

ANNUAL REPORT: CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF ANCIENT POTTERY AND GLASS -R. of NORTH MACEDONIA & BULGARIA 2019 FIELD SCHOOL

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The Conservation and Restoration of Ancient Pottery and Glass – R. of North Macedonia & Bulgaria 2019 Field School consisted of two parts implemented in two neighboring European countries – Republic of North Macedonia and Bulgaria. The initial three weeks (1 – 21 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 (NI Stobi) and consisted of several fragmented Roman vessels discovered during excavations at the site. The second part (22 June – 6 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 necropolis (6th – 4th 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 on replicas of Roman vessels but students practiced cleaning of authentic Roman glass fragments.

Under the guidance, supervision and help of the project director Dr. Daniela Cherneva and Ms. Biliana Yankulovska - Peeva, 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 conserve 24 Roman and Late Roman clay objects from the collection of NI Stobi (16 vessels, six terracotta figurines, two lamps). The selected vessels required different conservation treatment depending on their state of preservation. Thirteen of them were previously conserved but they were in a state requiring re-conservation due to ageing of the previously used materials and secondary damage. Two entirely preserved vessels but heavily contaminated with salt deposits were treated and cleaned. The surface of another vessel was with old extra glue that was cleaned. The selected vessels were couple of mugs, plates, bulbous unguentaria, and single examples of cup, lid, baby feeder, pot, jug and fusiform unguentaria. Beside the ceramic vessels the students worked on conservation of six terracotta figurines (all of them representations of Telesphoros and one of Eros). On all of them mechanical methods of cleaning of stubborn salts and dirt were applied because their outside surface was covered with unfired pigments. During the third week of the workshop - conservation of Roman glass, the participants worked on six complete glass unguentaria. On all of them were applied methods of stubborn salts and dirt removal.

During the second part of the workshop 9 ancient Greek vessels from the collection of the Archaeological museum in Sozopol were conserved: one fishplate, one fish grill, one askos, one bowl, two pixides, one lekythos, one plate. Seven of them were black-slip vessels, one red-slip, and the fish grill wasn't painted. It was produced in Apollonia Pontica, while the other vases were imports. The restored Greek vessels were exhibited as part of an archaeological exhibition in Sozopol presenting the Balkan Heritage Field School Program in Bulgaria.

The BHF along with its partnering institutions is working on publications of the restored vessels from the field school.