

## HOW OFTEN DID THE ATHENIAN ASSEMBLY MEET?

### I

According to the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* (*Ath. Pol.* 43.4), the Assembly in Athens met four times every prytany. At each one of these meetings certain topics had to be discussed or voted on. For instance, a vote concerning the conduct of magistrates presently in office was to be taken at the *κυρία ἐκκλησία*. At another meeting anyone who wished to could request a discussion of any matter, be it private or public. Nothing is said in this passage or anywhere else in the *Constitution of the Athenians* about the possibility of holding additional meetings of the Assembly in times of emergency, but in a few passages in the Attic orators we find the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* used. The scholia to these passages and some entries in the ancient lexica indicate that this term refers to an extra meeting of the Assembly which could be convened at short notice in order to deal with emergencies.

On the basis of this information, scholars have in the past concluded that the Assembly normally met four times each prytany in the Classical period, but that extra meetings, called *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι*, could also be held if the need arose.<sup>1</sup> Recently, however, M. H. Hansen, whose work on many aspects of the Assembly has greatly increased our understanding of Athenian democracy, has challenged this *communis opinio*.<sup>2</sup> Hansen argues that the evidence found in the scholia and lexica is unreliable and should be disregarded. In his view, several passages in the speeches of Aeschines and Demosthenes and some lines in *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 212 indicate that the Assembly met a fixed number of times each prytany, no more, no less. Consequently, an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* cannot have been an additional meeting of the Assembly. Hansen then proposes a new definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*: ‘one of the four meetings held during a prytany . . . summoned by the *prytaneis* at short notice or in accordance with a decree passed on a previous Assembly or by the Council.’ It stood in contrast to the ‘ordinary meeting’ which was ‘summoned by the *prytaneis* at their own initiative and at four days’ notice’.<sup>3</sup> Hansen’s arguments have been doubted by P. J. Rhodes,<sup>4</sup> but they have not received close scrutiny. I think that Rhodes’ scepticism is well justified in this case, and in this article I shall attempt to show that Hansen’s interpretation of the evidence should not be accepted.

Before proceeding to examine Hansen’s interpretation of the passages he uses to

<sup>1</sup> E.g. G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* 1–II (Munich, 1920–6), 987–8; G. Glotz, *La cité grecque* (Paris, 1928), 182–3; A. H. M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford, 1960), 108–9; V. Ehrenberg, *Der Staat der Griechen* (Stuttgart, 1965), 67; E. S. Staveley, *Greek and Roman Voting and Elections* (London, 1972), 79.

<sup>2</sup> Hansen first set forth this idea in his *Eisangelia: The Sovereignty of the People’s Court in Athens in the Fourth Century B.C. and the Impeachment of Generals and Politicians* (Odense, 1975), 51–7. He restated his position with new arguments in ‘How often did the *Ecclesia* meet?’ *GRBS* 18 (1977), 43–70 and presented further arguments in ‘*Εκκλησία Σύγκλητος* in Hellenistic Athens’, *GRBS* 20 (1979), 149–56. Both of these articles were reprinted with addenda in *The Athenian Ecclesia: A Collection of Articles* (Opuscula Graecolatina 26, Copenhagen, 1983). References in this article will be made to this volume which will be cited by the author’s name only.

<sup>3</sup> Hansen, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford, 1981), 521–2. This work will be cited hereafter as ‘Rhodes, *Commentary*’.

establish his position, I would like to set out some *a priori* reasons for doubting his thesis that a limitation was placed on the number of times the Assembly could meet each prytany. As all students of Greek history know, the Athenians had what we call a 'direct democracy', a form of government in which all major decisions were taken by the Assembly where all citizens were entitled to vote. Nevertheless, the Assembly tried, especially in the fourth century B.C., to conduct its business according to set rules, which were designed to promote fairness and order in its discussion of public business. These rules were self-imposed and did not represent any limitation on the powers of the Assembly, but were rather an attempt by that body to discipline itself, to act in a responsible fashion and not in a way which would bring it into disrepute. Only if the Assembly were run in an orderly fashion could it function efficiently. But such a restriction as Hansen envisages on the number of times it could meet each prytany would not have advanced the goals of fairness, order and efficiency. On the contrary, this restriction would have inhibited the ability of the Assembly to respond to emergencies. Hansen assumes that the *prytaneis* always made sure that the stipulated number of meetings was never used up before the end of the prytany and that they always saved one meeting which could be used to deal with any emergencies which might suddenly occur.<sup>6</sup> Yet, what would have happened if this one meeting was used to deal with an emergency early in the prytany, but then another emergency, demanding immediate attention, occurred at the end of the prytany, by which time the limit for that prytany had already been reached? Would the *prytaneis* have simply turned to the people and said that they could not call another meeting and that the matter would just have to wait until the beginning of the next prytany? I find it hard to believe that they would.

This is only an argument from common sense, and, like all such arguments, rests on the assumption that the Athenians were as clear-sighted and rational as we fancy ourselves to be. I would like to think that the Athenians did possess these wonderful qualities, but that is a proposition which needs to be proved, and it can only be proved by analyzing the evidence we have at our disposal. Let us, therefore, turn to look at the passages upon which Hansen builds his arguments.

## II

We need to look first at the evidence found in the scholia and lexica. Some of the explanations they provide for the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* are obviously wrong, but others give clear and concise definitions:

Schol. Dem. 18.73: *σύγκλητος ἐκκλησία λέγεται ἡ γενομένη διὰ τι ἐξαίφνης κατεπεῖγον. τρεῖς γὰρ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ μηνὸς γίνονται ὠρισμέναι, ἡ δὲ σύγκλητος οὐχ ὠρισμένη.*<sup>7</sup>

Schol. Dem. 24.20: *ιστέον γὰρ ὅτι κατὰ μῆνα τρεῖς ἐκκλησίας ἐποιοῦντο, . . . πλὴν εἰ μὴ ἄρα ἀνάγκη τις κατέλαβε πόλεμον, ὥστε καὶ περὶ ἐκείνου ἄλλην ἐκκλησίαν ποιῆσαι πλέον τῶν ὠρισμένων.*<sup>8</sup>

Harpocration s.v. *σύγκλητος ἐκκλησία*: *τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν αἱ μὲν ἐξ ἔθους καὶ κατὰ μῆνα ἐγίνοντο. εἰ δέ τι ἐξαίφνης κατεπεῖξεῖεν ὥστε γενέσθαι ἐκκλησίαν, αὕτη ἐκαλεῖτο σύγκλητος ἐκκλησία. Δημοσθένης ἐν τῷ κατ' Αἰσχίνου.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For a useful summary of the reforms of the fourth century B.C., see P. J. Rhodes, 'Athenian democracy after 403 B.C.', *CJ* 75 (1980), 305–23.

<sup>6</sup> Hansen, p. 43. Hansen pursued this idea in his 'When did the Athenian *Ecclesia* meet?', *GRBS* 23 (1982), 331–50 (= Hansen pp. 83–102).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. schol. Dem. 19.123.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. schol. Aeschin. 1.60; Photius s.v. *κυρία ἐκκλησία*; schol. Ar. *Ach.* 19.

<sup>9</sup> Cf: *Suda* and *Etym. Magn.* s.v. *σύγκλητος* and Poll. 8.116.

Hansen (p. 41) correctly observes that 'the scholiasts and lexicographers refer invariably to three *ecclesiai* every month instead of four *ecclesiai* every prytany'. Originally Hansen (p. 41) was willing to admit that 'In so far as their notes are reliable they refer to the period of twelve phylae (when a prytany probably was concurrent with a month)...'. Later Hansen (pp. 73–80) changed his mind and decided that this information was also incorrect for the Hellenistic period. His main objection to the testimony of these sources is that they set the *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* apart from the *ἐκκλησίαι νόμιμοι* or *ὠρισμένοι*, neither of which terms, Hansen (p. 41) notes, 'can be found in the sources of the classical or even the Hellenistic period'. He continues by pointing out 'On the contrary, the descriptions given by Aeschines (*τεταγμένοι ἐκ τῶν νόμων*, 2.72) and Demosthenes (*ὅταν ἐκ τῶν νόμων καθήκη*, 19.185) indicate that there was no technical term for what the lexicographers and scholiasts call *ἐκκλησίαι νόμιμοι* or *ὠρισμένοι* and modern historians "ordinary meetings"'.<sup>10</sup>

Are the scholiasts and lexicographers really inventing a technical term or just trying to express in their own words their idea of what an 'ordinary meeting' was? It is true that the Classical sources do refer to meetings *τεταγμένοι ἐκ τῶν νόμων* and meetings called *ὅταν ἐκ τῶν νόμων καθήκη*, but just because the scholiasts and lexicographers used different expressions from those used by the Classical sources does not necessarily mean that they are referring to two different kinds of meetings. As Hansen himself notes, there was no technical term for an 'ordinary meeting' of the Assembly in the Classical period and it was referred to by at least two different periphrases.<sup>10</sup> This left the scholiasts and lexicographers with no choice but to invent a term to designate this kind of meeting. Thus, the argument from terminology does nothing to impugn the testimony of the scholiasts and lexicographers.

What is striking about these sources is that they do appear to have known precisely how many times the Assembly met each month in the Hellenistic period.<sup>11</sup> This makes it very likely that, when commenting on the relevant passages in Aeschines and Demosthenes, the authors of the scholia and lexica consulted Hellenistic sources to find a definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. When they used this information to explicate the passages in the orators, either they did not realize that the number of tribes and prytanies had been changed between the Classical and Hellenistic periods, or they were aware of the change, but did not bother to adjust the information they found in their Hellenistic source to fit the conditions of the Classical period. There is consequently good reason to think that the scholiasts and lexicographers should be trusted for the Hellenistic period. But what about the Classical period? I can see no reason to think that, when the Athenians decided to add two more tribes, they also decided to change the meaning of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. The switch to twelve tribes involved no more than that and did not entail a complete transformation of the entire system of prytanies and the way in which the Assembly was run. In short, I see no reason for thinking that the meaning of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* must have changed between the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

The information found in the scholia and lexica is often unreliable and should never be uncritically accepted, especially when no source is cited to vouch for the information provided. Yet, even though the authors of the scholia and lexica in this case do not name any sources, it does appear that they must have had some. For this reason, their explanation of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* should be taken seriously,

<sup>10</sup> For a possible explanation for this phenomenon, see note 17.

<sup>11</sup> During the period of the twelve tribes, a prytany was probably concurrent with a month (Hansen, p. 41; W. K. Pritchett and O. Neugebauer, *The Calendars of Athens* [Cambridge, Mass. 1947], 68).

not tossed out without further consideration. It may be that the definition they provide for this term does not work in the passages of the Classical authors where it is used. If that is the case, it should be rejected and another definition of the term will have to be formulated. On the other hand, if this definition does make sense in the passages where the term is used, we ought to consider it to be correct.

### III

Hansen's most important objection to the traditional definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* as an additional meeting of the Assembly is his argument that the Assembly met a fixed number of times each prytany, no more, no less. Let us now look at the passages on which Hansen bases this argument. The first is Demosthenes 19.154:

*ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐκκλησία μὲν οὐκέτ' ἦν ὑπόλοιπος οὐδεμία τὸ προκατακεχρησθαι, οὗτοι δ' οὐκ ἀπῆσαν, ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ διέτριβον, γράφω ψήφισμα βουλευόντων, τὴν βουλὴν ποιήσαντος τοῦ δήμου κυρίαν, ἀπιέναι τοὺς πρέσβεις τὴν ταχίστην...*

To understand this passage we must set it in context. Demosthenes is describing the period just after the ratification of the Peace of Philocrates. By the terms of that treaty, Philip and Athens agreed that each one should retain only those territories which each one presently held, thereby implicitly renouncing claims to territories held by the other party.<sup>12</sup> However, Philip was not bound by the provisions of this treaty until he swore the oaths to the treaty. The purpose of this section of Demosthenes' speech is to prove his charge that Aeschines and the other ambassadors who were ordered by the Assembly to receive the oaths from Philip deliberately delayed their departure from Athens with the aim of giving the king more time to seize Athenian fortresses in Thrace before he had to swear the oaths to the treaty.<sup>13</sup> Demosthenes claims that he knew of this alleged plot and did his best to thwart it. If such a plot did exist and Demosthenes did know of it, one wonders why he did not denounce his fellow ambassadors to the Assembly at the time. For this there is a simple explanation – the entire charge is a sham. The fortresses in Thrace did not lie in Athenian territory, but in the kingdom of Cersobleptes.<sup>14</sup> Besides, even if they did belong to Athens, the delay of the embassy would have made no difference at all, as Aeschines was quick to point out.<sup>15</sup> The fortresses must have fallen to Philip before 25 Elaphebolion, the date on which Cersobleptes surrendered to Philip, just about the time the Second Embassy was elected to travel to Philip.

The falsehood of Demosthenes' charge in this section is not directly relevant to Hansen's argument, but it should warn us to be wary when using Demosthenes as a source and to expect him to omit important details when it suits his purpose. We also need to keep in mind that Demosthenes is trying to place his own actions in the best possible light and to portray himself as the self-appointed guardian of Athenian interests. Consequently, the most routine actions suddenly become brilliant moves in an effort to outsmart his opponents. This is precisely what happens in this passage. It is clear that the Assembly ordered the Council to supervise the departure of the

<sup>12</sup> [Dem.] 7.26.

<sup>13</sup> Dem. 19.150–4.

<sup>14</sup> For the location of these fortresses, see E. Badian, *Pulpudeva* 4 (1980), 64 and the references cited there. Demosthenes (18.27) states that at the time of their capture these fortresses were held by Thracians.

<sup>15</sup> Aeschin. 2.89–93.

ambassadors. Acting in accordance with the wishes of the Assembly, Demosthenes passed a motion in the Council on 3 Munichion instructing the ambassadors to proceed to Philip and to receive the oaths from him, a perfectly routine procedure.<sup>16</sup> But in the context of the imaginary plot to give Philip time to overrun the Thracian fortresses, this seemingly routine action gains a deeper significance. Demosthenes describes a dire predicament: Philip is moving toward the Thracian fortresses, no more meetings of the Assembly remain, since they have already been used up, and the Athenian ambassadors are delaying. But the resourceful Demosthenes is not to be outfoxed – he takes advantage of the fact that the Assembly ordered the Council to supervise the departure of the embassy and passes a motion instructing the ambassadors to leave at once. The plot is temporarily foiled.

Why does Demosthenes fail to mention the possibility that an additional meeting of the Assembly could be held in this situation? The answer is ready to hand – to admit this possibility would have spoiled the entire point he was trying to make.<sup>17</sup> As a careful reader of the orators, Hansen himself is well aware of how adept Demosthenes is at suppressing inconvenient details of constitutional procedure when it suits his purpose. Hansen (p. 39) notes very shrewdly how Demosthenes (19.185) does this elsewhere:

In this passage Demosthenes gives a detailed description of how the Athenian democracy worked. The phrase *ὅταν ἐκ τῶν νόμων καθήκη* indicates that the meetings of the assembly were held on fixed days or summoned at several days' notice. There is no reference to *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι*, but Demosthenes' silence on this point is not surprising. He wishes to emphasize the laborious and slow democratic procedure in opposition to the efficiency of an oligarchy or a tyranny.

We can easily restate this to fit Dem. 19.154: 'in this passage Demosthenes wishes to emphasize the lack of opportunity he had to thwart the plans of the other ambassadors and to demonstrate to the jury how brilliant he was to take advantage of the powers granted to the Council to hurry the malingering embassy on its way. Accordingly, he concentrates on the powers granted to the Council and the possibility of summoning an extra meeting of the Assembly to denounce the insidious schemes of his opponents is cunningly passed over in silence.'

<sup>16</sup> Hansen, p. 36 wonders 'Why should the people resign some of their powers if an extraordinary assembly could be summoned at any moment?' This misrepresents the situation. The matter of supervising the departure of the embassy was routine business which could be delegated to the Council without risk and did not necessitate the calling of another meeting of the Assembly. For the delegation of powers to the Council by the Assembly, see P. J. Rhodes, *The Athenian Boule* (Oxford, 1972), 82–5, 92 n. 4, 161, 182–3, 186–8, 218. Rhodes does not include Dem. 19.154 in his list of instances where the Assembly delegated powers to the Council.

<sup>17</sup> Hansen, p. 36 makes much of the fact that 'Demosthenes says explicitly that not a single *ecclesia* was left, and his emphatic expression must comprise both regular and extraordinary meetings'. But how would Demosthenes have said 'there were no more "ordinary meetings" left', when, as Hansen himself has noted, there was no technical term for an 'ordinary meeting'? Yet, there was probably no need for a technical term, since the word *ἐκκλησία* all by itself without the addition of *σύγκλητος* could mean 'an ordinary meeting'. In the opposition between the two expressions *ἐκκλησία* and *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* we have an example of 'semantic marking', whereby 'the semantically marked lexeme is one that is more specific in sense than the corresponding semantically unmarked lexeme' and 'the unmarked member of the opposition has both a more general and a more specific sense according to context' (J. Lyons, *Semantics* 1 [Cambridge, 1977], 307–8). In this case, the expression *ἐκκλησία* is the unmarked member of the opposition and can have a more general sense, i.e. 'a meeting of the Assembly', or a more specific sense, i.e. 'an ordinary meeting of the Assembly', while the expression *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* is the marked member of the opposition and carries only the specific meaning, i.e. 'an additional meeting of the Assembly called for an emergency'.

So much for Demosthenes 19.154 as evidence for a limit on the number of meetings of the Assembly which could be called each prytany. We must now look at Aeschines 2.61. Here Aeschines maintains that Demosthenes arranged two meetings of the Assembly on the 18th and 19th of Elaphebolion in order to 'snatch away in advance' (*προῦφαιρῶν*) the meetings of the Assembly before the envoys from the other Greek cities had arrived in Athens. Hansen (p. 37) maintains that Demosthenes could be described as 'snatching away the meetings in advance', only 'if a fixed number of assemblies were held every prytany, since the Athenians were now forced to discuss the peace during the meetings held on Elaph. 18 and 19 and take the vote on the peace'. This misunderstands the situation described by Aeschines. We know that the Assembly had sent ambassadors to the Greek states *παρακαλῶν τὰς πόλεις ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῶν Ἑλλήνων* and that around the beginning of Elaphebolion 346 these ambassadors were expected to return to Athens in the near future.<sup>18</sup> These ambassadors were apparently sent out to invite the Greek cities to send embassies of their own to Athens where they could all confer together about how best to defend Greek freedom.<sup>19</sup> In the speech he delivered against Aeschines in 343, Demosthenes (19.16) stated that these ambassadors from the Greek cities did actually arrive in Athens and listen to Aeschines speak in favour of peace and alliance with Philip and urge the Assembly not to allow any of the other Greeks to share in the treaty. In his reply to this accusation in his own speech at that trial, Aeschines implicitly agreed with his opponent that the Athenians had indeed invited the Greeks to send embassies to Athens and that they were expected to arrive there in Elaphebolion 346. Aeschines (2.61–2) then went on to deny that the Greek ambassadors were able to make it to Athens in time to attend the meetings of the Assembly on 18 and 19 Elaphebolion. According to Aeschines, the culprit who saw to it that these meetings of the Assembly were called before the Greek embassies had a chance to travel to Athens was none other than Demosthenes himself. Therefore, what Aeschines means by the participle *προῦφαιρῶν* is that Demosthenes snatched away from the Greek embassies the chance to attend the meetings of the Assembly which discussed the treaty with Philip by setting the dates for those meetings on days which were earlier than the soonest possible time the Greek embassies could reach Athens. It is, therefore, perfectly possible to make sense of Aeschines 2.61 without postulating any hypothesis about a limit to the number of meetings of the Assembly which could be called in one prytany.

Hansen (p. 37) next claims to find support for his hypothesis at *Ath. Pol.* 43.3, where he quite correctly notes that it is stated that those who act as *prytaneis* convene the Assembly four times each prytany or forty times a year. He observes that no mention is made of the possibility of summoning 'extraordinary meetings when required in addition to the forty ordinary meetings'. Relying on an *argumentum ex silentio*, Hansen infers that, since this possibility is not mentioned, the *prytaneis* could not summon extra meetings of the Assembly. There is nothing wrong *per se* with *argumenta ex silentio*, but this part of the *Constitution of the Athenians* is not the best place to use them. The *Constitution of the Athenians* is our most informative source for the Athenian constitution, but it is not always exhaustive in its treatment of each topic.<sup>20</sup> In this section alone, Rhodes has observed that the list of items to be

<sup>18</sup> Aeschin. 2.60.

<sup>19</sup> Aeschin. 3.68–70.

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it is not inapposite to note that elsewhere Hansen, p. 203 has remarked 'In Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens* the *nomothetai* are passed over in silence. Does this mean that *nomothesia* had been abolished after 329/8 or stopped being of any importance? Certainly not. *Argumenta ex silentio* of this kind based on the *Constitution of Athens* are of no value whatsoever'.

considered on the agenda of the Assembly is not complete.<sup>21</sup> Nor does it mention the fact that the *prytaneis* were required to give four days' notice for a meeting of the Assembly – this is reported to us only by Photius (s.v. *πρόπεμπτα*).<sup>22</sup> The silence of the *Constitution of the Athenians* cannot be summoned to speak on behalf of Hansen's hypothesis. The only reasonable inference which can be made from *Ath. Pol.* 43.3 is that the *prytaneis* regularly held four meetings of the Assembly each prytany. On the basis of this passage taken by itself, we cannot decide whether or not exceptions were made to this rule, but given the incomplete nature of much of the information found in the *Constitution of the Athenians*, it would be unwise to rule out this possibility.

To sum up. None of the passages adduced by Hansen proves that there existed a limit on the number of meetings of the Assembly which could be held in each prytany. By the same token, nothing in these passages can be used as evidence to show that an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* was not an extra meeting of the Assembly which could be summoned for special occasions in addition to the four regularly scheduled meetings.

#### IV

We can now consider the arguments which Hansen employs to formulate his new definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. First of all, he notes (p. 38) that Aeschines distinguishes between *ἐκκλησίας συγκλήτους* and *ἐκκλησίας τεταγμένας ἐκ τῶν νόμων*, but does not tell us how these differed. To determine what the difference is between the two terms, he turns to a passage of Demosthenes (19.122–3) where it is clear that the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* 'means a meeting of the assembly summoned at short notice' (p. 38). This, of course, is nothing new – the scholia and lexica include this feature as part of their definition of the term. What, then, are *ἐκκλησῖαι τεταγμέναι ἐκ τῶν νόμων*? Hansen (p. 39) suggests that they are 'meetings held on fixed days or summoned at proper notice'. To justify this definition he draws attention to another passage of Demosthenes (19.185) where the orator describes how the Council can convene meetings of the Assembly only *ὅταν ἐκ τῶν νόμων καθήκη*. What are these *νόμοι* referred to here? Hansen believes that they include the stipulation, reported to us by Photius (s.v. *πρόπεμπτα*), that the *prytaneis* were required to publish the agenda for a meeting of the Assembly at four days' notice.

Hansen is concerned, however, that this new definition will not cover certain meetings of the Assembly in Elaphebolion 346 which in his opinion were *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι*. Accordingly, he includes another category of meetings of the Assembly to be also considered *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι* and contrasts them with 'ordinary meetings':

If one of the four meetings held during a prytany was summoned by the *prytaneis* at short notice or in accordance with a decree passed on a previous assembly or by the Council, the meeting was an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. On the other hand, if it was summoned by the *prytaneis* at their own initiative and at four days' notice, it was an 'ordinary meeting' (p. 42).

At this point Hansen adds a further argument to support his new definition. He notes that 'Aristotle describes some fixed items on the agenda for all the four meetings held during a prytany' and concludes that if 'the *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι* were included among the four meetings we must assume that the people at an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* had to deal with routine matters prescribed for this meeting before they could debate

<sup>21</sup> Rhodes, *Commentary* 523.

<sup>22</sup> It is curious how Hansen, who is so sceptical about the evidence of the scholia and lexica for the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*, confidently accepts this piece of evidence from Photius for which there is no supporting evidence from the Classical period.

the urgent or important matter which had occasioned the summoning at short notice or by special decree'. Hansen claims that this assumption is proved correct by *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 212, an inscription which records an honorific decree passed in the archonship of Themistocles (347/6) for three Bosporan princes. In this decree, those who will act as *proedroi* at the meeting of the Assembly scheduled for 18 Elaphebolion are instructed to see to it that the matter of the money owed to these princes is brought up for discussion *πρῶτον μετὰ τὰ ἱερά* (*IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 212, line 57). According to Hansen's definition, this meeting of the Assembly was an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* 'since the date of the meeting was fixed by a decree carried by Demosthenes'. Hansen then draws attention to the phrase *μετὰ τὰ ἱερά* which he believes refers to the discussion of *τρία...ἱερῶν* which the *Constitution of the Athenians* tells us formed part of the regular agenda at two of the four meetings of the Assembly held every prytany (*Ath. Pol.* 43.6). This is alleged by Hansen to prove that 'an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* was not reserved for the discussion of some urgent matter. It was not an additional meeting, but one of the forty *ἐκκλησίαι* described by Aristotle'.

There is only one problem with this last argument, but it is a fatal one: *τὰ ἱερά* in the phrase *μετὰ τὰ ἱερά* does not refer to a discussion of the *τρία...ἱερῶν* mentioned at *Ath. Pol.* 43.6, but to the sacrifices which were performed at the beginning of every meeting of the Assembly.<sup>23</sup> In the inscription no reference is made to a discussion of sacred matters, but to the sacred matters. It is important to note the presence of the article in the phrase *μετὰ τὰ ἱερά* and its absence in the phrase *τρία...ἱερῶν*. In the first phrase, the article indicates that something specific is being referred to, i.e. 'the (one, specific) sacred business'<sup>24</sup> which consisted of the customary sacrifices which were performed at the beginning of every meeting of the Assembly. In the second, any three points relating to sacred business which happen to be of concern are put on the agenda to be discussed. *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 212 does not, therefore, lend support to Hansen's argument for a new definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. In fact, it is not even relevant to the discussion at all.

We need to return to Aeschines 2.72. In this passage Aeschines appears to distinguish between two different types of meetings of the Assembly, *ἐκκλησίας συγκλήτους* and those *τεταγμένες ἐκ τῶν νόμων*. Hansen thinks Aeschines is drawing a contrast between meetings held at short notice or summoned by decree (his definition of *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*) and those summoned by the *prytaneis* in accordance with the laws, especially the one regarding publication of the agenda four days ahead. But, if Aeschines wished to contrast these two types of meetings, he would surely have expressed himself differently. The *prytaneis* are not said to *τάττειν ἐκκλησίας* – they are said to *προγράψαι ἐκκλησίας*.<sup>25</sup> If Aeschines was trying to say what Hansen wants him to say, he would have spoken of *ἐκκλησίας προγεγραμμένες*, not *τεταγμένες*.

On the other hand, the phrase *ἐκκλησίας τεταγμένες ἐκ τῶν νόμων* is a perfectly good way of describing the four 'ordinary meetings' of the Assembly which the *prytaneis* were legally required to call each prytany and for which certain items of the agenda were fixed by the laws. This kind of meeting could well be referred to as one which was 'arranged for by the laws'. The 'ordinary meetings' stood in contrast to the extra meetings of the Assembly which did not have any fixed items on the agenda,

<sup>23</sup> Aeschin. 1.22–3 with scholia; scholia to Ar. *Ach.* 44; Dem. 54.39. Cf. Jacoby on *FGrHist* 334 F 16. *τὰ ἱερά* may also have included the prayers and curses pronounced by the herald before each meeting; for these, see Aeschin. 1.22–3; Dem. 19.70. Cf. the parody of a meeting of the Assembly at Ar. *Th.* 295–371.

<sup>24</sup> For the use of the article, see R. Renehan, *Studies in Greek Texts* (Gottingen, 1976), 69–74.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. *Ath. Pol.* 43.3–4; Aeschin. 2.61.



these being the *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι*. We should also point out that if we use these traditional definitions of these terms, the passage of Aeschines gains far more thrust. Aeschines is reminding the jury of the desperate situation in which Athens found herself in early 346 – things were so bad that the number of extra meetings exceeded that of the ‘ordinary meetings’. If we interpret the term *ἐκκλησίας συγκλήτους* in this passage according to the traditional definition, Aeschines is saying in effect that things were so bad in early 346 that, in addition to the four ordinary meetings, at least five *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* were called every prytany for the purpose of discussing urgent business. This is far more alarming than to say merely that in early 346 most of the meetings of the Assembly were called at short notice. If Aeschines had had Hansen’s definition of this term in mind when he wished to depict this dangerous state of affairs, he would certainly not have said that there were more *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* than ordinary meetings, but rather that every meeting was an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*, or, in other words, that circumstances were so pressing that the Athenians were never able to postpone their discussions of these urgent matters until after the normal four day interval had elapsed.

In short, I do not find Hansen’s attempt to formulate a new definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* convincing. Of the evidence he puts forward to justify his definition, *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 212 is not relevant to the issue; Demosthenes 19.185 can be used to support either the traditional definition of the term or Hansen’s new definition; and Aeschines 2.72 is better interpreted by using the traditional definition of the term. If anything, our examination of this evidence has provided fresh support for the traditional definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*.

## V

It is time to turn to Hansen’s analysis of the meetings of the Assembly in Elaphebolion 346. This is not the place to enter into a discussion of all the many issues concerning these meetings; I only wish to make two points which bear directly on the matter of the *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*.

In his revised analysis of these meetings Hansen (pp. 68–71) still has the Assembly meeting on five days, that is, 8, 16, 18, 19 and 25 Elaphebolion, in prytany viii of the archonship of Themistocles (347/6). This, of course, would appear to contradict his theory that at the maximum only four meetings of the Assembly could be convened each prytany. He attempts to circumvent this difficulty by claiming that the meetings on 18 and 19 Elaphebolion counted as one meeting, reducing the total number of meetings in this prytany to a more acceptable four. Hansen argues that such an interpretation is justified because ‘the two meetings on Elaph. 18 and 19 were prescribed by one decree, the agenda was the same for both meetings and the prytaneis issued probably only one summons’. First of all, it is not true that the agenda was the same for both meetings. The matter of the money owed to the Bosphoran princes was on the agenda for the meeting of 18 Elaphebolion only and not for the meeting on the following day (*IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 212, lines 65–6). Similarly, the discussion of the treaty with Philip was on the agenda for that day, whereas the vote on the treaty was on the agenda for 19 Elaphebolion and not on that for the previous day (Aeschin. 2.65–6). Hansen also misinterprets *Ath. Pol.* 43.4 when he states that this passage says ‘that the prytaneis were empowered to summon four meetings during their term of office, . . .’ On the contrary, the passage states that the *prytaneis* convene (*συνάγουσι*) four meetings of the Assembly. Nothing is said of four summonses, any one of which could be used to summon two or more meetings. It is simply unacceptable to count

the two meetings on 18 and 19 Elaph. as one meeting. Reading from the decree of Demosthenes which set the dates for the meetings, Aeschines (2.61) refers quite plainly to two meetings (*δύο ἐκκλησίας*).<sup>26</sup>

Although we must count the meetings on 18 and 19 Elaph. as two meetings, it is possible to eliminate the meeting on 8 Elaph. In his speech of 330 against Ctesiphon, Aeschines (3.66–7) says that Demosthenes proposed (*γράφει ψήφισμα*) that the *prytaneis* convene a meeting of the Assembly (*ἐκκλησίαν ποιεῖν*) on 8 Elaphebolion. First of all, we need to note that Aeschines does not say whether or not this proposal was passed and nothing in the text allows us to give a definitive answer to this question. Thus, even if we believe what Aeschines says here, we still would not be able to say that this proposal did pass and that consequently a meeting of the Assembly did take place on 8 Elaph. Second, it is uncertain whether or not Aeschines could prove this charge. At the end of this section of the speech in which he has referred to several decrees (3.62–8), Aeschines has a number of these decrees read out, but does not specify which ones. The decree of Demosthenes calling for a meeting on Elaph. 8 may have been among them and it may not have. It is, therefore, possible that Aeschines did not have any evidence to support this charge. This means that we are entitled to be sceptical about the truth of this accusation.

This scepticism increases when we note one additional fact, namely, that this charge is found only in Aeschines' speech of 330 which was delivered sixteen years after the event in question and is absent from his speech of 343 which was delivered only three years after the alleged incident. If there was any truth to this charge, why did Aeschines omit it in his earlier speech? It is more likely that the charge is baseless and that Aeschines was not confident enough to use it in 343 when the memories of the jury about the events of 346 were relatively fresh. By 330 Aeschines was quite sure that the jury would not remember the events of 346 in any detail and felt free to invent this charge. Indeed, there is a surprising number of unsupported charges made by Aeschines in his speech of 330 about the events of 346, none of which appear in his earlier speech. These are the following: (i) the deal between Demosthenes and Meidias (3.52), (ii) the entry of Demosthenes into the Council by means of bribery (3.62), (iii) the ruse which Demosthenes employed to force the Assembly to accept the proposal of Philocrates on 19 Elaph. (3.71–2), (iv) the story of the exclusion of Cersebleptes (3.73–5), and (v) the providing of mulecarts for the Macedonian ambassadors (3.76).<sup>27</sup> There is no evidence which would allow us to prove that the first, second, and fifth charges are false, but documents and witnesses cited in Aeschines' speech of 343 demonstrate that the third and fourth are untrue.<sup>28</sup> Given this knowledge, it is certainly not unreasonable to conclude that the rest are equally unreliable. But what is more striking is that of all these five charges which figure in the speech of 330 and

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Aeschin. 2.60, 65, 67; Dem. 19.13.

<sup>27</sup> Dinarchus (1.28) repeats the same charge against Demosthenes and, like Aeschines, fails to provide any evidence.

<sup>28</sup> The third charge is proved to be false by Aeschin. 2.65–6 where the decree regulating the procedure for the meetings on 18 and 19 Elaphebolion is read out. This decree stipulated that no speeches were to be made about the treaty on 19 Elaphebolion. Neither orator provides any evidence to prove that these orders were rescinded. The fourth charge is refuted by Aeschin. 2.83–6 where evidence is produced to show that Cersebleptes did indeed have a person in Athens who could have acted as his *synedros*, namely, Critobulus of Lampsacus, and that Aleximachus submitted a proposal to have him admitted to the Athenian Confederacy. This request was apparently turned down and Cersebleptes' representative was unable to swear the oaths to the treaty with Philip ([Dem.] 12.8). I plan to deal with the problems relating to the first charge elsewhere.

not in the speech of 343, not one is supported by any relevant evidence. This means that we can discard Aeschines' claim that Demosthenes proposed that the Assembly meet on 8 Elaph. and can eliminate this meeting from the calendar of events in prytany viii of 346.<sup>29</sup> We are now left with only four known meetings of the Assembly in that prytany.

Oddly enough, our criticism of Hansen's reconstruction of the events of Elaph. 346 has removed a possible objection to his hypothesis that there was a limit to the number of meetings of the Assembly which could be called in one prytany. However, we need to be careful in spelling out the implications of this for Hansen's argument. Our analysis of Aeschines 3.66–7 has removed one possible objection to Hansen's hypothesis, but it does not provide any evidence for it. We cannot rule out the possibility that Aeschines and Demosthenes did not report all meetings of Assembly which took place during prytany viii of the archonship of Themistocles. After all, they were only interested in discussing the Peace of Philocrates and may well have left out of their speeches any references to other meetings of the Assembly which met during prytany viii simply because these meetings did not discuss business which was relevant to this treaty.<sup>30</sup> And, even if this one possible objection to Hansen's hypothesis is removed, the others still stand and are not affected by our discussion of Aeschines 3.66–7. Nor can we use this reconstruction of the events in Elaph. 346 as evidence against the traditional view that the ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος was an extra meeting of the Assembly.

Before we proceed to look at the Hellenistic inscriptions, we should consider one additional piece of evidence from the Classical period. This is Thuc. 2.22.1 where we learn that in 431 Pericles 'fearing that any general discussion would result in wrong decisions, made under the influence of anger rather than reason' (trans. Warner) ἐκκλησίαν... οὐκ ἐποίει αὐτῶν. In an article written in collaboration with F. W. Mitchel, Hansen has argued on the basis of this passage that there was no restriction on the number of meetings of the Assembly at this time.<sup>31</sup> This reveals that in the late

<sup>29</sup> If this argument is accepted, it would eliminate one of the few exceptions to Mikalson's rule that the Assembly did not generally meet on festival days (*The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year* [Princeton, 1975], 187). Hansen (p. 84 n. 5) noted that Mikalson incorrectly interpreted Dem. 24.26 as referring to a meeting of the Assembly and has questioned his interpretation of *IG ii<sup>2</sup> 1673* lines 9–10. If we eliminate all these examples, this would reduce the total number of exceptions to Mikalson's rule to a total of eight, five of which, as Mikalson himself has noted, can be explained in a reasonable way and do not pose any serious problem for his general thesis.

If one accepts my analysis of Aeschin. 3.66–7 and the validity of Mikalson's rule, the restoration of *IG ii<sup>2</sup> 359*, lines 2–7 to give a meeting of the Assembly on 8 Elaphebolion should be viewed with suspicion. This restoration has been endorsed without question by several scholars, including W. B. Dinsmoor (*The Archons of Athens in the Hellenistic Period* [Cambridge, Mass. 1931], 372), W. K. Pritchett and O. Neugebauer (op. cit. (note 11), 54) and B. D. Meritt (*The Athenian Year* [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1961], 101–2). This restoration would be almost certain if the inscription were strictly *stoichedon*, but it is clear that, while most of the lines in the inscription appear to have contained 20 letters, line 6 must have contained 21.

<sup>30</sup> It is true that Demosthenes (19.154) states that by the time he passed his decree instructing the ambassadors to depart for Macedon (this was on 3 Munichion – see Aeschin. 2.91–2), there were no more regular meetings of the Assembly left in that prytany, but it is quite possible that another meeting of the Assembly might have been called between 25 Elaphebolion and 2 Munichion, or, that Demosthenes is being less than honest here and tailoring the facts to fit the design of his presentation of events in question.

<sup>31</sup> M. H. Hansen and F. W. Mitchel, 'The number of *ecclesiai* in fourth-century Athens', *SymbOslo* 59 (1984), 13–19. I am not convinced by the argument of Hansen and Mitchel that in the 350s the Assembly met only three times each prytany. See P. J. Rhodes, *CQ* 35 (1984), 55 n. 4.

fifth century extraordinary meetings of the Assembly could be called in addition to the regular meetings. What Thucydides is therefore saying in effect is that in his attempts to curtail public discussion of the war, Pericles saw to it that no extra meetings of the Assembly were held in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings. This is how Gomme interpreted the passage and I see no reason to disagree with him.<sup>32</sup> What is interesting about this conclusion is that it reveals that the practice of the late fifth century was the same as the practice of the fourth century according to the evidence of the scholia and lexica, evidence which, I have argued, ought to be trusted. Although some of the rules governing the procedure in the Assembly were altered in the fourth century, much remained the same and such continuity in procedure should come as no surprise.

Hansen and Mitchel believe, however, that there was a change in the period 362–55, when ‘the number of business meetings of the *ecclesia* was fixed at three, probably one *ἐκκλησία κυρία* and two other meetings’. This measure was part of the same reform by which ‘the hearing of all political actions was transferred from the *ecclesia* to the *dicasteria*’ and was undertaken ‘to reduce political pay, because the Athenian state was near bankruptcy’.<sup>33</sup> Yet even if the Athenians were in the habit of holding as many as two or three political trials in the Assembly each prytany (despite their almost pathological distrust of those in power, the Athenians were surely not this suspicious!), a measure which fixed the number of meetings of the Assembly at three per prytany would not have resulted in any substantial reduction in the payment of the *ekklesiastikon*. As a money-saver, this hypothetical measure would have not been very effective. Hansen’s approach also forces us to invent a hypothetical reform for which there is no direct evidence whatsoever. It would seem far more sensible and economical to conclude that there was a limit on the number of times the Assembly could meet neither in the fifth century nor in the fourth century. We might add that Thuc. 2.22.1 does not prove that the remarks of the scholiasts and lexicographers are correct for the fourth century, but it does make it far more likely.

## VI

We must now examine the use of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* in Hellenistic inscriptions. Initially Hansen (p. 74) ‘did not exclude the possibility that the scholiasts and lexicographers might be right in describing *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι* as additional meetings if the information is applied to the period of the twelve *phylai*’, but later changed his mind and argued that this information did not apply to this later period, whereas his new definition of the term did. To support his revised view, Hansen pointed to the prescripts of seventeen decrees from the Hellenistic period. We should, however, point out that the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* appears in only four of these, one of which is heavily restored. In the other thirteen the term is absent, a phenomenon which Hansen (p. 78) explains with the assumption that ‘the indication of whether or not an *ἐκκλησία* was *σύγκλητος* or not was optional’. He contends

<sup>32</sup> A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* II (Oxford, 1956), 76.

<sup>33</sup> Hansen and Mitchel, op. cit. (note 31) 16–7. For the payment of the *ekklesiastikon*, see *Ath. Pol.* 41.3 with *Rhodes Commentary* 490–3. If the average attendance was 6,000 (Hansen, p. 16), then each meeting of the Assembly will have cost the state only half a talent.

One wonders if the *ekklesiastikon* was also paid at the *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι*. Although there is no evidence on this point, I find it unlikely. We know that the *ekklesiastikon* was instituted to stimulate attendance. This was probably necessary for the ordinary meetings at which dull routine business was discussed, but not for the *ἐκκλησῖαι σύγκλητοι* at which important issues of immediate concern to all were debated.

(p. 77) that the two meetings mentioned in *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 554 and 857 must have been *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* on the one hand because they were summoned in accordance with a decree of the Assembly and on the other hand because all meetings of the Assembly summoned by a decree of the Assembly qualified as *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* in his opinion. This is a valid argument for calling these meetings *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* if and only if we can accept Hansen's definition of this term.

In the case of *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 644, 672, 775 and 1006 and *Hesperia* 5 (1936), 419–28 n. 15, Hansen assumes that these meetings must have been *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* because they were summoned on festival days. I see nothing which compels us to accept such an assumption and to rule out *a priori* the possibility that these could have been ordinary meetings of the Assembly, whether the term 'ordinary' is used in the traditional sense or in the sense which Hansen prefers. The same is true for *Hesperia* 5 (1936), 414–16 n. 12 and *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 649 and 896. If we can take for granted Hansen's definition of the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* as 'inter alia an emergency meeting summoned at short notice whereas an ordinary meeting had to be summoned at four days' notice' and accept the further assumption that in the Hellenistic period 'the *prytaneis* had to preside over the meetings they had summoned and could not pass on the presidency over an assembly summoned by them to the subsequent board of *prytaneis*',<sup>34</sup> we can conclude that these inscriptions record decrees passed at *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι*, but here again nothing forces us to accept Hansen's definition.

In *SEG* XXI 440, *IG* ii<sup>2</sup> 897 and 954 we run into the term *βουλή σύγκλητος*. It is clear from these inscriptions that in these cases a meeting of the Council was called first on these days, followed immediately by a meeting of the Assembly. Hansen points out (p. 76) that there is only one other known instance of this and that occurred in the autumn of 339 after Philip's capture of Elateia (Dem. 18.168ff.). At this time 'a meeting of the *boule* was followed immediately by an emergency meeting of the *ecclesia*, undoubtedly an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*'. I think Hansen is probably correct to call this particular meeting of the Assembly in 339 an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*, but it does not follow that all meetings of the Assembly which immediately followed meetings of the Council on the same day were *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι*. To generalize on the basis of one isolated example is always a risky move.

Looking at the matter from another angle, one could argue that the meetings of the Assembly referred to in these inscriptions had already been scheduled by the *prytaneis* several days earlier and that the *prytaneis* had posted the agenda for each of these meetings well in advance. At the last moment, however, a new concern arose, one which the generals wished to be dealt with immediately, but to be placed on the agenda for this meeting it needed to be approved first by the Council. To clear this hurdle, an emergency meeting of the Council was called at the request of the generals. At this meeting of the Council the new item was introduced, passed and placed on the agenda of the previously scheduled meeting of the Assembly, which was then convened immediately afterwards. This explanation certainly makes more sense than Hansen's when one takes into consideration the fact that, although the meeting of the Council is designated as *σύγκλητος*, the meeting of the Assembly is not labelled an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. It may be possible, as Hansen (p. 78) argues, that 'the indication of whether an *ἐκκλησία* was *σύγκλητος* or not was optional' and that the practice varied from one decree to the next, but I find it hard to believe that the practice should be inconsistent in one and the same decree. For these reasons, I find it

<sup>34</sup> Hansen, p. 77 n. 22. It should be noted that Hansen's only evidence for the Hellenistic rule governing the procedure of the *prytaneis* is a passage from Demosthenes (23.92).

preferable to categorize the meetings at which the decrees recorded in *SEG XXI*, 440, *IG ii<sup>2</sup>* 897 and 954 were passed as 'ordinary'.

This leaves us with the only inscriptions which actually use the term *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*. In each of these it is perfectly possible to use Hansen's definition of the term, but it is equally possible to use the traditional definition of the term without encountering any difficulties in understanding the rest of the contents of each decree. In sum, an examination of these decrees does not advance Hansen's case one iota.

As a final argument, Hansen notes (p. 79) that the contents of these decrees passed in *ἐκκλησίαι σύγκλητοι* were honorific. He finds it 'remarkable that such decisions were regularly on the agenda of an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος*' and concludes that 'an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* was not an assembly reserved for some urgent matter'. But on the traditional definition of the term an *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* was not just an additional meeting of the Assembly called in case of emergency. It was also a meeting for which there was no previously set agenda as opposed to the 'ordinary' meetings for which the agenda contained certain items which had to be discussed. Now the honorary decrees *IG ii<sup>2</sup>* 838 and 945 were not just passed for some minor *proxenoi* from small towns in Thrace. They were for close friends of Ptolemy III and Eumenes II. These men merited special treatment and what could be more flattering than to call an entire meeting of the Assembly just to confer honours on them? If their honours were to be voted at a regular meeting of the Assembly, these men would have had to wait several hours and to listen to much dull routine business, such as how many *drachmai* had been spent to pay for pigs at minor sacrifices, etc., until their turn came up. Besides, the passing of such an honorary decree may well have been preceded by several laudatory speeches of a kind which is all too common whenever awards are distributed. These tedious speeches might have consumed several hours and have thus justified the calling of a special session. One might ask, didn't the Athenians have better things to do at their meetings in this period? The unfortunate answer to this question is 'probably not'. But there is another way of looking at the matter. In the Hellenistic period the security of Athens depended not so much on her own army and fleet as on the favour of monarchs such as Ptolemy and Eumenes. Good relations with these kings were of the utmost importance and those who could win and maintain their friendship for Athens were highly valued and merited special treatment.<sup>35</sup> Due to these factors the notion of what constituted 'urgent and important business' was altered. The *ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος* was still summoned to discuss 'urgent and important business', but what was considered 'urgent and important business' had changed considerably from the Classical period.

Our examination of the Hellenistic inscriptions has yielded no decisive arguments against or in favour of Hansen's views. Nonetheless, the objections we have formulated still stand and nothing in our study of the Hellenistic inscriptions has caused us to abandon them.

<sup>35</sup> For the role of these friends of the Hellenistic monarchs, see G. Herman, 'The friends of the early Hellenistic rulers: servants or officials?', *Talanta* 12–13 (1980–1), 103–49.

I would like to thank Professor P. J. Rhodes, Professor J. Mikalson, my colleague Professor R. Dunkle and my wife, Victoria F. Harris, for reading over a draft of this article and offering valuable suggestions. They are not to be held responsible for any errors which remain. The research for this article was aided by a PSC-CUNY grant.

## VII

We can now summarize our conclusions:

(i) There is no reason to think that there ever was a limit to the number of times the Assembly could meet in one prytany.

(ii) We have no reason to disbelieve the traditional definition of the term ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος. As we have seen, we have no grounds for doubting the evidence provided for this term by the scholia and lexica; the definition they give for this term fits the context in each passage where it is used. Although the results of this study have been largely negative, consisting primarily of refutations of several of Hansen's arguments, I hope to have placed the traditional definition of the term ἐκκλησία σύγκλητος on a firmer basis.

*Brooklyn College*

EDWARD M. HARRIS