

Space, Status, and Vulnerability in Lysias 12, *Against Eratosthenes*

In this paper, I argue that Lysias, in his speech 12, *Against Eratosthenes*, uses the internal spatiality of houses to emphasize the civic and physical vulnerability that he and his family faced as a result of their metic status during the *junta* of the Thirty Tyrants.

As David Halperin and Virginia Hunter have demonstrated, Athenian democratic ideology figured the male citizen's body as inviolable at the expense of the bodies of women, enslaved people, and metics. Like his body, the house of a citizen male was considered to be sacrosanct, and incursions into the house by outside members were perceived as a devastating infraction (Cohen). Metics and enslaved people, few of whom were able to possess land or a home, were vulnerable without the protection of a citizen male; moreover, they lacked the family connections that made citizens members of a community and protected them from hostile outside influence (Kamen, Patterson). The tenuousness of their existence was the corollary to the freedom and equality afforded by the democracy to the citizen male.

In *Against Eratosthenes*, Lysias uses the metonymic relationship between the house and the person (both legal and corporal) to draw attention to the contingent nature of the metic life that he, his brother, and his brother's wife had built in Athens. Although his family was rich, successful, and well-connected, they became helpless victims when members of the Thirty Tyrants decided to prosecute ten metics for the purpose of extortion. Throughout the narrative of his own arrest and escape, and his brother's death and funeral, Lysias draws special attention to houses, and in particular to interior domestic space: when Peison comes to arrest him and agrees to take a bribe, Lysias describes the other man following him, moving ever inward through his house and then his bedroom, and into his private cabinet (§11). Held captive in Damnippos'

house, Lysias is able to use his knowledge of the layout of the house, acquired during previous visits, to escape (§§15-16). After his brother Polemarchos is forced to drink hemlock, Lysias and his family are not even allowed to bury him from any of their own houses, but must hire a shed to conduct the funeral (§18). The attention paid to domestic spaces, and the juxtaposition of Lysias' current abject helplessness and the evidence of his previous social connections, reveals the great divergence between the lifestyle to which Lysias and his family were accustomed, and their destitution at the hands of the Thirty.

Bibliography

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