



# Classical Athenian Archival System ~Anagrapheus and Demosion~

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## Introduction

ICA says that archives are fundamental to democracy, accountability and good governance. When we learn about the origin of archives, it is important to consider of the origin of democracy. This presentation shows the timeline of classical Athenian democracy and the establishment of Metroon so-called “Central Archives of Athens” , explained with two keywords, *Anagrapheus* and *Demosion*.

## History of Democracy in Classical Athens

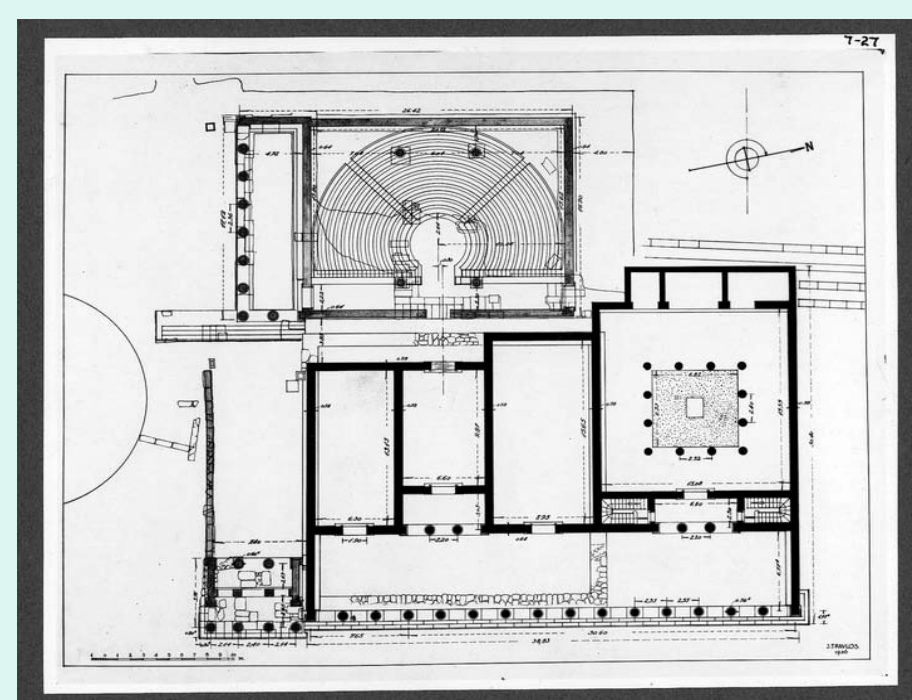
622/1 BC: Drakon's Constitution; the first written code  
594/3 BC: Solon appointed Archon of Athens; institutes democratic reforms  
560 BC: Peisistratos declares himself tyrannos  
507 BC: Kleisthenes reforms democracy (creates demos)  
492 BC~449 BC Greco-Persian Wars  
487/6 BC: Athenian Archonship becomes elective by lot  
461 BC: Ephialtes reforms and limits the powers of the Court of Areopagos  
454 BC: The treasury of the Delian League is moved from Delos to Athens  
451/0 BC: Pericles introduces a new citizenship law  
447 BC: Athens begins construction of the Parthenon, at the initiative of Pericles  
431 BC: The Peloponnesian War begins  
430 BC: An outbreak of plague  
429 BC: Death of Pericles  
415~413 BC: Athenian expedition to Siracusa  
411 BC: The democracy in Athens is overthrown by Oligarchic coup of Four Hundred; replaced by Five Thousand, then by democracy in 410.  
410~400/399 B.C. Revision of the laws  
404 BC: Athens surrenders to Sparta, ending the Peloponnesian War. Sparta introduces an oligarchic system, the Thirty Tyrants, in Athens.  
403 BC: Democracy restored  
399 BC: Socrates is executed in Athens on charges of impiety and corrupting Athenian youth  
Oration; Andokides I, *On the Mysteries*  
? Oration; Lysias xxx, *Against Nikomachos*  
338 BC: Makedonian King Philippos II defeats Athenians and Thebans at Chaeronea  
336 BC: Philippos II assassinated, Alexandros (the Great) succeeds  
330 BC: Orations; Demosthenes xviii, *On the Crown*; Aeschines III, *Against Ctesiphon*, Lycurgus I, *Against Leocrates*  
323 BC: Death of Alexandros  
323~322 BC: Lamian War: Athens is defeated by the Macedonians

### Metroon

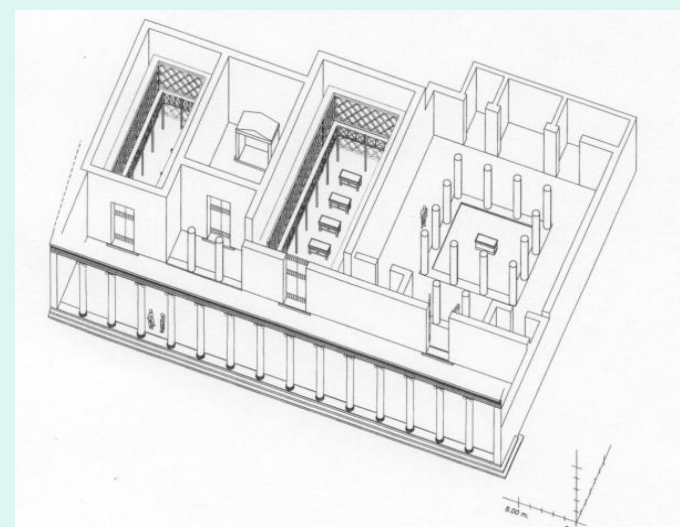
means what belongs to Mother  
Mother = Mother Goddess of Gods, People, and Animals  
Guardian of governance, documents  
Kybele from Minor Asia  
The building called Metroon since the middle of 4C B.C.  
and reconstructed in 2C B.C.



### Hellenistic Metroon



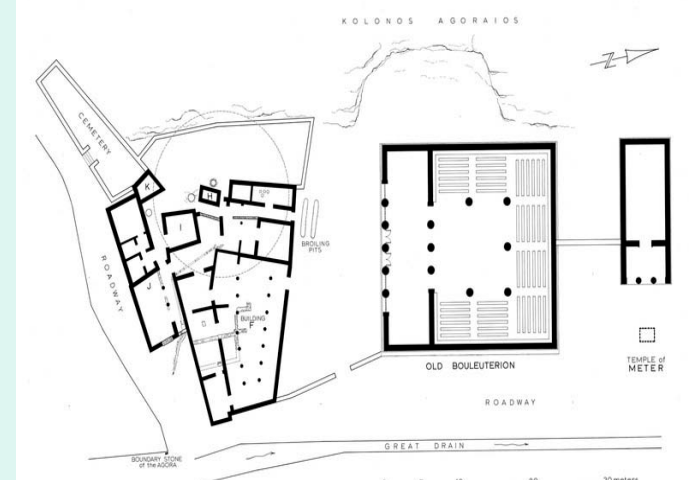
### Media Papyri(?)



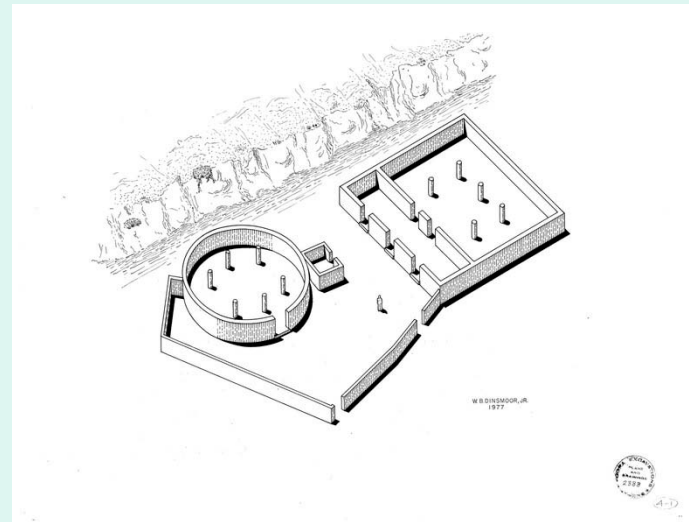
### Reference Tools

- Google Books <http://books.google.com/>
- JSTOR <http://www.jstor.org/>
- Perseus Project <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/>
- American school of Classical Studies in Athens <http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/>
- Athenian Agora Excavations <http://www.agathe.gr/>
- Searchable Greek Inscriptions <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>

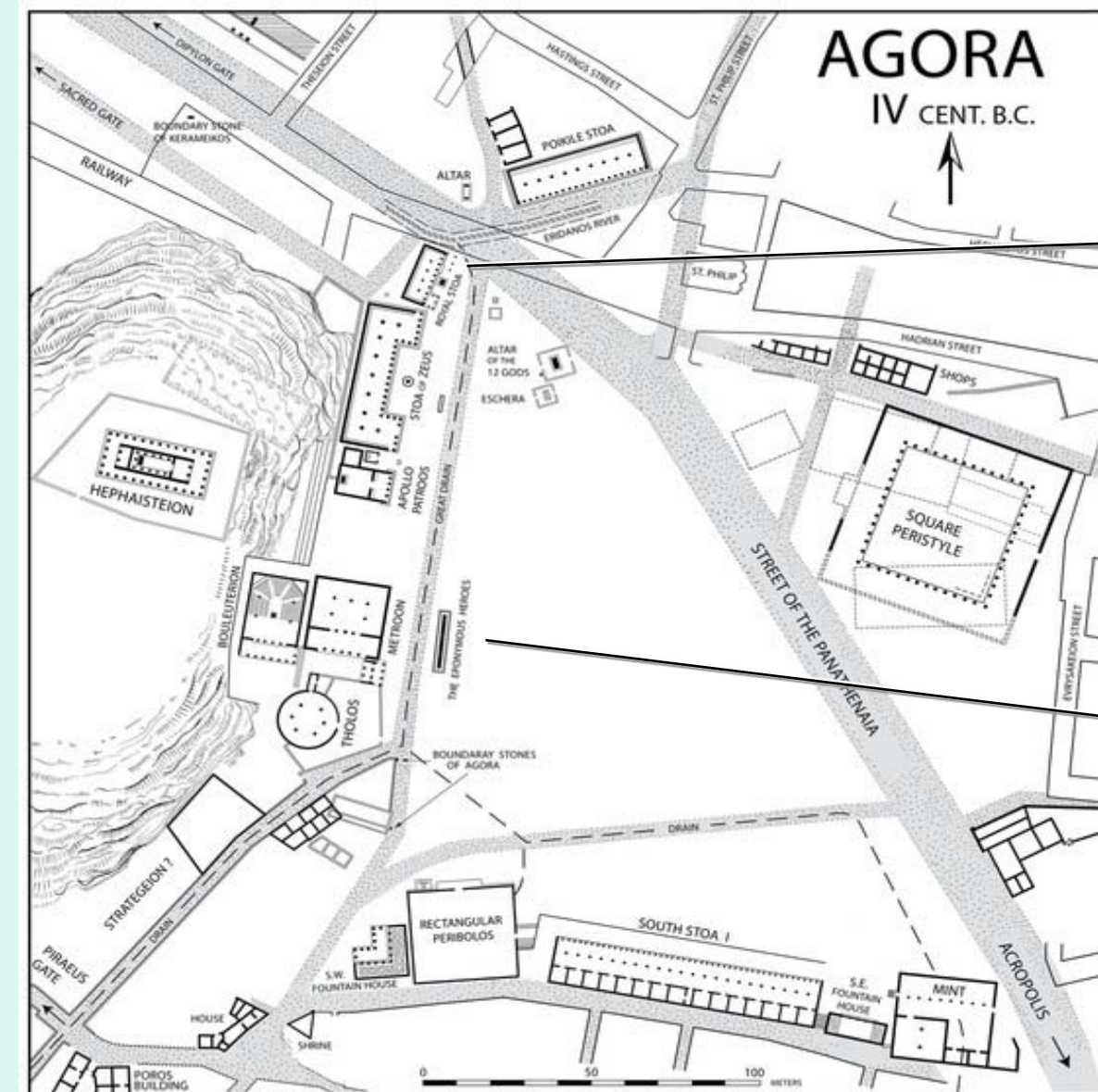
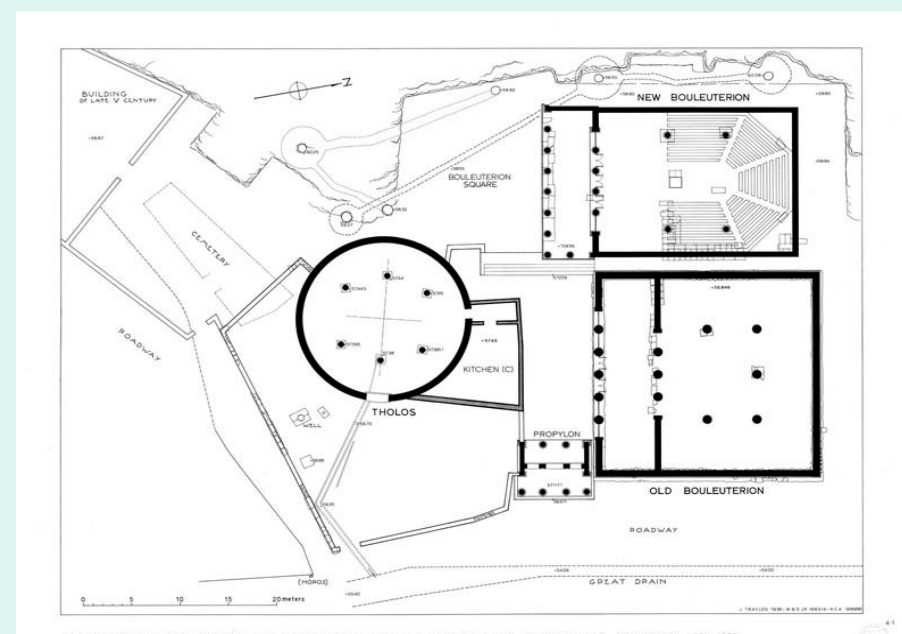
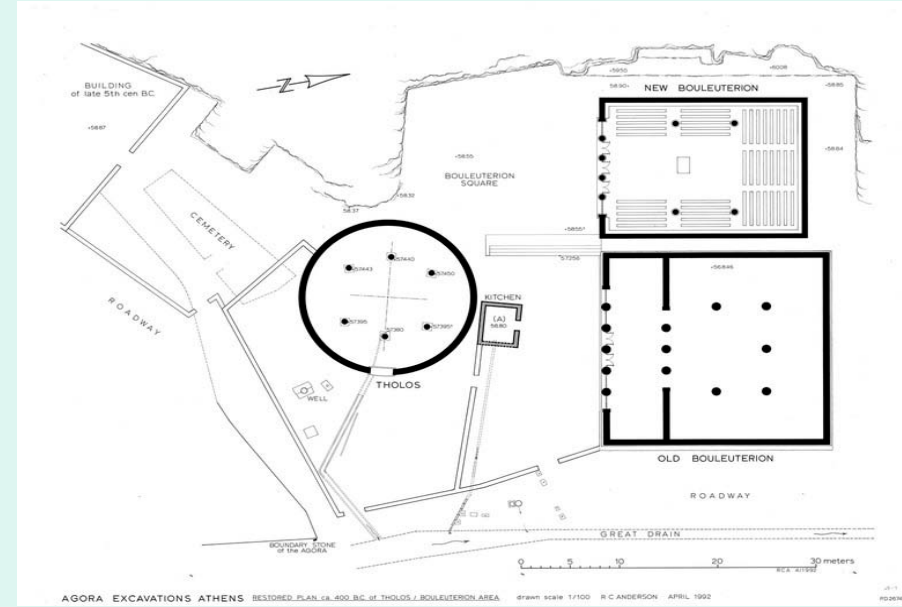
c. BC500 the site of Peisistratos' House, the Bouleuterion, and the small Temple of the Mother, soon after destroyed by the Persians



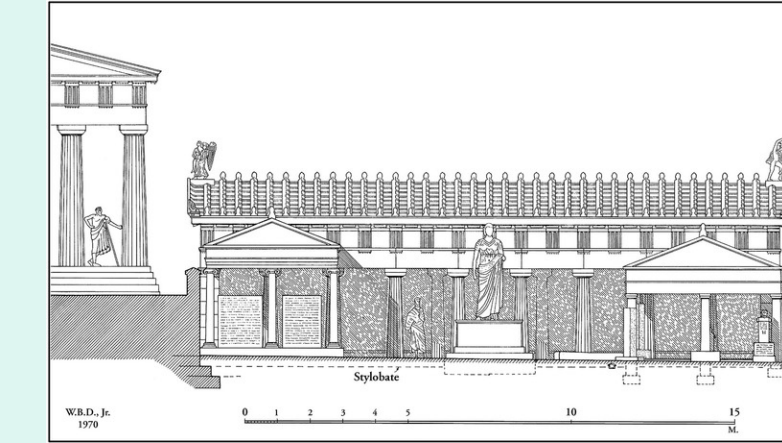
Tholos was build for Prytaneis to watch out, next to the Bouleuterion , in about 470 B.C.



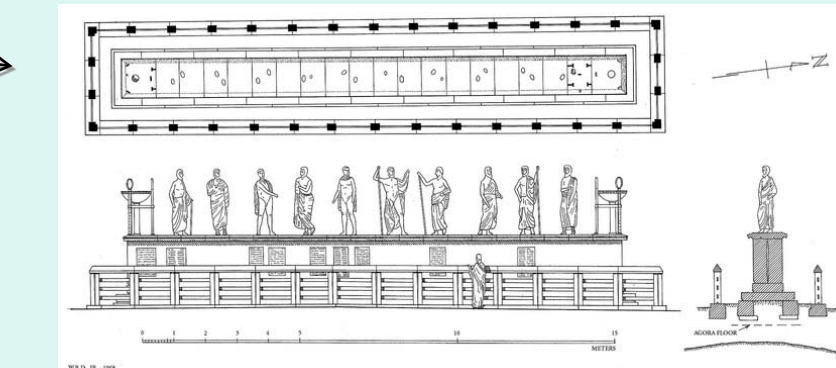
New Bouleuterion and Old Bouleuterion and Tholos



Important places of display



Stoa Basileus for permanent laws



Statues of Eponymous Heroes and notice boards

## Crisis of the Democracy (BC 411 and 404)

After a crisis of democracy in 411 B.C., the Boule, the 500-member, lottery-chosen governing council of Athens, appointed Anagrapheus (“codifier”) to examine and revise the laws and decrees of the state. The Anagrapheus was supposed to do the survey and collect materials from both inside and outside of the Bouleuterion, the Boule's building, which brought about a need for more space. As a result, a new building was constructed for the assembly in the last decade of the fifth century B.C. The old building remained as office space, where legislative and administrative records of Athenians were kept, and for the first time made available to the citizens for consultation.

9 Archons : Eponymous, Basileus, Polemarchos, 6 Thesmothetai  
The Boule was consisted of 500 men, 50 men from each of the ten new tribes(=demos), created by Kleisthenes. Members of the Boule served for one year and no man could serve more than twice in his life. They were strictly evaluated. The Prytaneis was the executives of 50 men in charge for a month. The chairman of Prytaneis, who guarded the seal of Athens and the key to documents and funds, was replaced every day. Such Athenian democracy system realized “a flat organization” with lottery election and ostracism and written laws.

## Discussions

☆Metroon of Athens, holding records, used to be Demosion, which means “belonging to Demos”.

Can we say that the origin of archives is not Archeion (Archon's office) but Demosion?

☆Anagrapheus surveyed both inside and outside of the Bouleuterion.

Is Demosion a collective archives?

☆What is Demosia Grammata (Peoples' writings)?

☆Demosion was open to public (just male adult citizens). Does it fulfill the requirement of Archives?

☆Who is the archivist of Demosion/Metroon? Gramateus (Secretary scribe chosen by lot) or Demosion(=Public slave)? In my opinion, the archivist is someone who made such system. In ancient Greece, orality and writing existed in parallel, as we have both paper and electronic records now. Public slaves in our days are computers.

☆What are Inscriptions? Publicity or Copy or Archives?

Inscriptions have format and style indicating metadata.

Some legislative inscriptions show Retention Schedule, following the Boule's decision.

## Function of the Boule & Holdings of Metroon

The Boule (Council of 500)  
-prepares decree or law proposals  
-administrates the Ekklesia , the general assembly  
-supervises, evaluates, and directs other officials  
-examines the qualification of citizenship  
-examines the qualification of officials  
-manages treasury  
-proceeds impeachments  
-approves the standard of weights and measures and supervises it  
-builds the triremes  
-inspects all public buildings and horses  
-inspects Incapables to give them a grant for food  
-trains the Epheboi (young men)  
-involves the sales of public land or mines  
-involves registration or payments (according to Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*)  
Reported holdings of Metroon  
• Minutes of the Ekklesia and the Boule  
• Laws and decrees  
• Diplomatic records  
• Treaties  
• List of Epheboi (young men)  
• Examined financial documents  
• State contracts with individuals  
• Inventories of the temples  
• Oracles  
• List of Olympic game victors  
• the Indictment against Socrates  
• Texts of tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides  
• Will of Epicuros  
Metroon seems not to be the central archives of entire Athens but the archives of the Boule, which is the center of her governance. Perhaps Metroon also might have documents of Stoa Basileus, which is the office of Archon Bosileus where the laws are displayed and religious or manslaughter trials are treated.