

## ANNUAL REPORT: BULGARIA APOLLONIA PONTICA EXCAVATION PROJECT 2015 FIELD SCHOOL

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Students excavating a stone with ancient Greek inscription

### SECTION A

The **Apollonia Pontica Excavation Project 2015** took place in Sozopol, Bulgaria (ancient Apollonia Pontica) on the Black Sea coast from June 27 to July 25, 2015. 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 7<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) and a Christian religious center with a basilica and necropolis in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD

The area excavated by the 2015 field school was situated at the northeastern edge of the island where the two previous summers' excavations had discovered Archaic period altars (botroi), sizeable limestone foundations, and several 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century AD graves. This summer's excavations were successful in continuing many of the previous years' findings. New finds included an additional altar, further limestone foundation blocks, another 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century grave,

and a dedication to a god on an Archaic period altar cornice. Finds such as these have shed new light on the extent of the Christian necropolis and of Archaic Greek religious practice on the island.

In addition to yielding numerous new finds, the 2015 season of the Apollonia Pontica Excavation Project also 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 (e.g. sorting and cleaning). Another contribution of the students was the result of the Workshop for Conservation and Restoration of Ancient Greek Pottery 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. The students also did the flotation of soil from the 2014 and 2015 excavations on St. Kirik and collected material for paleobotanical analysis.

After the intensive field work in season 2015 a lot of archaeological material and documentation was collected. The archaeological material recovered and documented this summer 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 2015). Additionally, the Archaic period inscription will most likely feature in the exhibition in the National Institute's museum that is dedicated to the most important archaeological discoveries in Bulgaria in 2015, after which it will be published in the exhibition's booklet.