applications in the professional field.

**Preparation for Conference Interpreting**

**1. Administrative and Logistical Preparation**

**Contract and Conditions:** Clarifying working hours, language combinations, and ensuring the team size meets professional standards (e.g., AIIC or TKTD guidelines).

**Technical Setup Confirmation:** Verifying the type of interpreting (on-site or Remote Simultaneous Interpreting - RSI) and ensuring equipment complies with industry standards (like ISO 4043 for booths).

**2. Thematic and Documentary Research**

**Gathering Materials:** Requesting the event agenda, speaker bios, PowerPoint presentations, and draft speeches from the organizer well in advance.

**Background Reading:** Reading parallel texts, recent news, and academic articles related to the conference topic in both the source and target languages to grasp the broader context and underlying concepts.

**3. Terminological Preparation**

**Glossary Compilation:** Extracting key terms, industry-specific jargon, abbreviations, and acronyms from the provided documents to create a customized bilingual or multilingual glossary.

**Term Internalization:** Memorizing this core vocabulary to ensure immediate retrieval during the high cognitive load of simultaneous interpreting.

## 4. Cognitive and Speaker Preparation

**Speaker Profiling:** Researching the speakers' professional backgrounds and subject matter expertise.

**Accent and Style Familiarization:** Watching previous videos or listening to podcasts of the speakers to get accustomed to their speaking speed, rhetorical style, and specific accents.

## 5. On-Site (Pre-Event) Preparation

**Early Arrival:** Arriving at the conference venue at least 30 to 45 minutes before the first session begins.

**Sound and Equipment Check:** Testing the interpreter console, microphones, and headphones, and ensuring a clear line of sight to the speaker and the projection screen.

**Booth Partner Coordination:** Agreeing with the booth mate on turn-taking intervals (usually every 20-30 minutes) and establishing non-verbal communication signals to assist each other during the session.