

## History

The Church of Constantinople was founded by St. Andrew, the first Apostle (commemorated on November 30); his disciple, Stachys, was the first bishop of Byzantium (38-54). After Constantinople became the capital of the Roman Empire in 330, the Church's status was elevated to its current position. The Second Ecumenical Council (381) conferred on its bishop second rank after the bishop of Rome, and the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451) granted Constantinople equal ranking to Rome, which expanded the Church's jurisdiction. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is known as the "Great Church of Christ," and it is the reference point for liturgical and administrative matters. It is also called the "Phanar," or "lighthouse," which derives from the name of the old Greek neighborhood where it is located.

## The Patriarchal Residence and Other Buildings

### 1 - The Constantiniana and Evgenidion

Except for part of the patriarchal library, all other buildings at the Phanar were rebuilt in the last two centuries. The Constantiniana, with rooms for the clergy, was constructed by Patriarch Constantine V in the 19th century, while the Evgenidion, originally erected by Patriarch Joachim III as a residence, was restored with funds from the benefactor Efstathios Evgenidis at the turn of the 20th century.

### 2 - The Tower and Adjoining Edifices

The 18th-century tower behind the church of St. George is used to store the holy *myron* (myrrh) and to house the archives and a museum. Library offices and a dormitory are located in the adjoining wooden structure, built during the first tenure of Patriarch Joachim (1878-84). The stone edifice housed a printing press from the 17th century until 1964; today, it contains rare icons and manuscripts.

### 3 - The Pavilion of the Holy Myron

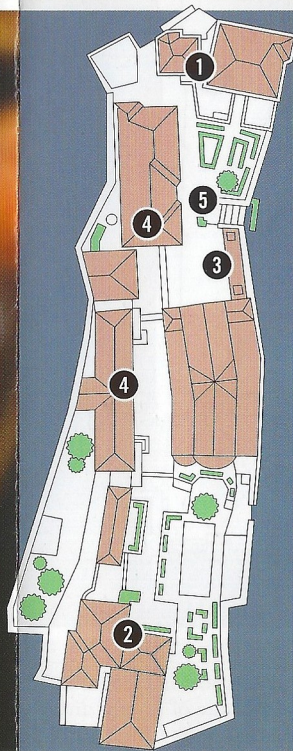
The holy *myron* prepared here in special boilers during Holy Week is distributed to churches worldwide for use in the sacraments of baptism and chrismation.

### 4 - The New Patriarchal House

The offices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate were destroyed by fire in 1941 and rebuilt by Patriarch Demetrios (1972-91). Three mosaic panels adorn the main foyer: 1) Christ enthroned, blessing those who enter; 2) St. Andrew handing the Gospel to St. Stachys; and 3) Sultan Mehmed II conferring privileges on Gennadios Scholarios, the first Ecumenical Patriarch after the Fall of Constantinople (1453). Besides the patriarch's office and private chapel, the building contains official chambers, including the conference room of the Holy Synod.

### 5 - The Gate of Patriarch Gregory V

Facing the patriarchal house, this entryway has remained closed since Easter Sunday 1821, when Patriarch Gregory V was martyred here, only weeks after the declaration of the Greek War of Independence.



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For more details, see John Chrysavgis,  
*The Ecumenical Patriarchate Today. Sacred Greek*  
*Orthodox Sites of Istanbul*, Istanbul: London Editions, 2014.



## The Ecumenical Patriarchate

With 300 million people worldwide, the Orthodox Christian Church comprises several self-governing Churches sharing one faith and worship. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is the highest see of the Orthodox Church, and it has retained its center in Istanbul (Constantinople) for over seventeen centuries. The Ecumenical Patriarchate directly oversees millions of Orthodox Christians of various ethnic backgrounds in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Asia, and parts of Greece. Orthodox Christianity enjoys profound continuity with Scripture and the Apostolic Church, and it adheres to the teachings of the seven ecumenical councils, all of which took place either in or near Constantinople. "Orthodox" means "right belief" and "right worship."

### Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was born Demetrios Archondonis in 1940, on the island of Imvros (Gökçeada, Turkey), and elected 270th Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome in 1991. A citizen of Turkey, he has worked for unity among Orthodox Churches, reconciliation among Christian Churches, and dialogue among Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Patriarch Bartholomew is noted for his environmental initiatives, which has earned him the title "Green Patriarch." As an apostle of love and peace, he has advocated religious freedom and human rights, for which he received the Congressional Gold Medal of the United States Congress in 1997.

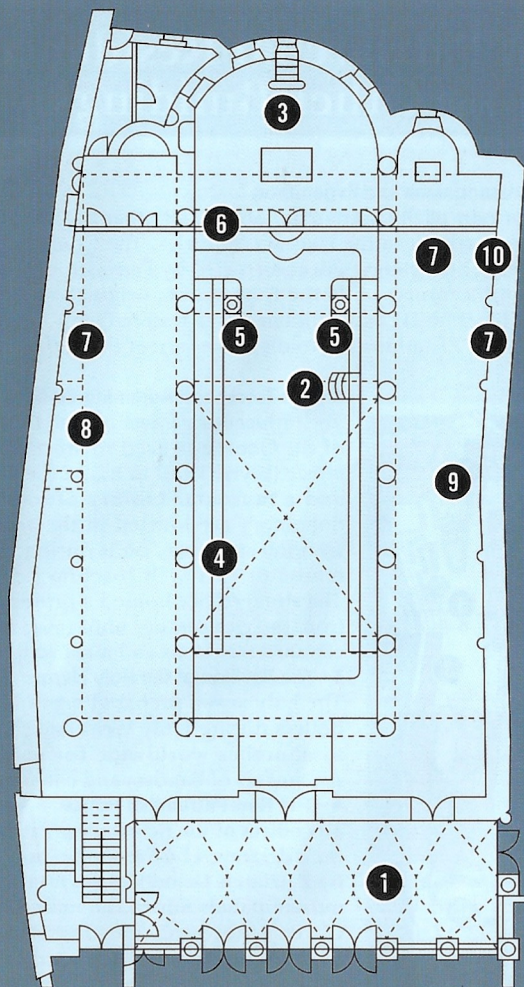




## The Patriarchal Church of St. George

**T**he church of St. George (the Great Martyr and Trophy-Bearer) is the fifth church in Constantinople to house the Ecumenical Patriarchate since the 15th century. Formerly a convent for Orthodox nuns, it was converted to the patriarchal offices by Patriarch Matthew II (1598-1601).

Patriarch Timothy II refurbished the church in 1614 (see inscription on main façade), and Patriarch Jeremiah III rebuilt it after a fire in 1720 (see inscription over right entrance). It was repaired in 1836 by Patriarch Gregory VI and restored recently under Patriarch Bartholomew. The church of St. George is divided into vestibule, nave, and altar and retains the traditional basilica style with three aisles. The vestibule contains icons of St. George and the Prophet Elijah, who is wearing fur in memory of the furrier merchants who brought a water system to the Phanar.



**1 - The Candle Stand** The first thing that every Orthodox Christian does upon entering a church is to light a candle. Made of walnut and inlaid with ivory petals in the shape of pentagons, the 17th-century candle stand in the patriarchal church is a replica of early Egyptian craftsmanship.

**2 - The Throne** The patriarchal throne is traditionally attributed to St. John Chrysostom (398-404), but an inscription on the gable eaves dates it to 1577. Four meters tall and fashioned in the form of a vine, it is made of walnut and inlaid with ivory, mother of pearl, and colored wood. Its 17th-century icon of Christ Pantokrator was commissioned by Patriarch Paisios I.

**3 - The Synthronon** Inside the sanctuary and behind the altar, the synthronon is an elevated marble throne (for the Patriarch) surrounded by eleven wooden thrones (for members of Holy Synod).

**4 - The Pulpit** The pulpit is traditionally attributed to St. John Chrysostom, but an inscription dates it to Patriarch Gabriel III (1702-7). Strikingly wrapped around a column, it is made of walnut and mother of pearl and embellished with a vine motif.

**5 - The Cantor Stalls** These two stalls, made of walnut with ivory inlay, are among the artifacts transferred in 1942 to the Phanar from the convent of Panaghia Kamariotissa on the island of Halki.

**6 - The Iconostasis** The icon screen that separates the nave from the altar is an 18th-century conglomeration of Byzantine, Renaissance, Baroque, and Ottoman styles. Carved out of wood and recently gilded, the screen is divided into three levels; its smaller icons allow individual veneration.

**7 - Three Important Icons** Two icons on the right aisle predate some of the iconography of Hagia Sophia and Chora Monastery. The 11th-century mosaic icon of Panaghia Pammakaristos depicts the Mother of God holding the infant Christ. As patron icon of the former patriarchal church of Panaghia Pammakaristos (1456-1587), it was transferred to all subsequent patriarchal churches. The 11th-century mosaic icon of St. John the Baptist was also originally located in the church of Panaghia Pammakaristos. On the left aisle, the icon of Panaghia Faneromeni, revered for its miraculous properties, was transferred here from Kizikos (today's Kapıdağ, Turkey). Overlaid with gold and silver, it predates the 14th century.

**8 - Three Remarkable Bishops** Like icons, relics are a central aspect of Orthodox worship, underlining the transfiguration of the material world by divine grace. Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom, the "three Hierarchs" (whose joint feast day is January 30), were the most influential theologians of the early Church, and they are venerated ecumenically in Christianity. After the Fourth Crusade (1204), the relics of these saints were taken from Constantinople to Rome. In November 2004, those of St. Gregory and St. John Chrysostom, the two renowned archbishops of Constantinople, were solemnly restored to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as a generous gift from Pope John Paul II. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over their return, and they are now preserved on the left aisle of the church of St. George. More recently, the relics of St. Basil were also returned from Rome.

**9 - Three Remarkable Women** The relics of St. Euphemia the Great Martyr (4th century), whose feast day is September 16, are a precious spiritual treasure. St. Theophano the Empress (r. 886-93), the wife of Emperor Leo the Wise, is commemorated on December 16. Although the third set of relics is traditionally attributed to Solomone, mother of the Maccabees, whose feast day is August 1, it probably belongs to Mary Salome (commemorated on the second Sunday after Easter), one of the myrrh-bearing women, who first witnessed the Resurrection.

**10 - The Column of Christ's Flagellation** One of the most treasured and ancient relics of the patriarchal church is this remnant of the column where Christ was bound and whipped by Roman soldiers during his passion and before his crucifixion. Two other portions are preserved in Jerusalem.