

EXCAVATING THE ATHENIAN AGORA: THEN AND NOW

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The American School of Classical Studies at Athens has been continuously excavating the Ancient Athenian Agora since 1931.

The Agora of Athens was the center of the ancient city: a large, open square where the citizens could assemble for a wide variety of purposes. On any given day the space might be used as a market, or for an election, a dramatic performance, a religious procession, military drill, or athletic competition. Here administrative, political, judicial, commercial, social, cultural, and religious activities all found a place together in the heart of Athens, and the square was surrounded by the public buildings necessary to run the Athenian government.

These buildings, along with monuments and small objects, illustrate the important role it played in all aspects of public life. The council chamber, magistrates' offices, mint, and archives have all been uncovered, while the lawcourts are represented by the recovery of bronze ballots and a water-clock used to time speeches. The use of the area as a marketplace is indicated by the numerous shops where potters, cobblers, bronzeworkers, and sculptors made and sold their wares.

In 1931 excavations looked like this:









Today in 2016, a few meters away, excavations look like this:







Read more on the [Agora Website](#).

