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Lysias for the Web

As an orator, Lysias is admired for the simplicity and clarity of his style and the success of his subtle characterization. Admiration, however, has not generally resulted in frequent translation of his speeches, particularly those that deal with cases brought by private citizens. None the less, increasing interest in the social history of the ancient world has brought a small crop of more recent translations.

The details provided in *Oratio 1* about the organization of an Athenian household have made it an ideal piece to translate for a website interested in women and gender in the ancient world. To translate any work for an audience with a declared interest is problematical. What is the target audience, and what level of knowledge, for example, of ancient legal practice and rhetoric, can it be assumed to possess? This type of translation is not a detailed commentary, so explanatory footnotes can be few.

In the first part of this paper I review the strategies of the few earlier translations of *Oratio 1* as a background to my own approach. In the second I discuss some of the specific problems of translation that I encountered: for example, where I traded off literal accuracy for greater faithfulness to the dramatic style of the speech.