

ANNUAL REPORT: CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF ANCIENT POTTERY AND GLASS – MACEDONIA & BULGARIA 2017 FIELD SCHOOL

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Conservation of glass workshop (replicas of ancient vessels) in Stobi

The Conservation and Restoration of Ancient Pottery and Glass – Macedonia & Bulgaria 2017 Field School consisted of two parts implemented in two neighboring European countries – Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria. The initial three weeks (3 – 23 June) took place at the site of Stobi – a 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 1st- 3rd centuries CE. The pottery there was provided by the National Institution Stobi (NIS) and consisted of 15 fragmented Roman vessels and four terracotta figurines discovered during the excavations at the site. The second part (24 June – 8 July) took place in Sozopol, ancient Apollonia Pontica, Bulgaria. Apollonia was one of the richest and most prosperous Greek colonies in the Black Sea region during the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods. 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 and restore artifacts from their collections.

The main goal of this program is to provide students with a comprehensive training and hands-on experience of pottery and glass conservation 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 contexts and environments. Students began their training with replicas of ancient vessels and then progressed to originals once they reached an acceptable level of skill, accuracy and precision. The training of glass conservation was based only on replicas of Roman vessels.

Under the guidance, supervision and help of the project director Dr. Daniela Cherneva and Ms. Biliana Yankulovska, the pottery and glass conservator in Stobi, participants passed through all stages of conservation and restoration of glass and pottery: mechanical and chemical cleaning, desalination, consolidation, pottery reconstruction (gluing shards together and filling gaps), retouching, etc. They maintained records of the entire process. By the end of the course, students managed to completely restore 15 Roman and Late Roman (3rd – 5th century) and 11 Ancient Greek (Classical Period – 5th-4th century) vessels, as well as Roman four terracotta figurines. The Roman artifacts will be exhibited in the Museum of Stobi, while the vases from Apollonia Pontica will be temporarily presented in the Museum of Archaeology – Sozopol. The intention of both institutions is to include the restored vessels in publications about the pottery of both sites.

In the afternoon workshops dealing with documentation of pottery (drawing, digitizing of the drawings, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) documentation), the students, while studying and practicing, conducted some high quality documentation work. They produced technical drawings of about 35 Roman vessels in Stobi (drawn and digitized) and 12 RTI models of artifacts from Archaeological museum in Sozopol. This was another contribution to the scientific and heritage preservation projects of both museums.