



Demosion, the origin of Democratic Archives in ancient Athens

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Stele with a relief showing Democracy crowning Demos (the people of Athens), ca. 337 B.C. Athens, Agora Museum, I 6524.

“Archives are fundamental to democracy, accountability and good governance.”

Etymology of Democracy : Greek

demos* (people) + *kratia*(power) → *demokratia

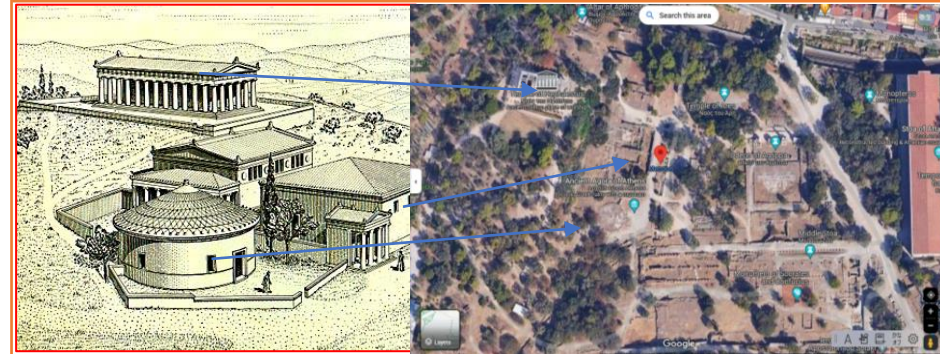
What is demos? [δῆμος](#) , ὄ

Literacy ©British Museum

Demos is artificial district for governance and then means people. ↓ [βουλή](#)
Athens has 10 *demos* and 50 citizens are sent to *Boule* (Council) by each.
Boule is consisted with 500 people, therefore called the council of 500.
One *demos* is in charge to keep night watch in *Tholos* (Round hall) and a chair chosen everyday holds the seal and the key for treasury.
Boule expands its function and the power.



Agora, the heart of democracy



<http://www.ime.gr/chronos/05/en/politics/325boule.html>

Google map

Timeline

508/507 B.C. Democratic reforms under Kleisthenes. More public buildings and boundary stones erected.

480/479 B.C. Sack of Athens by the Persians
460–429 B.C. Age of Perikles. Repairs and new buildings.

431–404 B.C. Peloponnesian War (Peace of Nikias 421–415 B.C.)

412B.C. ? Construction of New *Bouleuterion*
Old *Bouleuterion* called *Demosion*

Around 350 B.C. *Demosion* called *Metroon*

What are holdings of *Demosion* ?

- Decrees and laws codified by *anagrapheus*
- Proposal for *Ekklesia* and the laws
- Standards of measurements
- List of young soldiers
- Sponsors list of Chorus and Trireme
- Texts of Tragedy
- Records are custodied by *granmateus* and by *demosioi*, public slaves



↑ Louver Museum

[Alcibiades who erased records](#)

Reference : Ernst Posner

<http://files.archivists.org/pubs/free/ArchivesInTheAncientWorld-2003.pdf>