This paper examines some of Isocrates’ evidence for the ‘invention’ of Athens, which is the subject of Loraux’s book on Athenian funeral speeches. The Athenians shaped the image of Athens through the use of a range of patriotic myths which standardly included the story of the Seven against Thebes: how their ancestors secured the burial of the bodies of those who died in the expedition led by the Argive king Adrastus against Thebes in support of Polyneices son of Oedipus. The prose writers manipulated the details of these *topoi* as much as the poets, particularly in the Athenian *epitaphios* or funeral speech which praised those who died in battle and the city they died for, and there seem to have been at least two versions of the story of Adrastus current in the fourth century, one in which the Athenians recovered the dead by fighting

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1 There is some passing sense in the dedication of a paper on Isocrates to my teacher, colleague and friend, Patrick Lacey. Pat has always been engaged with Greek and Roman prose writers and edited Cicero’s *Second Philippic Oration* (Aris & Phillips, 1986). Plutarch quite justifiably partnered Cicero with Demosthenes in his *Parallel Lives*, but Isocrates’ importance in the development of Greek prose style and his wider interest in philosophy also make him a fit counterpart for Cicero.

2 Nicole Loraux, *L’Invention d’Athènes. Histoire de l’oraison funèbre dans la cité classique* Civilisations et Sociétés 56 Editions de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris, 1981). Her discussion of the treatment of *topoi* in funeral speeches is particularly relevant to this paper (225ff.), as are her specific comments on the story of Adrastus (mainly 64-9) and her general conclusions. The index wrongly refers 260-5 to Isocrates.

3 The main authors and passages apart from Isocrates are: Hdt. 9.27, [Lysias] *Epitaphios* Or. 2. 6-11, [Plat] *Menex.* 239, Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.46, Demosth. Or. 60.8, Euripides, *Suppliants*. Some maintain that Isocrates borrowed from [Lysias]; see J.E. Sandys (ed.), *Isocrates ad Demonicum et*
the Thebans, the other in which they reached a diplomatic settlement. Isocrates is unusual among them in that he employs both versions in praise of Athens, the bellicose version in Panegyricus (54ff.), the diplomatic in Panathenaicus (168ff.), where he calls deliberate attention to the change (Panath. 172ff.). He sets Panegyricus at least partly in the epitaphios tradition (74) and Panathenaicus deals with the same material for praise. Yet Loraux, though she discusses the contribution of Panegyricus to the image of Athens, foregoes the opportunity to discuss the contribution of Panathenaicus, presumably because Panathenaicus is too far removed from the genre of the funeral speech (69). She concludes from the other evidence that the image of Athens remained fixed in the funeral speech as always a warrior, armed and ready like the goddess Athena: ‘..toutes les guerres défensives verront le châtiment d’envahisseurs impies, et toute expédition offensive arrachera l’opprimé à une domination injuste: la belle image est en place..’ (150). Yet the image of Athens is incomplete without the evidence of Panathenaicus, and the change it makes in the traditional story proves to promote something rather more sophisticated and interesting than just the change from a bellicose to a more peaceful image of Athens.

Loraux does nevertheless see the main thrust behind the story of Adrastus as the making of the Athenian image and she appreciates that speakers will change the presentation of this and other topoi in order to achieve ever more effective images. This seems the most logical explanation of the change in Isocrates too, radical though it

Panegyricus (London, 1868) note on c. 55, quoting Theon Progymn. 1.155 Walz in ancient support, and E. Buchner (below n.5) 130, who draws up a stemma of borrowings, giving most credit to [Lysias]. Loraux prefers to speak of adaptations of what must have been very common currency (254). The evidence for the borrowings is often very flimsy word parallels of a general sort almost unavoidable in writers telling the same basic story.

4 Plutarch, who has Theseus King of Athens act for Athens in the story (Vit. Thes. 29), seems to imply that the first version comes direct from Euripides’ Suppliants, the other from Aeschylus’ Eleusinians. He denies that Theseus conquered the Thebans in battle, as Euripides and most of the writers referred to above say, and adds, following Philochoros, that the majority of writers agree that he recovered the bodies under truce.
may be. Yet earlier commentators find the reason for the change not in the more effective presentation of the image but in the contemporary political situation, and they say that Isocrates preferred the diplomatic solution in order to praise Thebes, even though the thrust behind the story was always praise of Athens. They argue that in 339 BC at the time of ‘publication’ of the *Panathenaicus*, Athens wished to court the favour of Thebes with a view to alliance, whereas there was no such desire in 380 BC at the time of ‘publication’ of the *Panegyricus*. They argue that contemporary Thebans would be more pleased by a version in which their ancestors showed moderation and agreed peacefully to surrender the dead. The mythical example might even move them to contemporary diplomacy.

The manipulation of the myth in favour of a contemporary peace settlement would suggest that the speech was designed to have a direct influence on politics in the narrow sense at Athens and elsewhere. This puts the emphasis on the audience. There is of course a wider debate about whether Isocrates has specific political motives in his speeches, and even Loraux, though she believes that the story of Adrastus is generally used to project a timeless image of Athens as the warlike champion of the oppressed, thinks it may occasionally have specific implications for contemporary foreign policy. Yet the particularly narrow political explanation of the principal change in

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6 Loraux, 69. William H. Race, ‘Panathenaicus 74-90 The Rhetoric of Isocrates’ Digression on Agamemnon’ *TAPA* 108 (1978) 175-85 sees the speech as a rhetorical essay rather than a political document and argues against the view that the praise of Agamemnon has political implications. G. Kennedy, ‘Isocrates’ Encomium of Helen’ *TAPA* 89 (1958) 77-83 and
the *Panathenaicus* seems to me unsatisfactory because it passes over other changes of detail in that version which are not explicable in terms of contemporary politics in the narrow sense, but are explicable in terms of the desire for more effective praise of Athens. These more detailed changes are moreover downright uncomplimentary to Thebans. The changes in the myth can all be better explained in terms of Isocrates' concern to shape his material to serve the changed argument of *Panathenaicus* which is to praise Athens in a different way from *Panegyricus*.

Isocrates himself holds that the speaker must manipulate facts to serve the programme of his rhetoric. He makes a programmatic statement to this effect in discussing the treatment of the achievements of the ancestors, which included myths, at *Panegyricus* 7-10. He declares there that his art of rhetoric can make the great small and the small great, can speak modernly about the ancient past and traditionally about the recent past; that the achievements of the ancestors are a common heritage but it is given only to the best speakers to make opportune use of them, invent appropriate reflections about each and clothe them in suitable language; that the art will progress if honour goes not to those who speak first on such topics, but those who speak best, not to those who discover them, but those who cover them as no other could.

Propriety and opportuneness are rhetorical virtues. This programmatic statement would support the purely rhetorical explanation of Isocrates' change in the story of Adrastus, that it is more opportune and more appropriate to the specific kind of praise he makes of Athens in the *Panathenaicus*. The rhetorical idea that different truths serve different programmes will necessarily produce different treatments of the same achievement where they occur in speeches with different requirements of occasion and propriety. Both the peaceful recovery of the bodies of those who died at Thebes and the recovery in battle could fit the occasion, could contain appropriate reflections, could be well expressed, if the point of reference of what was opportune or appropriate changed in the interim.

G. Heilbrunn, 'The Composition of Isocrates' *Helen*’ TAPhA 1107 (1977) 147-59 offer two opposing viewpoints, the political and the purely rhetorical, for the interpretation of the *Helen*. 
Loraux certainly believes that propriety and occasion dictated the basic preference in the funeral speech for the martial over the diplomatic settlement in the story of Adrastus. She allows that the martial version could to some extent include preliminary diplomatic overtures, but indicates that the funeral speech favoured the martial recovery of the dead because it was appropriate to the occasion, which was in honour of those who died fighting. The diplomatic settlement seemed on the other hand to serve the panhellenic image of Athens, which preferred to settle tensions inside Greece without violence or loss of life. This was inappropriate inside the funeral speech: ‘..dans les épitaphioi Athènes est promachos et seule la guerre lui fournit l’occasion d’affirmer son arête’ (68).

The choice of the martial version of the myth in Panegyricus is appropriate not to the funeral occasion, which it no longer serves, but to the general programme of the speech, which replaces it. Isocrates argued that the Greeks should unite for war against Persia, but that unity required the joint and equal leadership of Athens and Sparta (15-17), and Sparta stood in the way of that unity because she considered it her own ancestral right to lead Greece by herself (18). He therefore proposed to show that Athens had ancestral claims to the leadership of Greece in war greater than those boasted by the Spartans (20). Having proved these claims, he could prove her contemporary magnanimity as well by conceding her claim to sole leadership, arguing not that Athens should lead Sparta as Sparta had thought to lead her, but that they should both share in the leadership equally.

The ancestral claims of Athens to leadership in war are the appropriate larger context for the bellicose version of the myth of Adrastus. The narrower context is the desire to prove the ancestral claim by demonstrating that from the very earliest times individuals militarily powerful in their own right recognised the greater military power of Athens, came to her as suppliants for protection and assistance and won the active military intervention they requested, not moreover in mean causes but causes of panhellenic importance (54ff.). The suppliant Adrastus is the first such individual, the suppliant sons of Heracles follow. The proofs of the superiority of the leadership of Athens address the military leadership that will be required for the war against Persia.
Isocrates makes his mythical examples appropriate to his argument not only in the basic choice of version but also in the detail of its treatment. He interweaves the story of Adrastus with the story of the sons of Heracles, thus reinforcing their common message and affording the opportunity for a wide range of effective comparisons (see below p. 98). His narrow focus on the important details is apparent too. Isocrates gives no detail on how Adrastus came to grief. He describes him merely as one who did come to grief, then proceeds directly to his suppliance as proof of the ancestral claims of Athens, contrasting Adrastus' inability to recover his dead with his recognition of the power of Athens to do so (αὖτος μὲν οὕ δυνάμενος ἀνελέοθαι...τὴν δὲ πόλιν ἄξιων βοηθείν...). He proves that Athens took the lead in great causes rather than mean ones by turning what might be seen as the private misfortune of Adrastus into the panhellenic misfortune of all Greeks. The lack of burial is 'misfortune common to all' (ταΐς κοινοῖς τύχαις) and a matter of 'ancient custom and ancestral law' (παλαιὸν ἔθος καὶ πάτριον νόμον), which is of course where Sparta claimed to lead (55).

He focuses the story of the Heraclids in the same way, highlighting the power of Athens by having the sons of Heracles pointedly pass over all other cities except Athens as unable to help them escape the persecution of Eurystheus. He has them turn their misfortune into a matter of panhellenic concern by stressing the benefactions of their father toward all Greeks and appealing to Athens to 'repay with thanks the benefactions of their father to all mankind' (56). Heracles had freed the Greek world from many plagues in the course of the labours Eurystheus had set him. After summarising the main points of the proof of the ancestral claims to leadership he has just established (57), Isocrates briefly describes the success of the Athenians in marching against Thebes and Eurystheus, and how they completely reversed the fortunes of both the king Adrastus and the lord Eurystheus (58-60). He then turns directly to the main argument and the important implications of the ancestral assistance to the suppliant sons of Heracles for the contemporary situation, which is the Sparta claim to leadership. These sons of Heracles were able to found the power of the Peloponnese and Sparta only because the Athenians assisted them and conquered Eurystheus. Their descendants, the modern Spartans, should feel more grateful to
the Athenians than they seem to be for this ancestral benefit. Isocrates drives home the ancestral claims in a figure of triple climax, that it is not ancestral custom for immigrants (Spartans) to rule autochthonous stock (Athenians), or for recipients of favour to rule those who did them favour, or for suppliant refugees to rule those who gave them shelter (61-3). His development of the myth is devastatingly appropriate to the argument of the speech. His tight focus is in clear contrast to the looser compass of Lysias.7

The programme of Panathenaicus is different from that of Panegyricus and so is the argument addressed by the myth of Adrastus. There is no contemporary question of leadership. Isocrates still wishes to praise Athens, as he did in Panegyricus, but this time for its own sake, not to serve any other purpose (35), and he wishes to surpass all others in his praise (36-8). He implies that others have failed either because they did not praise her at all or because they praised her to excess, which created a backlash of opposition, or because they simply failed to rise to the theme (37-8). He will prevail by praising the achievements of Athens in comparison with Sparta. The comparison will demonstrate the complete superiority of Athens, but it will also allow him to make his praise of Athens just and exact, Isocrates' skills can be best appreciated when measured against those of (Lysias) Epitaphios 6-11. The often expressed idea that Isocrates is copying Lysias does scant justice to his greater inventiveness and economy and takes little account of their pursuit of entirely different arguments. Lysias is not mounting an argument about the ancestral rights of Athens to leadership, but is merely milking the myths to commemorate as many as possible of the conventional virtues of the Athenian ancestors. So in the story of Adrastus he draws attention to: Athenian fair-mindedness in deciding that even if he was in the wrong, his men paid for that with their deaths; Athenian concern for the gods regarding the burial; their propriety in sending heralds before going to war; their manly thoughts; their lack of mean motive; their devotion to the common cause; their modesty in victory. Isocrates' more focused line of argument in the Panegyricus had little assistance from this rather generalised view of the heroic past. Lysias' lack of inventiveness can be seen in his attempt at the idea of a change of fortune (16). Where Heracles obtained vengeance on behalf of others who had been wronged, but could not gain vengeance for himself in spite of his many wrongs, his children found vengeance and safety on the one day, thanks to Athens. This is lame.
which means balanced (38-9). It will allow him to admit honestly that Athens has done some wrong but still to praise her by insisting that Sparta has done worse (64-6). He points to the balance in his previous praise of Athens as proof of his credibility in To Philip 342 BC (16, 22). He chooses Sparta as the main point of comparison because she is an acknowledged Greek power (39-40). It would be futile to show her superior to a Phlius or a Sicyon.

Isocrates first compares the exploits of Sparta and Athens in war (41-107), and then turns to the question of their constitutions and to proofs of the superiority of Athens in this respect as well, restricting his proof of course to the ancestral constitution (108-118). He begins with the period of monarchy and the kingship of Theseus (119ff.). He uses as comparisons the history of the kings of Argos and Thebes—worthy cities in that period (Panath. 70-73 and Paneg. 64), but notorious for their in-house atrocities, such as the banquet of Thyestes and the crimes of Oedipus (121-2). His comparisons serve the praise of Athens. He says that he criticises the governments of Argos and Thebes not because he is intent on maligning them, but because he wishes to praise Athens by showing her superiority (123). He goes on to say however that those who wish to praise Athens will not wish merely to show that she was superior to these admittedly evil governments, but that she excelled in all the virtues those who lived then and those who live now. He then describes the monarchy of Theseus at Athens as such a government. Theseus handed over his power to the people in his lifetime, but went on risking his life in their behalf as a private citizen (128-9); his people meanwhile went on from strength to strength, trained in his ways (130ff.) Isocrates calls their government a democracy: demokratia, demos, plethos (129, 130-1, 139). His association of King Theseus with democracy is unusual in one sense, but the rest is in line with the usual ideology of the funeral speech.8 The general excellence of this democratic constitution is demonstrated at great length (130-150). Isocrates then turns to the achievements of this constitution in war (151ff.) He is particularly impressed that the ancestors of the Athenians refrained from wars with Greeks and concentrated on the barbarians (163).

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8 Loraux, 64ff. insists on the democratization of the traditional topeoi of funeral speeches.
The excellence of the democratic constitution in the times of Theseus offers the context for the story of Adrastus. The narrower argument addressed by the myth is the superiority of the Athenian ancestors in 'the use of war' τη περι των πολεμων έπιμελεία (168). Isocrates links this excellence in war with the quality of the constitution since it was from the constitution that all her achievements flowed in peace and in war.

It was no easy matter to prove Athens superior to Sparta in war. Panegyricus proved she had prior rights to war leadership by underlining that suppliants had come to her even before the state of Sparta had come into existence and by showing that the Heraclids, who brought Sparta into existence, could not have done so without her military assistance. Panathenaicus deals with the difficulty in a different way, by arguing that praise should go not to those who create the best war machine, but to those who use it in the best way, and that this results from a superior constitution and superior political leadership (152ff.) The signal difference between Athens and Sparta in their wars is now that Sparta used her excellence in war for evil ends and Athens used hers for good (175-198). There is now an explicit distinction between the fighting spirit and the use to which it is put (198). Isocrates later uses this same type of argument about the concord of Sparta, that this was indeed an excellence but could not be praised because it was used to bad effect (225-8).

This new criterion of superiority in war eliminated Sparta from the contest but it also required an adjustment to the image as Athens. Panegyricus considered the Athenian invasion of Theban territory in support of Adrastus fully justified, but Panathenaicus limits the proper use of war to offensive crusades against Persia (163) and defensive wars against invaders. The Athenians fought the Persians. They also fought defensive wars against those Greeks and barbarians who invaded their own territory, including the Thracians under Eumolpus, the Scythians under the Amazons, the Peloponnesians under Eurystheus and the Persians sent by Darius (193-5). They conquered these in battle and put a stop to their pride (196) in the old language of Panegyricus (58-60); but there was no justification of Athenian invasion of the territory of other Greeks, and this naturally precluded the story of their invasion of Theban territory in the cause
of Adrastus. This change of perspective explains the basic change in
the story from the bellicose or invasive to the peaceful or non-
invasive version. It also produces a novel arrangement of the
traditional topoi. For whereas Isocrates interweaves the offensive
expedition against Thebes with the defensive expedition against
Eurystheus in Panegyricus in order to reinforce their common
message about supplication, in Panathenaicus he deals with them
separately (168, 194) and he includes the war against Eurystheus with
a series of wars against other invaders of Attica. He is no longer
concerned with their common message, but recognises the new
distinction between the just and unjust war, which is now a major
part of his argument. For this reason too perhaps, he treats the
Persian invasion of Attica separately from the larger invasion of
Greece under Xerxes (189 v. 195).

Isocrates accordingly adapts the usual range of patriotic myth to
prove the military superiority of Athens in respect of her superior use
of war, which came from the excellence of the old democratic
constitution. The new version of her dealings with Thebes duly
showed that Athens recognised the just war concept, and preferred
peaceful settlement to war with fellow Greeks who had not invaded
her own land but who were merely guilty of oppression. The
Athenians are also said to have demonstrated a moderation in success
in mythical wars that was admired far more than their bravery and
also came from her excellent constitution (197). Isocrates thus adapts
the myth both to its context, which is the praise of the constitution,
and to the comparison with Sparta, whose warlike spirit could not be
denied, but whose use of justice in war certainly could. He gives the
old democracy the same quality of moderation in success as his
ideally educated man (31ff.), making its embassy speak mildly to the
rulers of Thebes, asking only for a more holy and more lawful answer
from them and merely hinting at the threat of military action
(ὑποθεσάτοντας . . .).

Isocrates also makes the details of the story appropriate to the new
argument and this explains further differences between the two

9 Loraux, 166 observes this separation but gives no explanation of it except
to suggest that it enhances the paradigmatic importance of Marathon.
versions. *Panegyricus* gave no details of Adrastus' expedition. *Panathenaicus* does. Adrastus now has a personal motive for the expedition, to restore his relative, the son of Oedipus, to Thebes. He loses the lives of many Argives in advancing this private cause and lets all his commanders die, while he escapes with his own life. Isocrates now calls his survival 'shameful' (αὐτὸς δ’ ἐπονειδίστως σωθεῖς...). He also introduces King Theseus into the story as a further novelty.

Isocrates introduces these details in order to promote the constitutional superiority of Athens by making Adrastus an inferior king to Theseus. This is a new point of comparison. He has already praised the record of the early monarchical period of Athens in comparison with those of other monarchical states, and has established her superiority by proving that she was free of the usual horrors of kingship like those of the royal houses of Argos and Thebes, which included Thyestes' cannibalism, Oedipus' murder of his father, incest with his mother and so forth (122-3). He now reminds the audience that Adrastus had married his daughter into the accursed house of Oedipus and was supporting the family. The reference to tragedy as the source of the horrors of the early royal houses (122) anticipates the reference to tragedy as the source of the story of Adrastus as well (168) and sharpens the association.

Isocrates presents Adrastus as inferior to Theseus not only in the record of his family, but in his use of war. He has identified the inferior constitution as one where the leaders seek their own advantage over the interests of the wider community (132-3). He introduces Theseus as the example of the good war leader who did not pursue private interests but went on incurring dangers on behalf of the city and the rest of the Greeks even after he handed power over to the people (129). He now makes Adrastus the antithesis of Theseus, as one who led the commonwealth to destruction in his private cause and let his subordinates take all the risks, while he escaped with his life (169). Isocrates goes on to portray the kings of Sparta in these same terms, sending the masses into dangers they preferred to avoid (180). The contrast is persuasive.

Isocrates also tailors the details of the myth to compare Adrastus unfavourably with the people of Athens in his use of war. Adrastus
invades the territory of Thebes in order to assist his relative and he comes to grief. The Athenian people will in the subsequent development of the story refuse to invade the territory of Thebes even in order to assist a suppliant, yet will recover the bodies of the dead through diplomacy. Their success, contrasted with the failure of Adrastus, confirms that their behaviour was the more praiseworthy, because more profitable and correct.

Loraux comments on the presence of Theseus in the story as unusual. She says that the democratization of the myth usually precluded any mention of the king, but that Isocrates introduced him to confirm the democracy by showing that in spite of his presence it was the people who acted. The reason why he does not figure in other versions of the story may well be the democratization, but Isocrates introduces him not just to confirm democracy, but to contrast him with Adrastus and show the Athenian King as superior to other kings as the Athenian people are to other states. The comparison with Argos contributes to the praise of Athens, and since Adrastus prefigures the kings of Sparta in his improper use of war, the minor comparison with Argos reinforces the major comparison with Sparta. Isocrates also tailors the image of Sparta to serve the comparison. He ‘democratizes’ the Spartan constitution in order to reinforce the contrast between Athenian leadership on the one hand, and Argive and Spartan leadership on the other (153-4), making the Spartans and their kings subject the ‘people’ (=periokoi), then expose them to dangers on the kings’ behalf (177-82).

Those who make much of the change from the bellicose to the diplomatic settlement of the myth make nothing of this early deterioration in the portrayal of Adrastus or the introduction of Theseus. Consistency of argument might require them to adopt the political explanation and suppose that Athens was at this time set against peace settlement with Argos, and that Isocrates changed the myth to dishonour her through her mythical king. The wider context of the myth explains the change in a better way. Isocrates is characterising Adrastus as a foil to his constitutional praise of Athens,

10 Loraux, 65f.
tailoring the myth to suit its demands. This is good rhetoric, not dishonest politicking.

Other changes in the details of the treatment confirm the explanation. Adrastus first appeals to the Thebans, unsuccessfully. He then goes as a suppliant to Athens and appeals to them, as in the Panegyricus, in terms of their support for ‘ancient custom and ancestral law’ (παλαιὸν ἔθος καὶ πάτριον νόμον...); but he is more explicit than he was before about the religious constraints on burial. Men observe the right to burial he says ‘not as something laid down by human nature but as something dictated by divine power’ (οὔχ ὑπ’ ἀνθρώπινης κειμένης φύσεως ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ δαίμονιας προστεταγμένης δυνάμεως). This is rich coming from one who is counted among the ‘most unholy’ (123). The new version sets up a multiple comparison that serves the praise of Athens by showing the hypocrisy of Adrastus who made the appeal, the impiety of the Thebans who rejected it, and the true piety of the Athenians who acted on it.

The Athenian ‘people’ send an embassy to Thebes and appeal for a more holy and lawful response, merely hinting at military action if these arguments do not prevail. The casting of war as a hint is appropriate to an argument which seeks to praise Athens as superior in the proper use of war. The people know that war in these circumstances must be merely a secondary resort behind diplomacy. Their approach works and there is further new detail to serve the new argument. The ‘lords’ (κύριοι) of Thebes permit them to recover the bodies. Isocrates now describes the Thebans in terms of their government just as he described the Athenians in terms of theirs, in a way different from Panegyricus, where they are referred to merely as ‘the Thebans’ (58), but appropriate to the new argument about the proper use of war in the context of the constitution. In his earlier discussion, Isocrates defined just three types of constitution: oligarchy, democracy and monarchy, and said that all three could produce good government, but that the appointment of bad leaders could also in all three produce bad government (132). Theseus was after all as good a leader as his democratic successors. Isocrates has this tripartite distinction in mind in his development of the story of Adrastus. The ‘lords’ of Thebes here represent an inferior oligarchic
style of constitution just as the Athenian ‘people’ represent a superior democratic style, and their use of war is accordingly inferior. They did indeed fight a just war against the invading Argives, but they then showed their unjust use of war by refusing to give back the bodies of the dead. The Athenians not only refuse to fight an unjust war, but have a perfectly just view of the return of the bodies. The new version of the myth indeed offers the full range of examples of the three basic constitutions defined in the earlier discussion (132), and this is reflected in a hierarchy of attitudes to war. The monarchical rule of Adrastus led to unjust invasion of Thebes, the oligarchic rule of Thebes led to unjust failure to return the dead, the democratic rule of Athens asserted complete justice in the use of war in both respects. The outcome of the story also shows that while kingship bends the knee to democracy as suppliant, and oligarchy bends her will, democracy does all the bidding. *Panegyricus* had a completely different emphasis.

The Theban response is the most drastic change in the story. They now hand over the bodies, speaking ‘moderately’ about themselves and those who had invaded their land. Isocrates calls this not in accordance with what ‘certain persons’ believe about them, nor in harmony with their previous decision (171). He goes on to justify his treatment and explain how it serves his argument (172-4). It should be clear by now that this argument is the greater praise of Athens.

The view that he chooses the diplomatic solution in order to flatter Thebes is quite untenable. It is unlikely that this was even part of his motive, because the new version offers no compliment to Thebes. It reminds them first of all of the horrors of Oedipus. It gives their oligarchic rulers the opportunity to respond to the demands of religion and law, but has them bow instead to the word of Athens. It makes their moderation the unnatural result of Athenian pressure, whereas the moderation of the Athenians is natural and comes from their superior constitution (151, 197). Isocrates does allow them to choose to bow down to Athens where Adrastus is compelled to supplicate, but this merely enhances the praise of Athens by producing a hierarchy of constitutions and a hierarchy in the use of war, in which Athens has first place.\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\) *Panath.* 92ff. seems also to refer in a derogatory way to the Theban
It is wrong to think that the bellicose version of the settlement was the better way of proving the superiority of Athens in war. Isocrates clearly means his treatment of the story of Adrastus to reflect her military strength as well as her just use of war: ‘How far the city prevailed in the use of war, wishing to show this did I narrate what happened at Thebes’. The proof was that Adrastus the king of the Argives came to supplicate them, and the ‘lords’ of Thebes were put in such a state of mind (τοὺς δὲ κυρίους ἀντιαθῆσαι θεσσαλὼν οὕτω διαθέσαν...) that they elected to bow down to the words sent by the city than the laws set by the deity (ὡστε ἐλέσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐμμεῖναι τοῖς λόγοις τοὺς ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως πεμφθείσιν ἢ τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ δαιμονίου κατασταθείσιν). These things would not have happened unless the city had at that time superior military reputation and power (174). The paradox of showing military superiority through diplomacy seems to me a particularly effective proof of the military superiority of Athens. Xenophon conveyed the full extent of Spartan military supremacy after the Peloponnesian War by saying that at that time people obeyed ‘whatever a Spartan man might order’ (Hell. 3. 1. 5). Isocrates conveys the full extent of Athenian military supremacy in the early period by showing that her mere word was enough to make the rulers of Thebes obey. Panegyricus required her to use force against her fellow Greeks to moderate their pride. Panathenaicus considers her military superiority so great that she does not need to fight. The paradox paid a supreme compliment to the old democracy in making the rulers of Thebes respond to her word rather than the claims of religion. It made her word more authoritative than that of the gods (174). The new version focused the argument for burial more firmly on religion precisely in order to demonstrate this.

medising in the Persian Wars and complicity in the Spartan annihilation of Plataea during the Peloponnesian War. Isocrates would have suppressed this too if he were intent on courting the favour of Thebes.

12 Schmitz-Kahlmann’s reasoning about the paradox is clear but wrong. She asks what could have been more natural in a writer seeking to establish the superiority of Athens in war to have told the bellicose version and concludes without considering the rhetorical effect of paradox that the reason for the change ‘kann also nicht in der Tendenz des Beispiels zu suchen sein’, and that it must be the contemporary political scene.
Isocrates frequently uses paradox as an effective rhetorical device. His very assertion that the old constitution made the Athenians better than the Spartans even in war is also described as ‘paradoxical to the many’ but true nevertheless (176). The *Panegyricus* stories of Adrastus and the sons of Heracles contain a series of paradoxes that highlight the claims of Athens as leader by showing how she produced radical reversals of fortune for those who supplicated her. Adrastus has as reward for his willing supplication all the masterful achievement he could have wished, while Eurystheus, the persecutor of Heracles as well as his sons, who thought to master others, was himself reduced to being a captive and a supplicant against his wishes. Willing supplication gains the world, wilful opposition loses it. Athens also proves paradoxically more powerful than the legendarily powerful Heracles. Heracles could not escape the power of Eurystheus though he suffered continual wrongs. Athens crushed Eurystheus’ power and put him in the hands of Heracles’ children when he wronged them just once (58-60).

Isocrates thus praises Athens in the most effective way, using different proofs in different speeches to serve their different programmes. The principal change in the story of Adrastus promotes his praise of Athens in comparison with Sparta in point of their use of war. It also praises Athens in comparison with other actors in the story. Adrastus favoured aggressive wars for personal reasons and caused large loss of life for his people and disgrace for himself. He had to appeal to Athens for assistance. Thebes held out against Adrastus’ appeal for the recovery of the bodies, but when the request came from Athens, they gave in because they recognised her superior power. Sparta was massively unjust in her use of war, sending her people to destruction in their attempt to destroy other Greeks (177ff.). *Panegyricus* proved Athens superior in war spirit and power. *Panathenaicus* has her prevail in a variety of virtues, not only war spirit and power, but regard for religion and the welfare of other cities in Greece. Athens emerges superior to Sparta, Argos and Thebes in her constitution, her treatment of the Greeks and her concept of just war. Isocrates certainly seized the high ground when he chose the use of war as his base of operations.
Isocrates’ own explanation of his treatment of the myth accommodates this explanation better than the idea that it was written to please Thebes. Isocrates claims that none of those who are ‘able to grasp his drift’ (συνιδεΐν... δισύνθειν) would be so envious or ignorant as not to praise him now and think him sophron for treating the myth in one way in the Panegyricus, now in another. He is confident that he has written ‘well and expediently’ (καλώς... και συμφερόντως). He introduces a Spartan sympathiser in the epilogue to interpret the drift of the speech as a whole in a manner that partly fits the myth and uses the language of its justification. Where Isocrates addresses those who

13 Those who support the Theban reference have difficulty with the justification. Von Armin says 32f. that Isocrates is leaving it to his clever audience to see through his surface impression. Mathieu (1938) 28f. n.2 says he makes the change ‘en faisant appel au témoignage des “tragédies”, en réalité pour des raisons politiques’, Houhaud says 19 that ‘En somme, Isocrate ne nous dit pas vraiment pourquoi il a joué des variations de mythe…’.

14 I argue a new interpretation of the sympathiser’s role in Images of Sparta: Writer and Audience in Isocrates’ Panathenaicus in The Shadow of Sparta (Routledge, 1994) edd. A. Powell and S. Hodkinson 223-271. The argument, which can be only summarised here, recognises the epilogue as a topos used by Isocrates in several of his speeches, most notably To Philip 14ff. The topos describes how he consulted his pupils about a draft or a part of the speech in question, in which he criticises some prominent person or state, and how they tell him that he is unwise to criticise. Their assumption is that people liked to be praised, not blamed, and that those who were criticised would at best ignore critics, or hate the critic, with dire consequences for his reputation. But Isocrates considers criticism to be truthful and improving and he uses their mistaken rejection of the criticism as a negative paradigm, to dispose his audience to avoid their error and accept it. The error of the pupils in the other use of the topos confirms the error of the Spartan sympathiser in the epilogue. Isocrates introduces him as a pupil who makes the signal error of rejecting the criticism of Sparta that balances the praise of Athens, confirming many other indications that we are meant to read his comments about the speech as at least in some respect misguided. He reads the praise the Athens as flattery because he thinks that the speaker must want the widest fame possible, and will achieve this by praising people to the skies, not by criticising them. His mistaken reading of the praise of Athens as flattery goes hand in hand with his rejection of the criticism of Sparta,
are ‘able to grasp the drift’ of the myth, the sympathiser claims Isocrates is testing the audience to see whether it is ‘able to grasp its drift’ (συνιδεῖν δυνηθεὶμ). He thinks it drifts toward pleasing the masses (236-7). Isocrates said his treatment of the myth was done ‘well and expediently’. The sympathiser agrees that the whole speech praised Athens ‘well and expediently’ (καλῶς καὶ προσηκόντως). He adds that this is because it followed the opinion of the masses (261). Isocrates has called himself sophron in his treatment of the myth. The sympathiser calls him emphatically sophron for slanting his praise toward the masses throughout the speech (236-7).

The sympathiser is wrong to see the praise of Athens as flattery. The speech was expedient in praising Athens in a balanced way, developing forceful points of comparison with other states. Isocrates is quite willing to criticise her in this context (53,64 etc.), yet even in the midst of what appear to be his second thoughts about the criticisms of Sparta, Isocrates calls his praise of Athens ‘well and justly’ done (καλῶς καὶ δικαίως 231), which rules out flattery, and he later commends the work as one that aims at the truth rather than gratifying the prejudices of the audience (271). The sympathiser has nevertheless grasped the important truth, that the point of reference of what is appropriate/expedient is the praise of Athens which constitutes the main argument, not the praise of Thebes or any of the minor league.

Loraux says that funeral speeches had less choice in the matter of the image than tragedy because of the demands of the funeral occasion (11), but that they chose the bellicose version of the myth because it was more appropriate to their argument and context (68), and that the funeral speech becomes ‘une histoire dont la rhétorique est l’instrument privilégié’ (143). Isocrates uses the same criterion of propriety to justify both versions of the myth, varying his choice according to the demands of his varying contexts for the praise of Athens. These do not include the wish to win the sympathy of Thebes.

which he also manages to read as ingenious flattery. Hans-Otto Kröner, ‘Dialog und Rede Zur Deutung des Isokrateischen Panathenaikos’ A&A 15 (1969) 102-21 offers the most recent views before mine about the role of the Spartan sympathiser.
The audience and the occasion of delivery of the *Panathenaicus*, and their potential influence on what was appropriate and opportune in the way of argument, are difficult issues. The title suggests that the speech was designed to be delivered at the Great Panathenaia, but this is contradicted by the internal evidence of the speech. There is indeed some very curious evidence about audience and occasion in the epilogue (199-272). Isocrates incorporates into his final version of the speech a report of the reactions of an earlier audience to an earlier draft. The epilogue thus reveals two stages and levels of audience, the first being an internal audience of pupils (including the Spartan sympathiser) who react to the first draft, the second being the (unspecified) external audience who now read in the epilogue the report of how Isocrates gathered his first audience to hear a preliminary draft, and then re-drafted it to take account of their reactions to it.15

If we read this epilogue at face value, we must conclude that though Isocrates chose the pupils who formed his internal audience, he had very little control over the identity of his external audience, for there is a strong suggestion that he ‘published’ the final result by distributing copies of the speech to the pupils who formed his internal audience, and he implies that they would take them wherever they wished (233,262). The Spartan sympathiser implies that he will read/interpret his copy to an audience of Spartans (247,250ff.). The other pupils would have their own contacts and this opens the possibility of multiple audiences of many different sympathies and opinions.

The difficulty in taking the epilogue at face value as a real account of Isocrates’ method of publication is that it is a ‘topos’ which Isocrates uses in other speeches as well, with the intention of securing a friendly reception from his external audience.16 Yet the ‘topos’ is bound to reflect some general level of reality, and there is no reason not to accept what he implies, that he ‘published’ the speech via the agency of his pupils to wider and disparate audiences. This makes sense for one who makes an issue of his inability to speak in public himself (10ff.).

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15 See op. cit. n.14 above., esp. 229ff.

If we take the epilogue at face value, we must conclude that Isocrates could not dictate his audience beyond choosing his pupils as the first recipients of copies of his speech, and that since they are of all kinds of sympathy and will take them where they wish, their audiences must also include all shades of sympathies. One of them might read/interpret the speech at the Panathenaia, and the average audience there would certainly include all shades of opinion, but the other occasions would be as multiple as the audiences, with the attendant problem of catering for a range of audience expectation. The Spartan sympathiser’s misreading of his criticisms of the Spartans in the first draft confirms that the audience is a problem; Isocrates takes elaborate precautions against such readings in the final draft, for the whole epilogue is designed to dispose the audience to accept the criticisms.17

There is indeed clear evidence that Isocrates did aim at all shades of opinion about Athens. His stated aim was to prove the excellence of Athens in a balanced way, by comparing her with Sparta (35-40). There had been those in the past who had gone to extremes of praise or blame, and those who chose the middle way had not risen to their theme (37-8). These views would be reflected still in the reactions of his own audiences. He would succeed in his persuasion by neither praising nor blaming her in absolute terms, but only in comparison with Sparta, reconciling them to the view that Athens was certainly not above criticism, but much more praiseworthy than her main rivals. He develops this pattern of thought consistently throughout the speech (53,57,64-66 etc.). He recreated the image of Athens in this way, mediating between the views of her extreme supporters and her extreme opponents, and proving to the middle-minded that such balance was possible.

Isocrates even sought to reconcile those in his audience who sympathised with Sparta. There had always been this element in Athens and elsewhere. His image of Sparta is largely negative and in his main text he refers several times to the supporters of Sparta, some of whom would not tolerate a word said against her, and would react to his negativity by attacking Athens in turn, or trying to find areas in

17 Op.cit. 225 etc.
which Spartan was nevertheless superior (62ff., 108ff.). The speech is an exercise in the management of these responses. Isocrates admittedly begins to regret his criticisms and is tempted to withdraw them when the Spartan sympathiser of the epilogue finds them so bitter, but the sympathiser is countered in his turn, and the final version of the speech retains the criticisms intact. Isocrates' concern with the reactions of specifically Spartan sympathisers inside the text suggests that they were a concern to him in his external audience.

Reconciliation of opposed viewpoints on the middle ground can also be traced in the treatment of the myth of Adrastus, both in the comparative approach to the superiority of Athens, which has already been explored, and in the democratization of the ancestral constitution. Panathenaicus offers a more democratic version of the myth than Panegyricus, and this could be seen as a move to reconcile the 'democrats', but the democracy in question is the democratized ancestral constitution rather than the contemporary democracy, and this could be seen as a move to reconcile those less inclined to extreme democracy (114ff.). The 'democrats' might be satisfied with a King Theseus who was a democrat in disguise, and the 'monarchists' (including Spartan sympathisers?) with a people who flourished under a king. Isocrates produces his usual leavening of praise with criticism in his treatment of the constitution. His position is that though the earlier constitution was superior, the Athenians were obliged to change it for reasons of expediency, but that 'none could blame those who chose it' (114), the choice was neither blind nor uninformed of the consequences (115-7) and was 'what all sensible men would choose and wish, though some of those who pretend to wisdom would deny it if they were asked' (118). This could be read as ironic, but Isocrates openly states his desire to praise Athens in a balanced way, and the analysis successfully sets moderate praise for practical success against the nobility of the ideal.

The main point made in this paper is that the requirements of the different arguments of Panegyricus and Panathenaicus dictated Isocrates' choice of version of the myth of Adrastus and controlled the details of the presentation. The changes in the myth seem to be set in the context of the creation of a new image of Athens, in which
Isocrates sought to balance his praise and reconcile extremes of praise and blame, including those of Spartan sympathisers. The speech is nevertheless a strange and complex beast, and its concerns are fully worthy of further investigation.

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