

DIALOGUES

between past and present:
ΠΡΟΤΕΙΝΟΜΕΝΟ ΔΙΑΛΟΓΟΝΤΕΣ

Materials, construction techniques, and social identity through the centuries, from prehistory to the pre-industrial era in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean



ONLINE LECTURE SERIES Spring 2025 | 1st lecture series

ZOOM PLATFORM: <https://pantheonsorbonne.zoom.us/j/98350366717?pwd=zQWTO4lpUGh5u2W2gaJsKwJgRZrUy7.1>

19 May 2025

18:00 (Greek time)



Panagiotis Kostoulas, Greece

The use of theran earth in the traditional architecture of the Santorini Archipelago and its itinerary in the Mediterranean from antiquity to the 21th century

ABSTRACT

The lecture focuses on the use of theran earth, as building material from antiquity to the modern era and its itinerary from the Santorini archipelago to the Aegean sea and beyond. Theran earth, the volcanic soil produced after the Late Bronze Age eruption of Thera, into which an impressive prehistoric civilization was buried, later became the fertile ground for a renewed architectural expression; initially locally and later spreading across the Mediterranean. Its pozzolanic properties were highly appreciated for the development of durable and resilient building materials, such as mortars, plasters and concretes, while later its use was introduced into modern hydraulic construction projects and the production of cement. The lecture concludes with a project implemented by Boulouki for the reclamation of the traditional building techniques with theran earth, after more than 50 years of neglect. Its use was investigated through a multidisciplinary approach, including ethnographic research, laboratory analysis, reproduction and implementation in an actual restoration project that integrated training and participatory methodologies. Will this valuable historic material be used again, in a conscious way, for restoring architectural heritage and promoting sustainable construction?

CV

Panos Kostoulas is an architect. He has graduated from the University of Patras and completed his post-graduate studies in Materials Science and Technology at the NTUA, focusing on historic mortars. Since 2012, he has worked as an architect, both as an employee and associate with several architectural firms in India and Greece. He is a founding member of Boulouki, established in 2018, a non-profit that promotes a renewed building culture, drawing from traditional knowledge and techniques, towards truly sustainable building. His work within Boulouki focuses on research, design of educational programmes and project management.