

## **Byzantine Architecture of the Helladic Periphery. Seeking the Role of Constantinople**

### ABSTRACT

In Byzantine architectural production of the periphery, the influence of Constantinople was uneven and rather sporadic. In the Aegean Islands the local building tradition more or less developed unaffected. Sporadic elements betray only distant relations through third-party models with the capital.

In the southern part of the Helladic peninsula and especially in the Peloponnese, The absence of official architecture from the major urban, commercial, and administrative center of the Peloponnese, Corinth, leaves a hard-to-fill void in restoring the architectural history of the region. It seems that Constantinople's infiltration into the local architectural production was greater than what was previously believed, but many links in the chain connecting the two traditions have simply been lost.

Despite the centralized character of the Byzantine state and the unique architectural production of the empire's capital in terms of both quality and quantity, one is surprised at the attachment of the Aegean and Greece to local building tradition, which was dictated by concrete restrictions such as limited financial resources, the technical skills of building workshops, and the available construction materials, and yet which proved strong and self-sufficient.

### AUTHOR

**Demetrios Athanasoulis** is director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades (Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports), charged with the excavation, field research and restoration projects of the monuments of the Cyclades and the management of the archaeological museums of the Cycladic islands. He is vice-president of the Christian Archaeological Society and member of the Greek Central Archaeological Council. He has conducted studies, restoration works and publications on the medieval monuments and sites of the Peloponnese and especially in the Argolid (castles of Acronauplia, Bourtzi and Argos, church of Hagia Moni), Arcadia (Karytaina, Leontari, Tegea), Corinthia (Corinth, Lechaion, Acrocorinth, Hagionori, church of Panagia Steiri) and Elis (Glarentza and Byzantine and gothic churches). He has also directed the installation of the Byzantine museum of the Argolid. Athanasoulis led the project to restore Chloumoutzi castle and to establish within its walls a museum devoted to the Crusader Morea. An architectural historian and archaeologist, his many publications, including his dissertation "Church Architecture of the Olena Diocese during the Middle and Late Byzantine Periods" (2006), focus on Byzantine and Frankish architecture in the Peloponnese.