

Marcus Tullius Cicero
(106-43 B. C.)

DE OPTIMO GENERE ORATORUM
(IV. 13-v. 14; 46 B. C.)

And this is our conclusion: that, since the most outstanding Greek orators were those from Athens, and the chief among them was easily Demosthenes, anybody who imitates him will speak in the Attic style, and excellently to boot. For, seeing that Attic orators are proposed for our imitation, to speak in the Attic style is to speak well. But, because there are many misconceptions over what constitutes this style of composition, I propose to undertake a task useful for students, but not completely necessary for myself. For I have translated into Latin two of the most eloquent and most noble speeches in Athenian literature, those two speeches in which Aeschines and Demosthenes oppose each other. And I have not translated like a mere hack, but in the manner of an orator, translating the same themes and their expression and sentence shapes in words consonant with our conventions. In so doing I did not think it necessary to translate word for word, but I have kept the force and flavour of the words. For I saw my duty not as counting out words for the reader, but as weighing them out. And this is the goal of my project: to give my countrymen and understanding of what they are to seek from those models who aim to be Attic in style, and of the formulas of speech they are to have recourse to.
