The etymological root of the term “Archon”

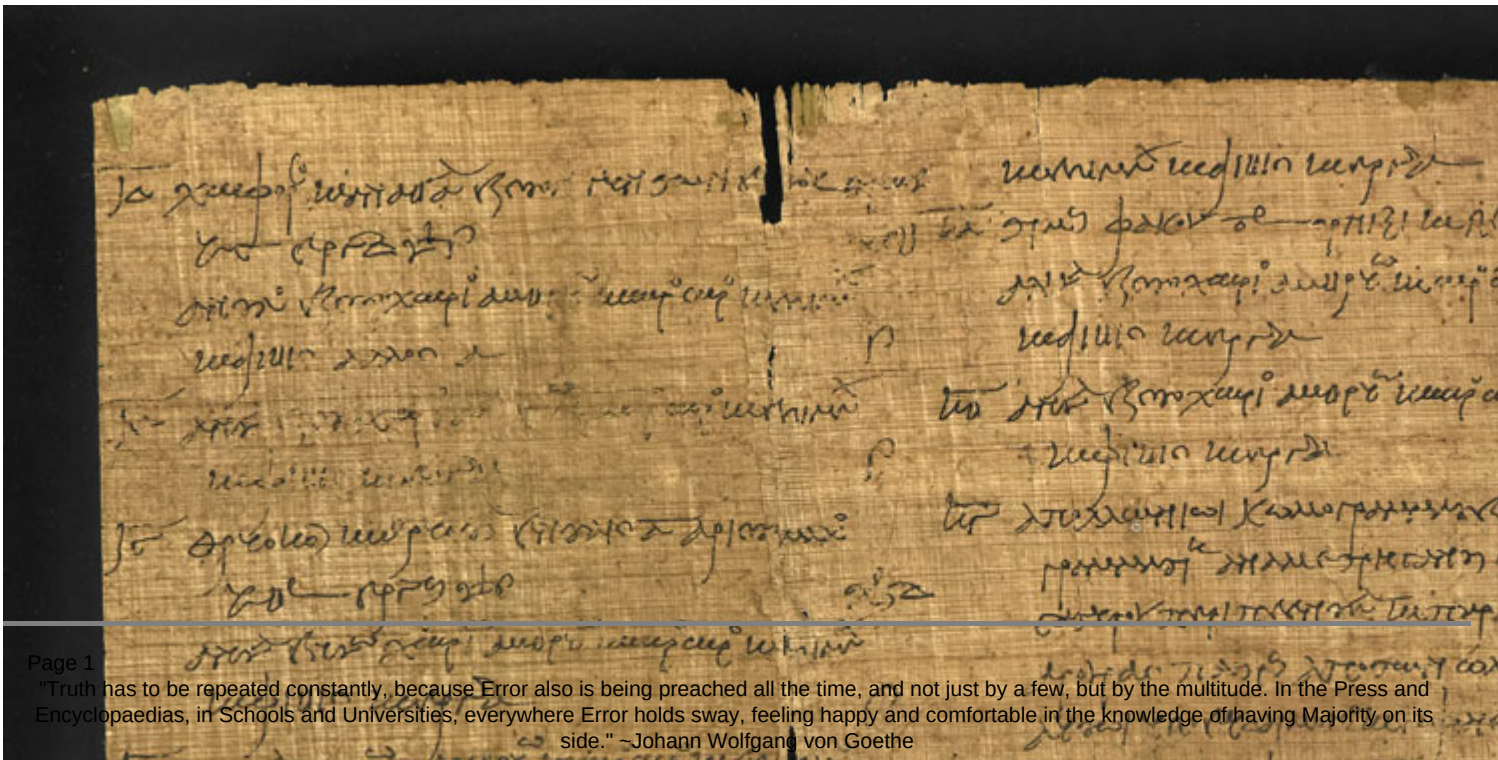
Description

How strangely will the Tools of a Tyrant pervert the plain Meaning of Words!
— Samuel Adams

Archon (Greek: ?????, romanized: árch?n) is the Greek term for “ruler”. Cognate derivatives are, e.g., terms such as:

- *monarchy*
- *dyarchy*
- *hierarchy*
- *patriarchy/matriarchy*
- *gynarchy*
- *autarchy*
- *anarchy* (etymology discussed subsequently in more detail)

According to Aristotle’s Constitution of the Athenians (78-c. 100), the power and influence of the king first devolved to the archons, and these offices were filled from the aristocracy by elections on a decennial basis.



Archon Eponymos was the primary magistrate, the *Polemarch* referred to the head of the armed forces, and the *Archon Basileus* was in charge of the religious aspects of society.
Various fraternities and sororities use the title of archon or variations on it. Some Gnostic sects used this term for demons associated with the planetspheres.

3-D computer rendering of an “archon”

The term anarchy is the negation of the term archon (i.e., the negatory prefix **a*). It thus means “without a ruler/master”, i.e., human beings that do not accept a master and who do not allow others to rule over them (they are not slaves to anyone). Importantly, this derivation should not be confused with “chaos or without rules”. Anarchy simply is the negation of slavery.

> Niemand ist mehr Sklave, als der sich für frei hält, ohne es zu sein. ‘
> ~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
> (Transl.: None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.)

Human beings who are anarchists are thus literally beings that do not accept to be ruled by archons, i.e., they are free and cannot be ruled and suppressed by external forces (they only subordinate themselves to natural law, viz., the timeless universal metaphysical foundation of morality and ethics; cf. the Kantian categorical imperative).

> Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.
> — Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals (1785)

Fulltext: archive.org/details/groundingformet000kant

In this context a quotation by the freedom fighter Malcolm X is of great pertinence.
He asked the following quintessential question concerning the highest of all virtues:

What is the price of freedom?

Answer
Death.

P.S. This does not imply that one has to die to be free, but it means that one has to be willing to risk once own life for the greatest of all goods, viz., the ultimate expression of human potential: *Absolute Freedom.*
If one is not willing to go “all in” one has lost the quest for freedom *a priori* because one is not willing to risk what it takes to achieve it. Fear is the inhibitor of freedom. Death is the mother of all fears. Ergo, overcoming the irrational fear of death is a *condicio sine qua non* for the obtainment of superordinate transcendental values.

> Non-cooperation with evil is a sacred duty.
> ~ Mahatma Gandhi

> Freedom comes with wisdom, intrinsically. They are inseparable, and no society wants people to be free. The communist society, the fascist society, the capitalist society, the Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian – no society likes people to use their own intelligence because the moment they start using their intelligence they become dangerous – dangerous to the establishment, dangerous to the people who are in power, dangerous to the “haves”; dangerous to all kinds of oppression, exploitation, suppression; dangerous to the churches, dangerous to the states, dangerous to the nations.
>
> In fact, a wise man is afire, alive, aflame. He would like rather to die than to be enslaved. Death will not matter much to him, but he cannot sell his life to all kinds of stupidities, to all kinds of stupid people. He cannot serve them. Hence, the societies down the ages have been supplying you with false knowing. That’s the very function of your schools, colleges, universities.
>
> They don’t serve you, remember, they serve the past, they serve the vested interests. Of course, they go on puffing your ego up bigger and bigger, they go on giving you more and more degrees. Your name becomes longer and longer, but only the name – you go on becoming shorter and shorter. A point comes where there are only certificates and the man has disappeared. First the man carries the certificates, then the certificates carry the man. The man is long dead.
> ~Osho

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