

Joachim Périon's *De optimo genere interpretandi*

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This paper discusses the ideas of Joachim Périon (1499–1559) on translation. Périon was a French humanist and theologian who translated a large part of the Aristotelian corpus into Ciceronian Latin. After a short introduction on Ciceronianism and Aristotelianism in the Renaissance, and the fifteenth-century translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Leonardo Bruni and Joannes Argyropoulos in Florence, a detailed analysis of Périon's *De optimo genere interpretandi* follows.

The *De optimo genere interpretandi*, which Périon first published in 1540 in Paris as a companion volume to his translation of the *Ethics*, consists of a preface and a commentary. The preface sets out Périon's general ideas on translation, particularly his objection to the word-for-word (*verbum ex verbo*) method current during the Middle Ages, and his choice of Cicero as the single source of correct Latin. The commentary further fleshes out these ideas, giving minute instructions on how to translate Aristotle's Greek into Ciceronian Latin; here the sections on Book 1 Chapter 1 and the word *προαίρεσις* (Book 3 Chapter 2) are summarised.

Périon's Ciceronian translations of Aristotle became influential in the sixteenth century but also provoked adverse reactions from other humanists, amongst them the French philologist Denys Lambin. We take a brief look at Lambin's preface and annotations to his new translation of the *Ethics* published in 1558 in Venice; Lambin produced the translation with the express intention of supplanting Périon's.

An appendix reprints the text of Book 1 Chapter 1 of the *Ethics*, first in the Greek original, then in two medieval translations, and finally in four Renaissance versions.