



# Monemvasia: A Byzantine City State

*Haris A. Kalligas*

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## **Monemvasia: A Byzantine City State** Haris A. Kalligas

This lavishly illustrated book stands out in its field as the only book currently available on the best-preserved Byzantine city in the Peloponnese – Monemvasia. Haris A. Kalligas, a world authority on Monemvasia's history and architecture, here explores the city's foundation, its status as a powerful maritime centre of Byzantium, and its gradual decline after the fall of the Empire.

Founded on a rock off the eastern shore of the Morea in the late sixth century A.D, Monemvasia was populated by the inhabitants of Sparta and was to become an important port. The citizens retained their ancient institutions, while they developed maritime activities, both military and commercial. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were particularly prosperous for the city, and it remained a centre of commercial activity during the last Byzantine period. When the Turks seized Byzantium, Monemvasia came first under papal and then Venetian rule and changing conditions led to its gradual decline. The Venetians handed the city over to the Turks in 1540 and returned in 1690 for a period of twenty-five years. After a second Ottoman occupation, Monemvasia was the first city to be liberated by the Greeks during the War of Independence in 1821.

Using sources from all periods, along with original material based on research on the architectural and urban history of the city, *Monemvasia* is a comprehensive study of a unique city – a city within the Byzantine Empire which preserved institutions of municipal autonomy and self government originating from the Roman period.

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