Zagora is a village and archaeological site on a peninsula on the south-west coast of the Greek island of Andros in the Cyclades. Unlike many other Aegean Early Iron Age sites, the entire settlement of Zagora, which covers an area of about 6.7 hectares, has been preserved to that time period and has remained undisturbed by later human occupation. The reason the residents of Zagora abandoned their home is not definitely known, but whatever the reason, they abandoned their home in a hurry. Because the site has been so well preserved, people’s belongings have been found strewn about their homes, as if they were forced to leave in the middle of a day’s work. There has been a total of three archaeological digs in Zagora. The site was first found in the late 1800s, but it was not until much later that it was actually excavated. The first archaeological dig was in the 1960s and 70s, the second one was over a few years in the early 2010s, and the most recent dig lasted for three weeks just this past July. The earliest excavations only uncovered about 10% of the total settlement area, but the following digs have helped unearth discoveries about Zagora’s architecture and even culture. For example, the area had a fortification wall that protected Zagora on its vulnerable landward side, and the layout of the houses shows that the inhabitants built homes blocked together rather than as detached buildings. The excavation of animal bones at the Zagora temple suggests that piglets and young lambs were used as sacrificial offerings. Outside of the fortification wall, one area shows evidence of three different burials. This location may very well be a cemetery for the people of Zagora. This area has not been explored as it is a very fertile and has therefore been cultivated continuously over the centuries. Thus, well preserved artefacts are unlikely to be revealed.

This area of Zagora was populated during the Early Iron Age (1100 – 700 BC). There are three main questions to be answered about civilizations from the Early Iron Age. First, what was the nature of early sanctuaries, why did they develop the way they did and where they did? What was their role to the communities they served? Next, why and how did the social organization of settlements change and how can we read that from the architecture and objects left behind? Finally, what does all of this have to do with the birth of the ‘polis’ – the first step in the development of the early modern state? Like many aspects of archaeology, all of these questions are interconnected, and it is impossible to fully answer one single question without decent understanding of the other two. This is why site excavations and the analyzation of artefacts is so important, and why the single village of Zagora has had three separate excavations through the past few decades. The intended audience for the work in the Zagora excavations is other archaeologists, as multiple groups have returned to the area to work, as well as the general public of Greece, as much of the work these archaeologists do is of cultural and historical importance to the people of this area.

As previously mentioned, there have been three past archaeological excavations at Zagora. Interestingly, all three of the excavations of this area of this Greek island were carried out by Sydney University in Australia. The first dig was in the 1960s and 70s, the second one lasted from 2012 to 2014, and the most recent dig was just three weeks long, taking place during the summer of 2019. The specific lengths of times for the excavations in the 60s and the 70s is not provided, but the fieldwork in 2012, 2013, and 2014 lasted for six weeks during the fall of each year. Although not much specific information is publicly provided about the findings, especially from the earliest excavations, much of the archaeological research in Zagora seems to fit under the culture-history body of scholarship. The earliest discoveries of Zagora were made in the 1960s, and this is when many archaeologists were turning away from traditional archaeology and toward new archaeology. Even in the early 2010s, much of the work used new 21st century technologies and methods to better understand the town. The 2019 dig also had ties with the culture-history body of scholarship. For example, the University of Sydney’s Department of Archaeology collaborated with GML Heritage, “one of Australia's leading heritage consultancies”.

Much archaeological research of agora has been done using stratigraphy and pottery findings. Other archaeological field methods mentioned on the Zagora Archaeological Project website include surface and geophysical surveys, site clearing, making a site grid, and soil removal. The website for the Zagora project also explains many different archaeological tools and technologies, though it did not say exactly which ones were used in their fieldwork. Specific tools and technologies explained on the website are: a dumpy level (an automatic level used to determine heights in relation to a known point), a theodolite (an instrument that measures horizontal and vertical angles), a total station (an electronic instrument used to measure angles and distances, particularly on slopes), a mattock (a hand tool similar to a pick axe), a trowel (a hand tool, typically pointed, with a metal blade and handle used for delicate work), Global Positioning System (GPS), a ranging pole (a surveying instrument painted alternating red and white in 50cm intervals, used for sightings by surveyors), a compass, a ground penetrating radar (abbreviated to GPR, a geophysical instrument which uses electromagnetic radiation to detect features and artefacts underground, can provide information up to 15m), a differential magnetometer (also known as a gradiometer, a geophysical instrument which sends a magnetic pulse into the ground and measures its response – extremely sensitive to metal, it measures variations in the magnetic field and can indicate the presence of large features), and a resistivity meter (also known as a resistance meter, measures the electrical conductivity or resistance of the ground and determines unusual patterns beneath the surface which may indicate features or artefacts).

Of the artefacts found at Zagora, many are typical household items from the time. As was previously stated, some event, presumably a natural disaster or storm of some kind, occurred with little to no warning and the people of Zagora were forced to evacuate. Therefore, many objects were left out and ended up being preserved. The majority of objects archaeologists discovered are kitchen items, such as pots, dishes, and jars to store food and liquid. Specific storage vessels were a hydria (which mainly stored water), a pithos (a clay storage jar for staple foods such as wine, oil, wheat and barley), and an amphora (which stored and transported a wide range of goods). Other items commonly found in the kitchens of houses in Zagora were a chytra (a generic term for an ancient Greek cooking pot), a kantharos (the generic term for a cup), and an oinochoe (a wine-pouring vessel of various shapes). Other household objects that were not kitchen items have been recovered from the ruins of Zagora, but not anywhere near the same number. What archaeologists have found are a fibula (a metal pin, similar to a safety pin), a spindle whorl (a weight on the spindle to assist pull in spinning yarn), and a pyxis (a box with a lid that a woman will use as a powder box or jewelry container). It is likely that archaeologists have found more kitchen items than other household objects because the pots and jars were made out of clay and stone, and therefore better preserved, while many other household items have decayed with time. Although many questions remain surrounding Zagora, each new excavation unearths new hints to the lives of the people of the lost village.