

ANNUAL REPORT: BULGARIA APOLLONIA PONTICA EXCAVATION FIELD SCHOOL 2016

This field school is part of the IFR-BHF Program for the Balkans

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Students and excavation team members take photos of a newly found grave from the Late Antiquity, Sveti Kirik Island, Sozopol, Bulgaria.

The **Apollonia Pontica Excavation Project 2016** took place in Sozopol, Bulgaria (ancient Apollonia Pontica) on the Black Sea coast from June 26 to July 24. The excavations were conducted on the small island of St. Kirik, which is connected to Sozopol by an artificial causeway. The Apollonia Pontica Field School began in 2011 and from 2015 is an initiative of the Balkan Heritage Foundation – Institute for Field Research (BHF-IFR) Joint Program. The project contributes to the efforts of the Apollonia Pontica Excavation Team and the Museum of Archaeology – Sozopol to explore this important site, which is threatened by government investment projects.

Excavations on St. Kirik Island over the past decade have revealed that it was the site of a Greek settlement, the sacred precinct (temenos) of Apollonia Pontica with the sanctuary of

Apollo from the Archaic to Hellenistic Period (late 7th-4th cent. BC) and a Christian religious center with a basilica and necropolis in the 5th to 7th centuries AD

The area excavated by the 2016 field school was situated at the north and northeastern edge of the island where the three previous summers' excavations had discovered Archaic period pit altars (botroi), sizeable limestone foundations, and several 5th-7th century AD graves.

This summer's excavations were successful in continuing many of the previous years' findings. New finds included a massive limestone foundation, several 5th-7th century graves, and probably another Archaic period bothros, which will be completely excavated next season. A lot of mass material was collected – mostly pottery from the Archaic, Classical and Late Antiquity period, animal bones, glass. Among the special finds are two bronze arrowheads-coins (two types), in general rare finds, very typical for Apollonia Pontica. They were discovered in a small area where in the previous years another three have been found. Another special finds were several coins, which will be cleaned and identified later this year, fragmented Late Antiquity oil lamp, etc.

The 2016 season provided all of its participants with valuable field work and finds processing experience. Under the guidance and supervision of their instructors, participants took part in all activities on the field: digging, measuring, field documentation (photography, graphic documentation, context sheets, bag labels, etc.), and initial finds processing (sorting and cleaning). Another contribution of the students were the results of the Workshop for Conservation and Restoration of Ancient Greek Pottery as it has been found in Apollonia Pontica. In this workshop students cleaned, desalinated and consolidated fragments from a dozen broken vases, a few of which were partly or completely restored. Another one week workshop on physical anthropology took place where the participants and their supervisor while studying examined several skeletons from the previous excavation seasons.

After the intensive field work in season 2016 a lot of archaeological material and documentation was collected. It will be processed in the forthcoming months by the Apollonia Pontica excavation team and affiliated specialists. The results of the excavations will be presented in public during the annual archaeological reports of the Bulgarian National Institute of Archaeology in March, and an article will be published in the annual edition of the Institute – Archaeological Discoveries and Excavations (in 2016).

It should be also mentioned that representatives of IFR Board of Directors – Dr. Ran Boytner and Mr. Yuval Bar Zemer visited the field school. In connection with their visit a press conference was organized and several journalists from Burgas district were invited to St. Kirik island and had the chance to talk to team members, students, IFR and BHF representatives.

In March 2016 a presentation of the 2015 excavations was made at the annual archaeological reports of the Bulgarian National Institute of Archaeology. Additionally, the Archaic period inscription found in 2015 was included in the annual exhibition in the National Institute's museum that is dedicated to the most important archaeological discoveries in Bulgaria for the

year (exhibition's booklet is available upon request).