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THE PNYX IN THE HISTORY OF ATHENS



Edited by
Björn Forsén and Greg Stanton

The Pnyx in the History of Athens

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Reflections on the Number of Citizens Accommodated in the Assembly Place on the Pnyx

Mogens Herman Hansen

Having read Björn Forsén's recent article in *Hesperia* and heard the papers by Susan Rotroff and John Camp I am persuaded that the second rebuilding of the Pnyx, i.e. the construction of Pnyx III, took place in the fourth century B.C. The three objections I stated in 1989¹ have all been answered and disposed of. As the evidence stands I will endorse the conclusions reached in both articles, and return to the fourth century date. I did in fact myself believe in that date when I wrote and published my four articles about the Pnyx.² It was only in 1989, in the addendum to my third article, that I changed my mind and preferred the Roman date. I have now again accepted the fourth century B.C. dating, as will be apparent in the forthcoming German and Italian editions of *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*. My only reservation is signalled by the words "as the evidence stands", because I believe that the problem of the date of Pnyx III can only be solved once and for all by a new excavation of the Pnyx itself. Let me add, however, that I do expect such an excavation to confirm the conclusions of Forsén, Camp and Rotroff.

Some Consequences of the Dating of Pnyx III into the Fourth Century B.C.

I am not only persuaded that Pnyx III is a fourth century monument, I have also been persuaded by Susan Rotroff's contribution that the construction of it must be dated "some years before the end of the third quarter of the fourth century B.C.", that is, to state it a little less cryptically, in the 330s.³ This was the date arrived at by Homer Thompson when

¹ Hansen (1989b), 141; Hansen (1991), 128.

² Hansen (1982), 241-248 = Hansen (1983), 25-33 with addenda at 34; Hansen (1985a), 241-250 = Hansen (1989b), 129-140 with addenda at 141; Hansen (1986), 89-98 = Hansen (1989b), 143-152 with addenda at 153; Hansen (1988a), 51-58 = Hansen (1989b), 155-162 with addenda at 163-165; Hansen (1987), 12-19.

³ Rotroff and Camp (forthcoming); cf. Rotroff in this volume, 40 ("a terminal date of not before *ca.*

in 1943 he changed his mind and brought Pnyx III back from the Hadrianic period to the 4th century B.C.⁴ But in his article in *Hesperia* Supplement 19 he suggested a date in the mid-340s.⁵ His reasons for this small but not unimportant updating of Pnyx III were historical rather than archaeological. One source especially seemed suggestive: in the speech *Against Timarchos*, delivered in 346/5, Aischines refers to a notorious meeting of the assembly in which a report from the Areopagos about a building programme concerning the Pnyx was drowned in laughter during the discussion.⁶ On the assumption that the rebuilding of the Pnyx was carried out immediately afterwards Thompson preferred to connect Pnyx III with Euboulos rather than with Lykourgos, and thus dated it in the 340s instead of in the period 336-324. Susan Rotroff's careful examination of the 4th century pottery, however, seems to confirm Thompson's earlier suggestion made in 1943, i.e. that the construction of Pnyx III was part of the magnificent Lykourgan building programme carried out in the prosperous period after the peace of 338.⁷

The lower date of Pnyx III means that three important literary sources must now be associated with the remains of Pnyx II, and not with Pnyx III as would have been the case if the reconstruction had taken place in the mid-forties and not in the mid-thirties or later. The three sources are:

1. The law about the presiding tribe, *he proedreuousa phyle*, proposed and carried in 346/5 and upheld by the *dikasteria* in spite of the *graphe nomon me epitedeion theinai* brought against it. Aeschin. 1.34: ἀναγνώσεται οὖν ὑμῖν τοὺς νόμους τοὺς περὶ τῆς εὐκοσμίας κειμένους τῶν ρητόρων. τὸν γὰρ περὶ τῆς προεδρίας τῶν φυλῶν νόμον Τιμαρχος οὕτως καὶ ἕτεροι τοιοῦτοι ρήτορες συνελθόντες γεγραμμένοι εἰσι μὴ ἐπιτῆδειον εἶναι, ἵν' ἐξῇ αὐτοῖς καὶ λέγειν καὶ ζῆν ὡς αὐτοὶ βούλονται. Cf. Aeschin. 3.4: τῆς δὲ τῶν ρητόρων ἀκοσμίας οὐκέτι κρατεῖν δύνανται οὔθ' οἱ νόμοι οὔθ' οἱ πρυτάνεις οὔθ' οἱ πρόεδροι οὔθ' ἡ προεδρεύουσα φυλή, τὸ δέκατον μέρος τῆς πόλεως. Dem. 25.90: οὐ πρυτάνεις, οὐ κῆρυξ, οὐκ ἐπιστάτης, οὐχ ἡ προεδρεύουσα φυλή τούτου κρατεῖν δύναται. — The latter two passages show that, although introduced when the Athenians assembled on Pnyx II, the law was still in force during the period of Pnyx III.

2. Demosthenes' famous description in the speech *On the Crown* of the *ekklesia synkletos* held in 339 after Philip's capture of Elateia. Dem. 18.169: ἐσπέρα μὲν γὰρ ἦν, ἦκε δ' ἀγγέλλων τις ὡς τοὺς πρυτάνεις ὡς Ἑλάτεια κατείληπται. καὶ μετὰ ταῦθ' οἱ μὲν εὐθὺς ἐξαναστάντες μεταξὺ δειπνοῦντες τοὺς τ' ἐκ τῶν σκηνῶν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐξεύργον καὶ τὰ γέρρ' ἐνεπίμπρασαν, οἱ δὲ τοὺς στρατηγούς μετεπέμποντο καὶ τὸν σαλπικτὴν ἐκάλουν. καὶ θορύβου πλήρης ἦν ἡ πόλις. τῇ δ' ὑστεραίᾳ, ἅμα τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, οἱ μὲν πρυτάνεις τὴν βουλὴν ἐκάλουν εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον, ὑμεῖς δ' εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐπορεύεσθε, καὶ πρὶν ἐκεῖνην

335 for the fill of Pnyx III").

4 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 269-283.

5 Thompson (1982), 145.

6 Aeschin. 1.81-84.

7 In the discussion of this paper Susan Rotroff pointed out that the 4th century pottery found in the fill could probably not be dated so exactly that a construction date in the 340s could be ruled out; but then Judith Binder reminded us that the 4th century pottery found in the fill was fragmentary and worn which indicates that the earth in which it was found was not used as fill of Pnyx III immediately after the pottery was produced but only some years later. Susan Rotroff agreed and consequently, as the evidence stands, a date in the Lykourgan period is to be preferred to a date in the 340s. The building programme may well have been discussed in the assembly in 346/5 as indicated by Aischines' description at 1.80-83, but the rebuilding itself seems to have been undertaken more than a decade later.

χρηματίζει καὶ προβουλευσαι πᾶς ὁ δῆμος ἄνω καθήτο.

3. Apollodoros' description in the speech *Against Neaira* of how citizenship decrees passed in one *ekklesia* must be ratified by the quorum of 6,000 immediately before the opening of the following *ekklesia*, when citizens are gathering in front of the assembly place. Dem. 59.89f.: ἔπειτ' ἐπειδὴν πεισθῇ ὁ δῆμος, καὶ δῶ τὴν δωρεάν, οὐκ ἐὰ κυρίαν γενέσθαι τὴν πόλιν, εἰ μὴ τῇ ψήφῳ εἰς τὴν ἐπιούσαν ἐκκλησίαν ὑπερεξακισχίλιοι Ἀθηναίων ψηφίσωνται κρύβδην ψηφίζόμενοι. τοὺς δὲ πρυτάνεις κελεύει τιθέναι τοὺς καθίσκους ὁ νόμος καὶ τὴν ψήφον διδόναι προσιόντι τῷ δήμῳ πρὶν τοὺς ξένους εἰσιέναι καὶ τὰ γέρρα ἀναιρεῖν, ἵνα κύριος ὢν αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος σκοπῇται πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄντινα μέλλει πολίτην ποιήσεσθαι, εἰ ἄξιός ἐστι τῆς δωρεᾶς ὁ μέλλων λήψεσθαι.

After these preliminary remarks on chronology I shall focus on two problems: (a) how many citizens could be seated in the auditorium of Pnyx I, II and III? and (b) what is the relation between the introduction of assembly pay in the 4th century and the number of citizens attending a session of the *ekklesia*?

The Maximum Attendance of Pnyx I, II and III

1. Like all other Greeks⁸ the Athenians sat down during the sessions of the *ekklesia*. There is no evidence whatsoever that they ever attended standing. This applies to all periods: the fifth century (= Pnyx I),⁹ the fourth century down to the 330s (= Pnyx II)¹⁰ and the age of Lykourgos (= Pnyx III).¹¹

In the fifth century the people sat on the bare rock (perhaps on cushions),¹² whereas the *prytaneis* were seated on wooden benches.¹³ In the fourth century the *prytaneis* were still given *proedria*, even after the chairmanship of the *ekklesia* had passed to the board of nine *proedroi*.¹⁴ For the ordinary citizens who attended a session our only sources are two passages in Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazousai* where he uses the expression ἔδρας καταλαβεῖν about the audience.¹⁵ McDonald took ἔδραι to mean some kind of artificial seats, perhaps wooden benches.¹⁶ Homer Thompson, on the other hand, is sceptical.¹⁷ Both in *The Athenian Ecclesia* and in *The Athenian Assembly* I have followed McDonald,¹⁸ but on reflection I have to sound a warning. There are quite a few attestations of ἔδρα being used in a metaphorical sense,¹⁹ and in the two Aristophanes passages mentioned above ἔδρας

⁸ H. Od. II.239; Thuc. I.87.3; VIII.76.3; Xen. *Anab.* VI.2.5; VII.1.33; Cic. *Flacc.* 16; cf. Vischer (1873), 380-390.

⁹ Thuc. VI.13.1; Ar. *Eq.* 754.

¹⁰ Ar. *Eccl.* 23, 86, 94, 98-9; Aeschin. 2.68; Dem. 18.169.

¹¹ Hyp. 1.9; Dem. 10.75; Theophr. *Char.* 26.5.

¹² Ar. *Eq.* 754, 783; *Vesp.* 31-33, 42-44.

¹³ Ar. *Ach.* 25.

¹⁴ Din. 2.13.

¹⁵ Ar. *Eccl.* 22, 86.

¹⁶ McDonald (1943), 75.

¹⁷ Thompson (1982), 141-142: "Wooden seating for the whole auditorium would have been so costly for both installation and maintenance as to be virtually unthinkable."

¹⁸ Hansen (1987), 18 with note 130; Hansen (1983), 17, 29 with n. 17: "Following McDonald I am less pessimistic than Thompson about wooden seating for the whole of the auditorium. The seats in the 'Periclean' theatre were probably of wood, see Pickard-Cambridge (1946), 19, and I can see no reason to be sceptical about similar seating facilities on the Pnyx."

¹⁹ E.g. Hdt. VII.37.2; Pl. *Leg.* 904b; Arist. *Hist. An.* 619b32.

καταλαβεῖν may mean 'to take a seat' in the sense of 'to sit down', perhaps on a bench, but possibly directly on the ground or on some kind of chair. There is one more piece of evidence that there were benches in the auditorium of the *ekklesia*, viz., Suda s.v. ἱκρία (275 Adler): ὁρθὰ ξύλα ἢ σανιδώματα τῆς νηός. καὶ τὰ τῶν θεάτρων, ἃ ἦσαν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. ἐπὶ ξύλων γὰρ ἐκάθητο.²⁰ If we could trace the Suda's source this note might settle the question, but it is not advisable to trust a lexicographer without supporting evidence. So we cannot be sure that the Athenians in Pnyx II and III sat on narrow benches. They may well have, but they may also have been sitting on cushions or perhaps on low stools²¹ or on folding stools like those described by Athenaios²² and attested both in vase-painting and in sculpture.²³

2. Now how many citizens could be squeezed into the assembly place on the Pnyx? No matter how we make our calculations it is important to remember the distinction between a standing audience and a seated one. In a Swiss *Landsgemeinde* most citizens are standing during the meeting, but some are sitting (on wooden benches), especially the elderly and disabled. In the densely packed parts of the *Landsgemeindeplatz* in Sarnen I measured the attendance to be 4 persons per square metre if standing and 2.5 persons per square metre if seated.²⁴

Obviously more people than that can be squeezed together in a train or a bus, and perhaps the British, being patient, and the Japanese, being small, have the record — I will not dispute that.²⁵ But again: persons seated in a bus or a train will unquestionably take up more space than those standing. Stanton reminds us that "people in the eastern Mediterranean often sit on their haunches rather than sit on the ground with their legs in front of them."²⁶ This is undoubtedly true, but not supported by the sources we have for the Pnyx. On the contrary, in Aristophanes' *Knights* the sausage-seller provides Demos with a cushion he has had sewn and points out that the alternative to sitting on a cushion is to sit on the hard rock; but that would not have been the case if Demos had been sitting on his haunches.²⁷

In his paper Stanton does not take the distinction between standing and being seated into account, e.g. when he writes "If the Swiss are satisfied with 0.25 sq.m. per person when standing at meetings of the *Landsgemeinden*, ancient Athenians were probably prepared to endure less than the 0.23 sq.m. per person I have suggested above."²⁸ The comparison made here is, in my opinion, false since the Athenians were invariably seated during a session of the *ekklesia* whereas almost all the Swiss citizens are standing in the *Landsgemeinde* (apart from a small minority of mostly old and disabled who are seated).

3. What is then the minimum space required for a seated person who is attending a large meeting? I would suggest that the answer is 0.4 m.², and my guidelines used to calculate the maximum attendance are *not* the Danish building regulations, as Stanton seems to

²⁰ See also Schol. Ar. *Thesm.* 395: ὡς ἔτι ἱκρίων ὄντων ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις ἐπὶ ξύλων καθημένων.

²¹ Cf. the *χαμαιζήλος* δῖφρος mentioned at Pl. *Phd.* 89b.

²² Athen. 512c: ὀκλαδίας τε αὐτοῖς δῖφρους ἔφερον οἱ παῖδες, ἵνα μὴ καθίζοιεν ὡς ἔτυχε.

²³ See for example the kalyx krater by Euphronios in Berlin (F 2180). For a full discussion see Richter (1966), 38-40, 43-46.

²⁴ Hansen (1983), 213.

²⁵ Stanton in this volume, 19.

²⁶ Stanton in this volume, 19. — This way of sitting is attested on red-figure Athenian vases; cf. e.g. the cup by the Ambrosios painter in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 01.8024.

²⁷ Ar. *Eq.* 783-785; cf. 754.

²⁸ Stanton in this volume, 19.

assume, but — more importantly — (a) information obtained from architects constructing sports centres, (b) personal inspection of political mass meetings, especially the Swiss *Landsgemeinden*, and (c) the study of ancient Greek theatres.

Stanton questions my calculations and arrives at a much smaller figure, namely 0.23 m.², in the following way: he takes the 36 cm attested in Corinth to be the width of a seat, then he allows for 64 cm only for the depth of a seat from back to front. 36 by 64 cm is 0.23 m.², a figure Stanton now applies to the entire floorage of Pnyx II, on his calculation 3,400 m.², and assumes a maximum attendance of 14,800, whereas my estimate would be that an auditorium of 3,400 m.², if filled, must have accommodated ca. 8,500 persons.

Which figure is right, 0.4 m.² or 0.23 m.²? I suggest that instead of using artificial minima, not attested anywhere, we should rather supplement the study of actual modern mass meetings with the preserved remains of Greek theatres. After all, most Greek *poleis* seem to have used their theatre for meetings of the assembly.²⁹ Thus it would not be all that strange if the seating density on the Pnyx was of the same order as the seating density in an ancient theatre.

Let me quote what I wrote in 1983: "The figure 0.4 m.² for a seated person is corroborated by an examination of the preserved Greek theatres. In the theatre of Dionysos in Athens the width of a row of seats is 75 cm, in Epidauros the figure is 75-76 cm, and in Corinth 77-81 cm. In Athens the front of each row of seats is marked with vertical lines ca. 41 cm apart, and Schultz suggested convincingly, with reference to the practise in London theatres, that these lines mark the limits of individual seats. In Corinth similar marks are found 36 cm apart." So a spectator in a Greek theatre required no more than ca. 0.30 m.². "But we must allow for vertical stairways between the blocks (*kerkides*) and semicircular passages dividing the blocks horizontally (*diazomata*)."³⁰

Here I would like to elaborate two points. (a) In a Greek theatre with stone seats the benches fill only 50-80% of the entire koilon. One example will suffice: in Aspendos the rows of seats fill ca. 55% of the entire *koilon*, the rest being filled by the *orchestra* and the *diazomata*. Again, the steps between the *kerkides* fill more than 10% of the rows of seats. Thus the actual seats add up to no more than about half the entire theatre. In an *ekklesiasterion* the free space around the bema was undoubtedly much smaller than an orchestra in a theatre, and the passages between the seats did not have to be as wide as in a theatre; still, if the citizens were seated on wooden benches, there must have been vertical and horizontal passages between the benches, and even if people were sitting on the ground or on stools they cannot have filled the entire floorage in the way imagined by Stanton. For one thing, it would in that case have been impossible for a "backbencher" to come forward to the bema and address his fellow citizens. Furthermore, to have the floor of the auditorium filled to the last seat with 0.23 m.² per participant would require more discipline and organisation than even I am prepared to expect from a crowd of Athenian citizens. In all mass meetings I have studied I have noted that people tend to stand densely packed in some parts of the auditorium whereas in others they stand (or sit) far more dispersed. That is how people behave unless under military discipline and we have no evidence that the *syllogeis tou demou* or other magistrates interfered with how the Athenians were seated in the auditorium. I feel that there is a contradiction between Stanton's calculation of the maximum attendance and his sketch of the Athenian national character.³¹

²⁹ Hansen and Fischer-Hansen (1994), 48-53.

³⁰ Hansen (1983), 213.

³¹ Stanton in this volume, 21. Let me add that I find the sketch somewhat one-sided. Stanton does not mention, for example, that several thousand Athenian jurors every second day or so conducted the

(b) The theatres in Athens and Korinth are the only ones for which we know the width of an individual seat. But the depth of a row of seats is of course known for a considerable number of stone *koila*, and a study of this figure alone can shed further light on the way in which the Greeks were seated in theatres and assembly places of similar construction. For political meeting places equipped with benches of stone, several of them probably *ekklesiasteria* or perhaps *dikasteria*, the width of the steps ranges from 35 to 90 cm.³² Again proper theatres with an *orchestra* and a *skene* show a considerable variation too.³³

The attested variations indicate that there were at least three different ways of being seated. In *koila* with deep seats, as for example in the theatres in Athens and in Korinth, people must have been seated on the front part of a step with their feet placed on the rear part of the step below.³⁴ In *koila* with shallow seats, as for example the meeting places in Lato and Samothrake, there is not room enough for the feet of the men seated on the step behind, and one of two possible ways of seating the audience must have been adopted. Either the individual seats must have been considerably broader than the 36-41 cm. attested in Korinth and Athens so that a person seated above could place his feet not behind but between two persons seated below, or, alternatively, people must have been seated on the second, fourth and sixth steps with their feet on the first, third and fifth steps, etc. The first method is attested in Sophilos' famous picture of spectators watching a horse race (Fig. 15).³⁵ The second method is not attested in any source, but it is a possibility we cannot preclude.³⁶

As stated above, the actual area of an individual seat in a Greek theatre as far as it is known seems to be *ca.* 0.30 m.², considerably more than the 0.23 m.² calculated by Stanton. Second, if we allow for vertical and horizontal passages on the analogy of Greek theatres, 0.4 m.² per person seems, once more, to be the correct figure for the auditorium as a whole. It is in my opinion unrealistic to imagine that the 3,400 m.² were filled to the last square inch with citizens squeezed into the minimum space required for an individual but not attested for large meetings. Instead of operating with artificial maxima, I prefer to rely on observations of actual mass meetings combined with a study of Greek theatres.

4. So I uphold my contention that there is a significant connection between the quorum of 6,000 and the dressed auditorium of Pnyx I which seems to have covered an area of 2,400 m.². I am much attracted by Stanton's reconstruction of the auditorium of Pnyx II and prepared to accept a floorage of 3,400 m.², but that does not imply that it was constructed to accommodate many more than the required quorum of 6,000. It is rather the size of the auditorium of Pnyx III that has become the bone of contention after Susan Rotroff's and John Camp's renewed inspection of the site. John Camp has pointed out, in my opinion convincingly, that it is unbelievable that the amount of earth-filling required by Thompson's and Travlos' reconstruction can have disappeared by erosion without leaving

complicated sortition outlined by Aristotle in the *Ath. Pol.* 63-66. Or that every speech delivered in a private suit was measured by the water clock, etc. etc.

³² Lato: 35-36 cm.; Samothrake: 40 cm.; the Panionion: 55 cm.; Kassope: 66 cm.; Poseidonia: 72 cm.; Metapontion: 75 cm.; Rhegion: 83 cm.; Argos: 90 cm. See Hansen and Fischer-Hansen (1994), 57-76.

³³ Chaironeia: 55 cm. (measured by Rune Frederiksen); Aptera: 61 cm.; Thorikos: 61-65 cm.; Delphi: 65 cm.; Mantinea: 66.5 cm.; Priene: 68.5 cm.; Aigeira: 65-72 cm.; Boiotian Orchomenos: 67-71 cm. (measured by Rune Frederiksen); Segesta: 70 cm.; Megalopolis 70 cm.; Isthmia 70 cm.; Argos: 72 cm.; Dodone 73-81 cm. (measured by Kirsten Kvist Hansen); Epidauros: *ca.* 75 cm.; Eretria: 74-82 cm.; Sikyon: 78.5 cm.; Syracuse: 83 cm. See especially Dilke (1950), 21-62.

³⁴ See the seated persons depicted on the so-called Asterita vase, a Corinthian column-krater of *ca.* 560 B.C., published by Beazley (1957), 233-244.

³⁵ Athens National Museum 15499.

³⁶ Suggested for the theatre at Chaironeia by Dilke (1950), 36.

any trace either of the fill itself or of an upper part of the retaining wall needed to support it. The inference is either (a) that there was no earth filling and that the floor of Pnyx III sloped downwards from the bema — but that is hard to reconcile with the fact that the Athenians were seated during the sessions; or (b) that there was some fill to bring up the floor of the auditorium to the level of the bema, but that the auditorium was much smaller than the 5,550 m.² calculated by Thompson and Travlos in their reconstruction.

The *ekklesiastikon* and its Connection with the Attendance Numbers of the Assembly

1. The auditorium of Pnyx I was open, the auditorium of Pnyx II (and of Pnyx III) was closed on all sides. It was closed off to the north by the retaining walls and to the south by scarps. There was no natural delimitation of the auditorium to the east and west, between the points where the side scarps and the retaining wall ended, but the *gerra* mentioned in the Neaira speech, and probably in the speech *On the Crown* as well, show that a temporary fence was set up before each session; a fence which must have run from the western end of the western retaining wall along the promenade above the scarps to the south and to the eastern end of the retaining wall.³⁷ Furthermore, the auditorium was closed on all sides by *miltos* — presumably sprinkled on the ground.³⁸

Why this change from an open to a closed auditorium? In my opinion the new type of auditorium must be connected with the introduction of the *ekklesiastikon*. We know from the *Ath. Pol.* that Agyrrhios first introduced a fee of 1 obol; later Herakleides of Klazomenai raised it to a fee of 2 obols; and then again Agyrrhios to a fee of 3 obols.³⁹ In the *Ekklesiazousai* Aristophanes provides us with an additional piece of information, namely that the fee was paid out to a fixed number of participants only,⁴⁰ perhaps the required quorum of 6,000. From Aristophanes' play we can infer that the *terminus ante quem* for the introduction of the *ekklesiastikon* was 393/2, but it is perfectly possible that the fee of 3 obols was paid already in or before 400 B.C., i.e. contemporarily with the construction of Pnyx II.⁴¹

We must assume that as soon as citizens were paid for attending the assembly, control became necessary and with the control came the change in the physical form of the meeting place, the *ekklesiasterion* on the Pnyx. But why did the Athenians introduce the *ekklesiastikon*? and what is the relation between assembly pay and the size of the auditorium of Pnyx II? Again the answer is stated explicitly by Aristotle in the passage just mentioned: *Arist. Ath. Pol.* 41.3: *μισθοφόρον δ' ἐκκλησίαν τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀπέγνωσαν ποιεῖν. οὐ συλλεγομένων δ' εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ἀλλὰ πολλὰ σοφίζομένων τῶν πρυτάνεων, ὅπως προσιστῇται τὸ πλῆθος πρὸς τὴν ἐπικύρωσιν τῆς χειροτονίας, πρῶτον μὲν Ἀγύρριος ὀβολὸν ἐπόρισεν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτον*

³⁷ Hansen (1989b), 129-135.

³⁸ *Ar. Eccl.* 378-379: *καὶ δῆτα πολὺν ἢ μίλτος, ὃ Ζεῦ φίλτατε, γέλων παρέσχευ, ἦν προσέρραινον κύκλω.*

³⁹ *Arist. Ath. Pol.* 41.3.

⁴⁰ *Ar. Eccl.* 291-292, 389.

⁴¹ Hansen (1989b), 154, cf. Hansen (1987), 13. Plutarch's report that the assembly place was rebuilt under the Thirty is probably anecdotal but may contain a core of truth, in which case the most reasonable explanation is that the Thirty used the reconstruction as a pretext for having the assembly place closed. On this interpretation the actual reconstruction was carried out only after the restoration of the democracy in 403. For this interpretation see Moysey (1981), 31-37.

Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Κλαζόμενιος ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπικαλούμενος διώβολον, πάλιν δ' Ἀγύρριος τριώβολον.

There is no reason to doubt the explanation offered by Aristotle; the problem is how to interpret the passage. The ratification of decrees took place before the opening of an *ekklesia*,⁴² and, accordingly, Aristotle's piece of information allows for two different interpretations:

(a) If too few citizens attend the *ekklesia* a dole will stimulate attendance and help to bring up the number of participants. (b) If many participants arrive late, a dole paid out to first comers or to those who arrive before a certain hour will stimulate punctuality. The number of participants during peak hours may be the same, but a sufficient number, e.g. the required quorum, will be present already when the meeting begins.

Some historians (including myself) have stressed (a) as the principal motive for the introduction of the *ekklesiastikon*⁴³ but, on the analogy of a famous inscription from Iasos, Philippe Gauthier has argued that (b) must be the true reason for the *ekklesiastikon*.⁴⁴ In Iasos a waterclock was set up in front of the meeting place, the jar was unbunged at sunrise and the dole paid out to citizens who arrived while the water was still flowing.⁴⁵ Combining this source with the information that the Athenian *ekklesiastikon* was paid out to first comers only, Gauthier assumes that assembly pay was introduced exclusively in order to ensure punctuality, not to ensure a better attendance.

Gauthier is right in emphasising an aspect often neglected by historians, but, in my opinion, he overstates his case when he tries to argue that ensuring punctuality was the only reason for the introduction of the *ekklesiastikon*. The two objectives, to get more citizens to attend and to make them arrive earlier, are in no way mutually exclusive:⁴⁶ the *ekklesiastikon* would in itself ensure a better attendance, and if paid out to first comers only or only to those who arrived before sunrise, the result would be that a quorum was present already when the meeting was opened.

That the Athenian *ekklesiastikon* had both effects is apparent from the *parodos* of Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazousai*. The first lines of the strophe support the view that the introduction of the *ekklesiastikon* stimulated more citizens to arrive in time for the opening of the session: χωρῶμεν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ὦνδρες. ἠπείλησε γὰρ ὁ θεσμοθέτης, ὅς ἂν μὴ πρῶ πάντῳ τοῦ κνέφους ἦκη κεκοιμημένος ... μὴ δώσειν τὸ τριώβολον. But the first lines of the antistrophe show that the *ekklesiastikon* also had the effect that many more citizens turned up for the meetings: ὄρα δ' ὅπως ὠθήσομεν τούσδε τοὺς ἐξ ἄστεως ἦκοντας, ὅσοι πρὸ τοῦ μέν, ἡνίκ' ἔδει λαβεῖν ἐλθόντ' ὀβολὸν μόνον, καθήντο λαλοῦντες ἐν τοῖς στεφανώμασιν, νυνὶ δ' ἐνοχλοῦσ' ἄγαν. In his commentary on the play R.G. Ussher has the following note on ἐνοχλοῦσι: "they make themselves a nuisance by crowding the meetings, whereas before they never came at all."⁴⁷

Furthermore, the reference to the threat uttered by the *thesmothes* may suggest that in classical Athens, as in Hellenistic Iasos, the dole was paid out only to those who arrived before a certain hour; yet two other passages in the play show that the dole was paid out to a fixed number of citizens in the order they arrived regardless of when they arrived.

⁴² Dem. 59.89 quoted above; cf. Hansen (1983), 13, Hansen (1989b), 130-133.

⁴³ Hansen (1983), 18-19.

⁴⁴ See Hansen (1989b), 148, n. 14; Gauthier (1993), 231-250.

⁴⁵ *I. Iasos* 20 = Michel (1900), 345-346, no. 466, republished with an excellent and extensive commentary by Gauthier (1990), 417-443.

⁴⁶ Correctly pointed out by D. Musti in the discussion of Gauthier's paper; see Gauthier (1993), 249.

⁴⁷ Ussher (1973), 119.

Chremes complains that he was too late to obtain the *ekklesiastikon*, but the reason he states is not that he arrived later than usual, but that an unexpected crowd had shown up before him (380-384); the inference is that he would have been paid if the session had been attended only by the usual number of participants. Similarly, although it is already morning (312), Blepyros envisages the possibility of attending the *ekklesia* and *being paid for it* (352ff., 389); again the presumption is that a certain number of citizens were paid and that even late comers might obtain the allowance if only they arrived before the fixed number of *symbola* had been handed out.⁴⁸ In this important respect the Athenian practice differed from what was done in Iasos, where the dole was paid out for a fixed period measured by the clock. All who arrived before the water ran out would be paid, all who arrived later would have to attend (or to leave) unpaid.

Finally, the reconstruction of the *ekklesiastikon* based on Aristophanes' play must be supplemented with what we know about assembly pay in the 320s. Aristotle's mention of the *ekklesiastikon* at *Ath. Pol.* 62.2 conveys the impression that all participants were paid. We know that *symbola* were still being handed out to participants in 341/0,⁴⁹ but we have no way of deciding from the simple reference to *symbola* whether only first comers got a *symbolon* or whether everybody did. But if the Athenians continued the practice of handing out a restricted number of *symbola* only, as Gauthier believes,⁵⁰ the most likely interpretation of *Ath. Pol.* 62.2 is that 6,000 *symbola* were distributed, but that only a few more citizens showed up, so that — by and large — everyone was paid when the session was over.

This interpretation of the *Ath. Pol.* squares well with two passages in Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazousai*. In verses 282-284 Praxagora urges on the women, telling them that usually men who arrive after dawn have to go back home (*ὑπαποτρέχειν*) without pay. She does not say that they have to attend the *ekklesia* without pay, and the presumption is that many who arrived after the handing out of *symbola* had stopped did not bother to stay on and attend the session unpaid. Yet some undoubtedly did attend without pay, and the inference is that a meeting of the *ekklesia* was regularly attended by the 6,000 who were paid plus some more who attended without obtaining the pay, perhaps a total of 6,500 or 7,000. We do not know.⁵¹

Occasionally, however, so many citizens turned up that the auditorium could not accommodate all who arrived. That happened after the women in disguise had ousted many of the men⁵² and were in control of the majority when Praxagora proposed to transfer all powers to the women. In his conversation with Blepyros Chremes says that he had never before seen such a crowd approaching the Pnyx and that he and many others did not get their pay.⁵³ A passage later in the play indicates that Chremes stayed on as a spectator, not as an active participant.⁵⁴ In reply to Chremes' description of this notorious

⁴⁸ Hansen (1989b), 149.

⁴⁹ *IG II²* 1749, lines 75-76 = Meritt and Traill (1974), 48, no. 38, lines 78-79: ... ἐπειδὴ καλῶς κ[αὶ] δ[ικαίω]ς ἐπεμελήθησαν τῆς συλλογῆς τοῦ δήμου καὶ τῆς δ[ι]αδόσεως τῶν συνβόλων ...

⁵⁰ Gauthier (1993), 248, n. 48.

⁵¹ In my earlier work (Hansen (1989b), 147-151) I suggested that there was an institutional link between assembly pay and attendance: the *symbolon* handed out served a double purpose: it was both a ticket to the *ekklesia* and a token to be exchanged for the fee after the meeting was over. Citizens who arrived too late to get a *symbolon* were not only deprived of the fee, they were not even admitted. In the light of the criticism of this view raised for example by Gauthier ((1993), 240, n. 19) I retract it and suggest instead the alternative interpretation argued in this paper.

⁵² *Ar. Eccl.* 300.

⁵³ *Ar. Eccl.* 383-388.

⁵⁴ *Ar. Eccl.* 431-434:

session of the people Blepyros asks what the reason could be for bringing so vast a crowd together that early: ἀταρ τί τὸ πρᾶγμα ἦν, ὅτι τοσοῦτον χρημ' ὄχλου οὕτως ἐν ὥρᾳ ξυνελέγη;⁵⁵ The two words ἐν ὥρᾳ are in my opinion crucial. Blepyros' surprise is caused not so much by the fact that the *ekklesia* was attended by a large crowd, but rather by the curious circumstance that the participants had shown up so early. Obviously it was not unknown to find "the house full" during the peak hours of a session, and at least occasionally the auditorium of Pnyx II must have been filled to the last seat.

2. It is still a moot point what the maximum attendance was, but let me end with some reflections on the normal attendance.

(a) The quorum of 6,000 goes back to the 5th century⁵⁶ when there were twice as many citizens as in the 4th century.⁵⁷ Nevertheless even then the Athenians seem to have had difficulties both in gathering a sufficient number of citizens to the sessions (Thuc. VIII.72.1) and in getting them to arrive early (Ar. *Ach.* 22 with scholia). When democracy was restored in 403 a natural consequence of having half as many citizens as in the age of Perikles would have been to reduce the quorum to 3,000.⁵⁸ But the Athenians were not prepared to do that. They kept the quorum at 6,000 and preferred instead to introduce assembly pay in order to ensure that the traditional quorum would come to the sessions and come early. That they attained their end is apparent not only from Aristophanes' *Ekklesiazousai* but also from the preserved citizenship decrees, which must all have been ratified by the prescribed quorum.⁵⁹

(b) A comparison between the *ekklesiastikon* and the *dikastikon* suggests that the Athenians had some difficulties throughout the 4th century in getting the quorum gathered. The dole paid out to jurors was 3 obols per session and that amount was not changed for a century, from the 420s until the 320s.⁶⁰ During that period prices and wages had gone up a good deal and assembly pay was correspondingly raised from 3 obols in the 390s to 1 - 1 1/2 drachmas in the 320s. So for a meeting that went on for a whole day the jurors got less than someone who attended the assembly, whose meetings usually lasted only a few hours. We do not know why this anomaly remained but a modest guess may be worth making. On a normal court day the Athenians had to use 2,000-3,000 men from the jury list to pick up by lot some 1,500-2,000 jurors.⁶¹ For an assembly they had to use 6,000 participants to get the prescribed quorum. Presumably, while 3 obols were enough to ensure that on any court day enough qualified people turned up for allotment, it was harder

⁵⁵ Ar. *Eccl.* 394-395.

⁵⁶ Hansen (1983), 26.

⁵⁷ Hansen (1991), 53, 55. Rhodes (1988), 275; Hansen (1988b), 14-28.

⁵⁸ The quorum of 6,000 is first attested in connection with the introduction of the law on ostracism, but we do not know when it was first used in connection with a meeting of the assembly. Probably contemporarily with the construction of Pnyx I; cf. the discussion in Hansen (1983), 26. But was the floor of Pnyx I dressed ca. 500 as traditionally believed? or ca. 460 in connection with Ephialtes' reforms? We do not know. If Pnyx I (and the quorum requirement) goes back to ca. 500 when there must have been fewer citizens than in the age of Perikles it is easier to understand how the Athenians could uphold the quorum requirement in the 4th century in spite of the loss of population during the Peloponnesian War. But even assuming that the construction of Pnyx I and the introduction of the quorum date from ca. 500, the presumption is that originally very few meetings of the people were called and that only a few of these required the presence of 6,000 Athenians, whereas the quorum had to be present in most of the numerous 4th-century sessions of the *ekklesia*; cf. Hansen (1987), 15-17. Thus there are good reasons to believe that there was a close connection between the severe drop in the number of citizens during the Peloponnesian War and the introduction of assembly pay immediately after the war.

⁵⁹ Hansen (1987), 17 with notes 123-125.

⁶⁰ Hansen (1991), 188-189 with further references.

⁶¹ Hansen (1991), 186-188 with further references.

to get 6,000 to turn up regularly for the assembly. The inference is that a normal attendance of 6,000 or more could only be obtained by an increase in the *ekklesiastikon*, and a further inference from that is that an attendance of many more than 6,000 must have been exceptional throughout the 4th century.⁶²

⁶² For helpful comments I would like to thank Tobias Fischer-Hansen, Lise Hannestad and all who joined in the discussion of my paper during the symposium.

General Bibliography

References to ancient authors in the Proceedings follow the abbreviations of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*², with occasional expansion for clarity. The references to modern literature follow the Harvard system, giving only the author's name and the date of publication in the footnotes, whereas the full bibliographical references are printed in this bibliography. All abbreviations of serials in this bibliography follow the system used in *The American Journal of Archaeology* 95 (1991), 1-16.

In addition the following abbreviations have been used in the Proceedings:

IG = *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin 1873-

I.Iasos = *Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* 28.1-28.2. *Die Inschriften von Iasos* I-II, Bonn 1985.

I.Ephesos = *Inchriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* 11.1-17.4. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* I-VIII, Bonn 1979-1984.

SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden 1923-

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Fig. 67. Main gateway through the Compartment Wall, with (1) original portions shown in solid black; (2) additions contemporary with the White Poros Wall distinguished by hatching. Cf. Thompson and Scranton (1943), 318, fig. 29. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Fig. 68. Tower W2 in the White Poros Wall, seen from the west. Cf. Thompson and Scranton (1943), 339, fig. 44. Courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

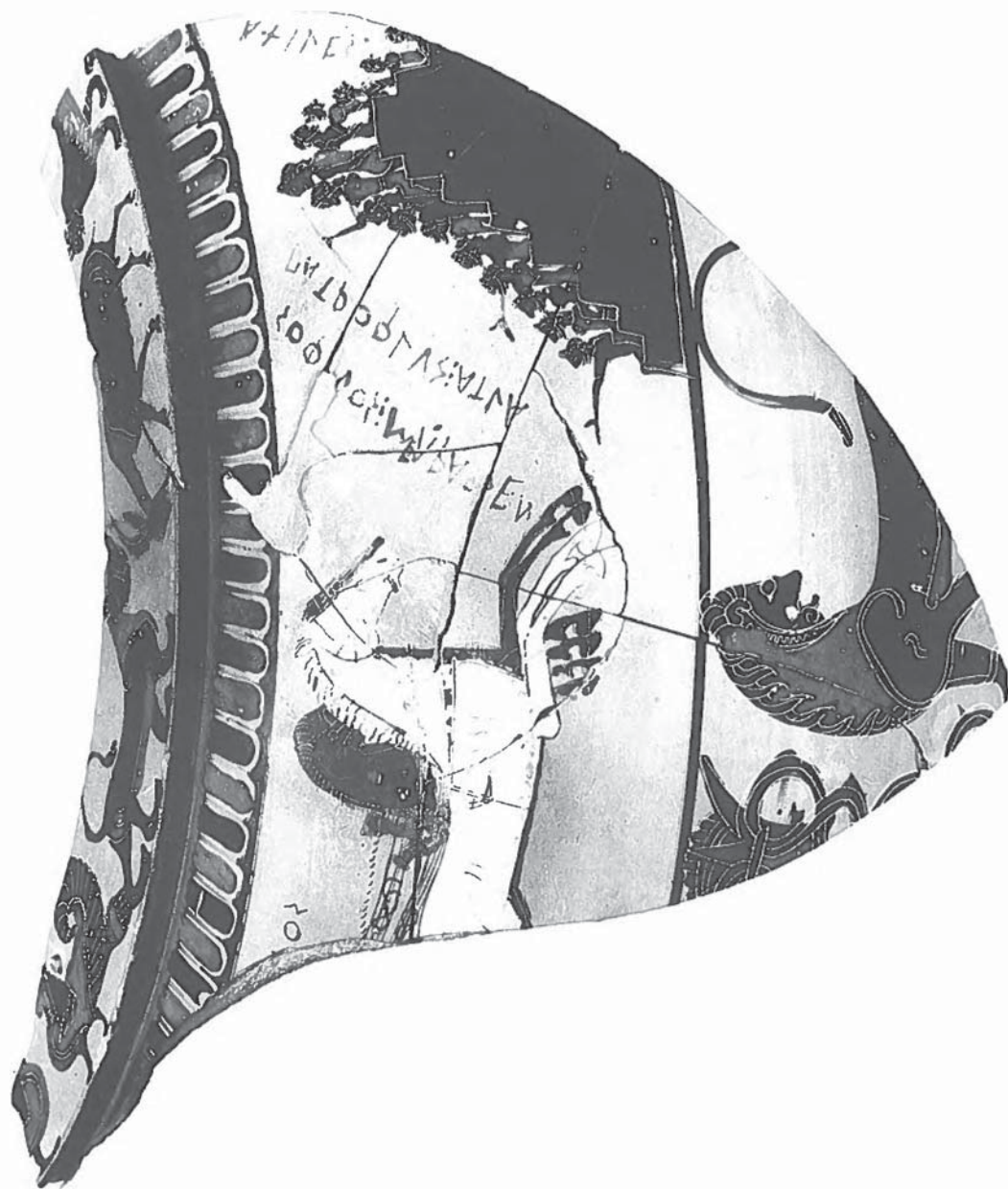


Fig. 15



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