

ANNUAL REPORT: MACEDONIA & BULGARIA CONSERVATION 2016 FIELD SCHOOL

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

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Dr. Daniela Cherneva and her students with the Ancient Greek vessels restored in the Museum of Archaeology, Sozopol, Bulgaria.

The **Conservation and Restoration of Ancient Pottery and Glass – Macedonia & Bulgaria 2016 Field School** consisted of two parts implemented in two neighboring European countries – Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria.

The initial three weeks (4 – 25 June) took place at the site of Stobi - Roman and Early Byzantine city, the capital of the Roman province Macedonia Secunda. Stobi was an important Roman city and reached its zenith of power during the 1-3 centuries CE. The pottery there was provided by the National Institution Stobi (NIS) and consisted of fragmented Roman and Late Roman vessels discovered during the excavations at the Roman theatre in 2015, as well as from some earlier excavations at the site. The training of glass conservation was based on replicas of Roman glass vessels.

The second part (26 June – 10 July) of the workshop took place in Sozopol, ancient Apollonia

Pontica, Bulgaria. Apollonia was one of the richest and most prosperous Greek colonies in the Black Sea region in Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic period. The pottery for the workshop represented a collection of several broken and fired vases from a ritual fireplace in the ancient Greek and Hellenistic necropolis (6th – 2nd century BCE) of Apollonia Pontica and was provided by the Archaeological Museum – Sozopol, Bulgaria.

The project contributes to the efforts of the both institutions – National Institution Stobi and Museum of Archaeology – Sozopol to conserve, restore and exhibit more artefacts from their collections.

This workshop was initiated by Balkan Heritage Foundation in 2009. The glass conservation module was added in 2012. The main goal of this program is to provide students with a comprehensive training and hands-on experience of pottery with very different specifics (black glazed Classical and Hellenistic Greek pottery and locally made Roman and Late Roman fine ware) at two different sites, enabling students to evaluate and compare similarities and differences in conservation techniques, methods, material choice, etc. applied to artifacts from different archaeological context and environment. The technique of glass conservation follows similar principles of the pottery conservation, but due to the delicate composition of the Roman Glass, the students gain hands on experience with replicas of Roman vessels. In general, the combined workshop provide an excellent basic experience for students who would like to proceed a career in conservation.

Students begin their training with replicas of ancient vessels and then progressed to originals once they reached an acceptable level of skill, accuracy and precision. Under the guidance, supervision and help of the project director Dr. Daniela Cherneva and Ms. Biliana Yankulovska, pottery and glass conservator in Stobi, the participants passed through all stages of documentation, conservation and restoration of glass and pottery: mechanical and chemical cleaning, desalination, consolidation, pottery reconstruction (gluing shards together and filling gaps), retouching, etc. They maintain record of the entire process. By the end of the course students managed to completely restored 17 Late Roman (5rd – 6th century AD) and 15 Ancient Greek (Classical Period – 5th-4th century BC) vessels. The Roman artifacts will be exhibited in the new Museum of Stobi (still in a process of construction), while the vases from Apollonia Pontica will be temporally presented in the Museum of Archaeology – Sozopol. The intention of the both institutions is to include the restored vessels in publications about the pottery of the both sites.