

In 1262 the Byzantines made themselves masters of Mystras, inaugurating a brilliant period for the medieval fortress-state. Houses covered the hill, mansions and palaces, churches and fortified monasteries were built, and the densely settled city was enclosed by two encircling walls. After the middle of the 14th c. when responsibility for the government of Mystras was assumed by members of the imperial family at Constantinople – the Kantakouzanoi (1348-1380) and the Palaiologoi (1380-1460) –, the Despotate of the Morea flourished and developed into an important cultural centre, with close links with Constantinople. The arts and letters were cultivated here by major artists and intellectuals, who played an important role in the development of the humanities and the subsequent evolution of artistic trends in 15th c. Europe.

Metropolis (Ayios Dimitrios)

The church was built probably a few years after Mystras was surrendered to the Byzantines (1262). The important wall-paintings in the Metropolis are executed in a variety of different styles, related to the different periods (end of the 13th, early 14th c.) at which they were painted, and the various expressive means of the painters who created them.

Monastery of Vrontochion

The Church of Ayios Theodoros (1290-1295), and that of the Panayia Hodigitria (Aphentiko) together formed the fortified monastery of Vrontochion, an imposing foundation built by the abbot Pachomios.

A number of high-quality wall-paintings (1312-1322) are preserved in the Hodigitria, some of them connected in style with the art of Constantinople.

The Church of Ayia Sophia

Amongst the sculptural decoration of the church, which was the katholikon of a monastery, are preserved monograms of the founder, the first Despot of Mystras, Manuel Kantakouzenos (1348-1380). The wall-paintings include an impressive monumental representation of Christ in the apse.

The Church of the Peribleptos

The church was built against a rock-face. The wall-paintings are distinguished by their carefully worked colours and the elegant figures, full of nobility and a sense of rhythm.

The Church of the Evangelistria

Small elegant church with luxurious annexes (to the south and west). The surviving wall-paintings probably date from the late 14th or 15th c.

The Church of the Pantanassa

The protoblatas Ioannis Frangopoulos built this masterpiece in 1428: its architectural type is modelled on the Hodigitria, its decoration (sanctuary apses) was borrowed from gothic art and its wall-paintings are derived from the Hodigitria and the Peribleptos. The wall-paintings on the ground floor belong to the 17th-18th c.

The palaces

The palaces of the Despots were built on a small plateau on the hill. Buildings with a variety of functions, erected at different periods (13th-15th c.), form a large complex, dominated by the throne-room (early 15th c.).



- 1. ΜΥΡΙΑ ΠΥΛΗ
 - 2. ΑΓΙΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ (ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ)
 - 3. ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟ
 - 4. ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΤΡΙΑ
 - 5. ΑΓΙΟΙ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΙ
 - 6. ΟΜΗΡΗΤΡΙΑ (ΑΡΧΕΝΤΙΚΟ)
 - 7. ΠΑΛΑΤΙΑ
 - 8. ΑΓΙΟΙ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΙ
 - 9. ΑΓΙΑ ΙΩΡΙΑ
 - 10. ΠΥΛΗ ΚΑΣΤΡΟΥ
 - 11. ΚΑΣΤΡΟ
 - 12. ΠΑΝΤΑΝΑΣΣΑ
 - 13. ΠΕΡΙΒΛΕΠΤΟΣ
- 1. MAIN GATE
 - 2. AYIOS DIMITRIOS (METROPOLIS)
 - 3. MUSEUM
 - 4. EVANGELISTRIA
 - 5. AYIOI THEODOROI
 - 6. HODIGITRIA (APHENTIKO)
 - 7. PALACES
 - 8. AYIOS NIKOLAOS
 - 9. AYIA SOPHIA
 - 10. GATE TO THE KASTRO
 - 11. KASTRO
 - 12. PANTANASSA
 - 13. PERIBLEPTOS