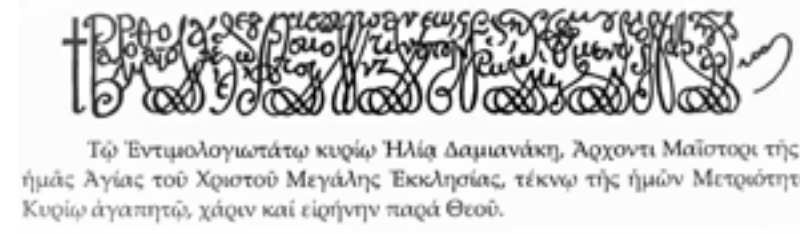


*What is an
Archon?
I am.*

Iconographer, Subdeacon
Elias Damianakis
Archon Great Church of Christ

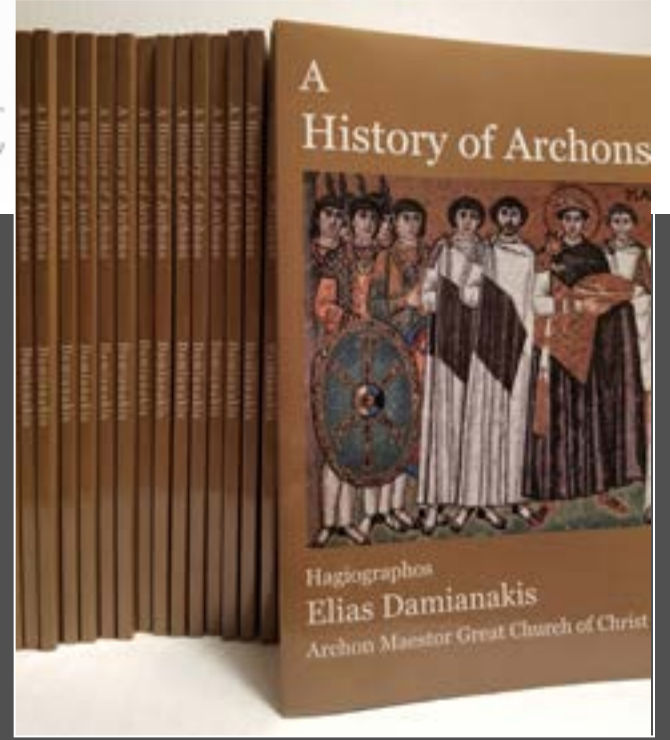
Archon is a term used since ancient Greece and later in the Roman Empire and beyond its collapse in 1453. Unlike the narrative promoted by many adversaries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The term archon has been used with many negative connotations. The word archon in its simplest means leader and addressed as lord. The gospel utilizes the term for both good and evil individuals.

Hence the contemporary space alien archons in Star Trek, Star Wars, Marvel Comics, and popular literature (Lord of the Rings - Ο Άρχοντας των Δαχτυλιδιών). There are some laughable internet Orthodox trolls who utilize these examples to discredit archons and the Ecumenical Patriarch.



My book: **A History of Archons** (2nd edition release Fall 2023 -full color) goes into detail from Ancient Greece to modern times elucidating the importance and influence on other cultures of titled officials.

An Archon prosopography is also in development.

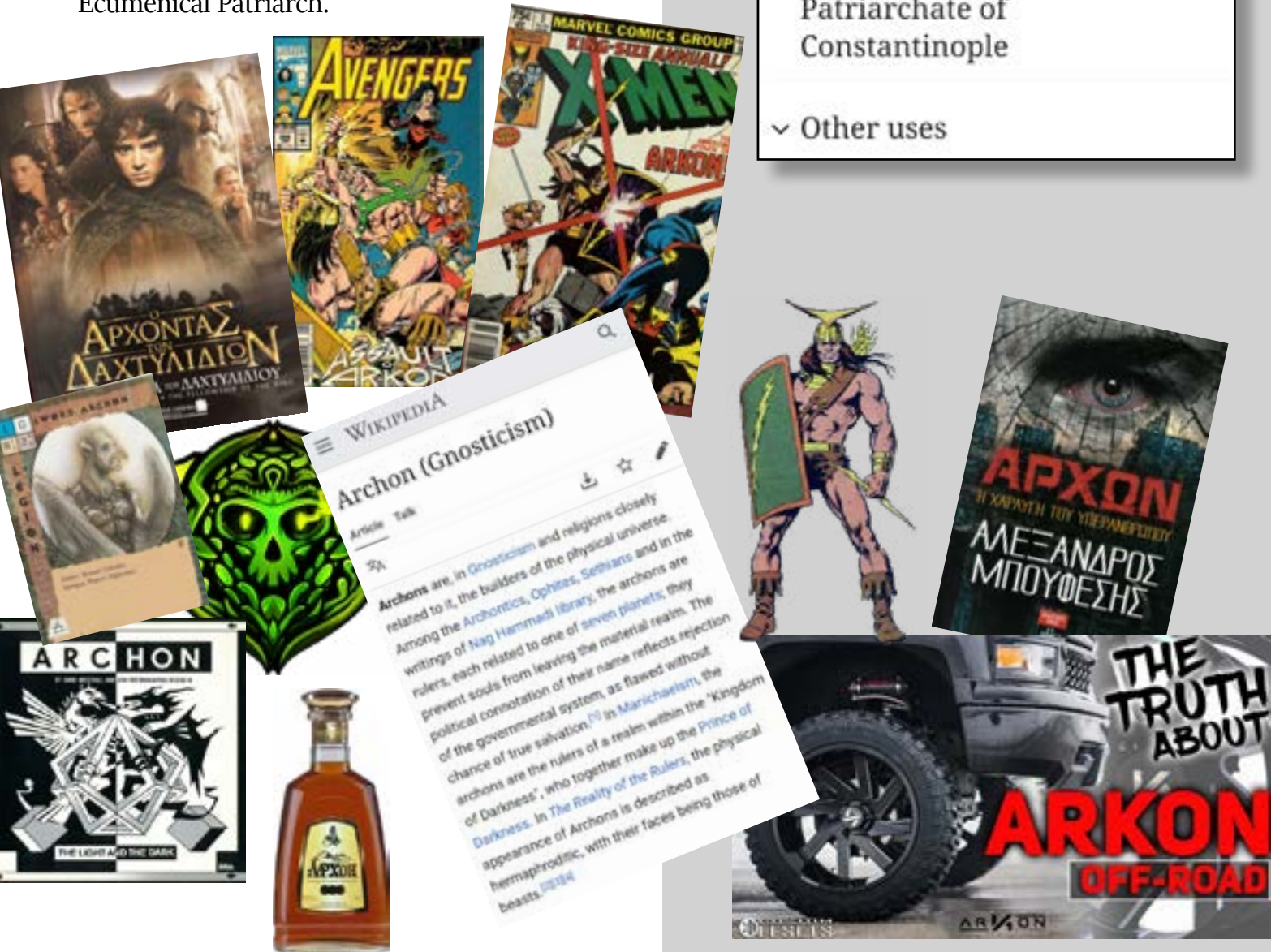
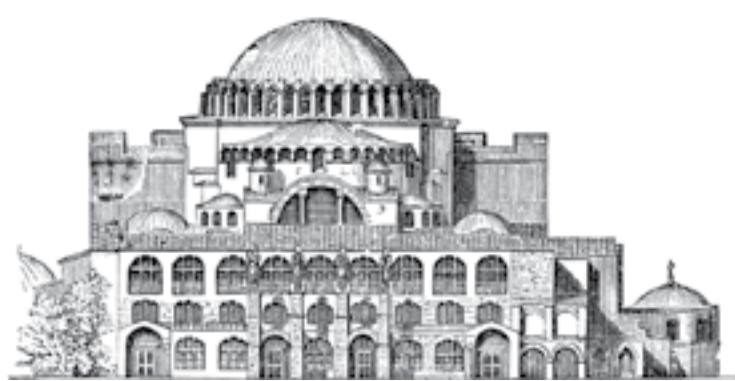


Let's explore the historical and pertinent aspects of archons.

In the Greek city-states, Archons were elected officials who held power over a specific region or city and were responsible for maintaining law and order, conducting trials, and overseeing religious festivals and events. The famed Aeropagatie the hill to the northwest of the Acropolis in ancient Athens the judicial council whose member archons (Areopagites) met on this hill and where St Paul preached to the Athenian Archons.



In the Roman Empire, the term Archon was used to describe various titled officials such as governors of provinces, administrators of cities, military commanders, and magistrates who held administrative and judicial powers.



Early in Christian history bestowed titles were conferred (οφφικιάλιος) onto individuals describing one's position of responsibility. The church is replete with titled officials, both lay and clerical. In the Roman Empire, now referred to as the Byzantine Empire, the term archon was used to describe the highest officials of the government, including the emperor, who was considered the chief Archon.

Archons can be traced back to the early Christian Church, with the first recorded instances of laypersons serving in this role dating back to the first century AD. During this time, the Christian Church was still in its infancy, laypeople played an important role in supporting the work of the early Christian leaders, helping to spread the gospel, administer church facilities, and care for the poor.



Above: Panel of a Diptych Announcing the Consulship of Justinian Metropolitan Museum NYC

Below: Emperor Justinian surrounded by Archons (L) Strategoi, Maestor (White Mandya) Ravenna, Italy



In the centuries that followed, the Christian Church became increasingly institutionalized, with the development of a hierarchical structure that included bishops, priests, and deacons. In fact, the hierarch is a clerical archon -Ιεραρχών.

After the fall of the Roman empire in 1453 the role of archons in the Church became more and more important through the centuries. Archons of "The City" became caretakers of the Churches in Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and all the churches in the Balkans.

However, despite this increasing formality, the role of lay ecclesial Archons remained an important part of the church's spiritual life and growth.



Archon merchant under the Ottoman Rule



Anyone who visits a monastery or Orthodox church has met an archimandrite, protopresbyter, archpriest, confessor -clerical archons. Just as there were two parallel groups of archons one political and one ecclesiastic in nature, there are two parallel groups within both political and ecclesiastic groups. The ecclesial archons are both lay and clerical. Many titles have been in constant use for millennia. A fine example is the title Archon Protopsalti of the Great Church of Christ, where we have the continuous lineage from the earliest centuries of the Church of Constantinople.

Jumping to the 20th century and the visionary leadership of Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America, established in 1966 the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle. The establishment of the fraternity “Knights of St Andrew” on the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the organization’s first chirothesia of whom are now known as Archons the of Ecumenical Patriarchate. As stated, earlier Archons have always existed in Christendom and specifically the Orthodox Church. 1966 represented the reintroduction of a lay leadership organization. Between the Order of St Andrew and the Brotherhood of Pammakaristos there are approximately 1500 Archons from around the world. They exemplify the finest from every conceivable industry: theologians, artists, builders, attorneys, shipping, media, restaurants, investment managers, academics and so on. With diverse opinions and financial abilities, the one thing that unites us is our love and devotion to The Great Church of Christ.



Top: His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America establish the Order of Saint Andrew 1966

Center: His Eminence “Laying of Hands” 2010 Archon Elias Damianakis

Bottom: His All Holiness in Istanbul with the Ukrainian community commemorating the Holodomor



“Archons have always offered many-fold and invaluable contributions to the Church and our Nation, and they continue to this day their service, organized into two Brotherhoods – the Order of St. Andrew and the Brotherhood of ‘Panagia Pammakaristos’ comprising members outside of the United States. These around 1500 Archons throughout the world contribute in many ways and effectively to the support of the multidimensional and sacred work of the Mother Church, as well as to the defense of its inalienable rights, as demonstrated by the immense and admirable initiatives of the Order of St. Andrew...”

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the term Archon is used to refer to an official who has significant influence in the administration and governance of the church. These Archons are appointed by the Ecumenical and are responsible for overseeing the religious life and institutions within their respective regions and represent the interests of the Orthodox church in a broader society...

In conclusion, Archons have a long and rich history since the ancient Greek city-states, the Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire), and especially the Orthodox Church. An Archon’s role in the governance and administration of Orthodoxy cannot be overstated and continues to play a critical role in our church.



Here in my humble opinion, are *some* of the key activities of Archons of the Great Church of Christ:

Preserving the Orthodox Faith: Archons play an important role in preserving the Orthodox faith and its teachings by ensuring that the teachings of the church are followed and upheld.

Building and Maintaining Churches: Archons have been responsible for overseeing the construction and maintenance of churches within their respective regions, ensuring that they are well-maintained and that the people have access to places of worship.

Supporting the Clergy: Archons have been instrumental in supporting the clergy within their regions, providing them with the resources and support they need to carry out their ministry effectively.

Promoting Religious Education: Archons have promoted religious education within their regions, ensuring that the next generation has a strong foundation in the Orthodox faith and its teachings. Supporting theological schools and promoting the study of the Gospel in its original Greek language and culture.

Advocating for the Orthodox Church: Archons serve as advocates for the Orthodox Church, working to promote the interests of the church in the wider community and advancing its mission.

Providing Financial Support: Archons have provided financial support to the churches within their regions, ensuring that they have the resources they need to carry out their mission and ministry.

Promoting Unity: Archons have promoted unity within the Eastern Orthodox Church, working to ensure that the different regions within the church are working together for the common good.

Protecting the Rights of the Laity: Archons have played an important role in protecting the rights of the laity within their regions, ensuring that they are treated fairly and with respect.

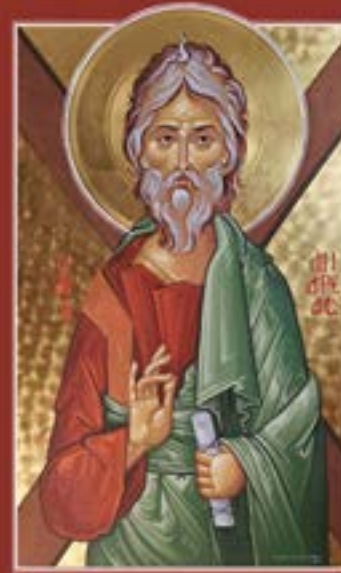
Advocating for the Poor and Needy: Archons advocate for the poor and needy within their regions, working to ensure that they are provided with the resources and support they need to live their lives with dignity.

Protecting the Environment and Culture: Archons support the protection of the natural environment, educational and cultural initiatives of the Orthodox Church.

Philanthropy: Archons play a significant role in supporting the philanthropic initiatives of the Orthodox Church, including supporting social service organizations, orphanages, and other charitable causes.

Supporting the Ecumenical Patriarchate: Archons serve as ambassadors of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, working to promote the interests of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in their respective countries and communities.

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH



November 30 is the Feast Day of Saint Andrew the First-Called, the patron saint of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle. Our Holy Mother Church of Constantinople, one of the original five apostolic Sees (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem) was founded by St. Andrew, the First-called of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Saint Andrew was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and was the brother of Peter, the chief of the Apostles who founded the Church in Rome. St. Andrew had first been a disciple of John the Baptist; afterwards, on hearing the Baptist's witness concerning Jesus, when St. John pointed Him out with his finger and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,36). Andrew then began following Christ and became His first disciple, and is therefore called the Protocletus, the First-Called of the Apostles. After the Ascension of the Lord, he preached in various lands, and founded the Church in Byzantium, the future site of Constantinople. Having suffered many things for the Lord's sake, he died in Patras of Achaia: he was crucified on a cross in the shape of an "X," the first letter of "Christ" in Greek; this cross is also the symbol of Saint Andrew.



While Peter symbolically came to represent the Church of the West, Andrew likewise represents the Church of the East. The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is made up of Archons who are selected by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for their outstanding service to the Church, and are significant, distinguished, and well-respected leaders of the Orthodox Christian community. Their special concern and interest is to serve as a bulwark to protect and promote the Sacred See of St. Andrew the Apostle and its worldwide salvific mission.



Θεοτόκος ή Παμμακάριστος, "All-Blessed Mother of God"

Pammakaristos is the name for the Brotherhood of Archons beyond the Order of St Andrew

Following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the seat of the Orthodox Patriarchate was first moved from Hagia Sophia to the Church of the Holy Apostles.

From around 1455 to 1587, the church was made the seat of the Patriarchate by Gennadios II Scholarios. A document of the second half of the 16th century describes a number of tombs and relics there, including Alexios Komnenos. In 1587, it was converted into a mosque, after which it was significantly altered. It was converted into a mosque around 1587 during the reign of Murad III. It was called Fethiye Camii ("Conquest Mosque") to commemorate the Ottoman conquest of Orthodox Georgia.



Patriarchal Churches of Constantinople

- The Church of Hagia Irene, was the cathedral church of the Patriarchate before Hagia Sophia was completed in 360
- Hagia Sophia 360 - 1453
- Holy Apostles 1453 - 1456
- Panagia Pammakaristos 1456 - 1587
- Theotokos Paramythia 1587 - 1597
- St George 1597 - current

ABOUT ELIAS DAMIANAKIS



Archon Elias Damianakis and his wife Angela are a founding member of St. Raphael Palm Harbor, FL. Invested in 2010, conferred the ancient Roman [Byzantine] offikion Maestor. Elias is a celebrated Byzantine Iconographer, author, and innovative internet entrepreneur. He has sponsored His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's visit to Florida (2006); underwrote 100,000 commemorative prints/cards for Patriarchal visits; installed private chapel for Patriarchal devotion during Patriarchal visit.



Archon Damianakis received the Medal of St. Paul GOARCH, for service to the YAL, as Archdiocesan Conference Chairman (1987), Archangel Michael Medal, Holy Metropolis of Atlanta; served as US Delegate to the Millennium International Clergy-Laity-Conference, Constantinople (2000). Participates in frequent Archon pilgrimages to the Ecumenical Patriarchate: Historic Return of the Relics (2004); witnessed visitations of Pope Benedict (2006); Pope Francis (2014); several official Archon trips; Smyrna, Cappadocia, Ankara, Jerusalem, Sinai.

Archon Elias attended two Synaxis of Orthodox Primates Sunday of Orthodoxy (2014) Constantinople; celebrated several historic events in Constantinople: Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of His All Holiness' elevation to the Ecumenical Throne (2011). Participated in several International Religious Freedom Symposiums: EU Parliament Brussels (2010); Washington DC, (2017); joined His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros on his historic return to Constantinople (2019).

Archon Elias received numerous civic awards, notably a Special Congressional Recognition (2017). He is a celebrated online pioneer, dubbed an "Evangelist of Beauty." He Establishes/underwrites websites dedicated to Orthodoxy, Iconography, Religious Freedom, and "Orthodoxy and the Environment" OIKOU.org



Archon Damianakis is an internationally renowned Master Iconographer. He lectures and offered Master Classes around the world: Athens, London, Moscow and St Petersburg, Russia. Taught iconography at Hellenic College/ Holy Cross School of Theology and founded the School of Iconography. His online hub is Archonelias.com

Elias and his wife, Angela (Psychotherapist, LCSW), grew up at Holy Trinity, Hicksville, NY and married in 1991. They have three children Theophani (son-in-law, Stylianos Sarigiannis), Stavronikitas (daughter-in-law Kristen Karavantos-Love) all four graduates of HCHC, Euphemia (16) and grandson Elias.

ArchonElias.com