

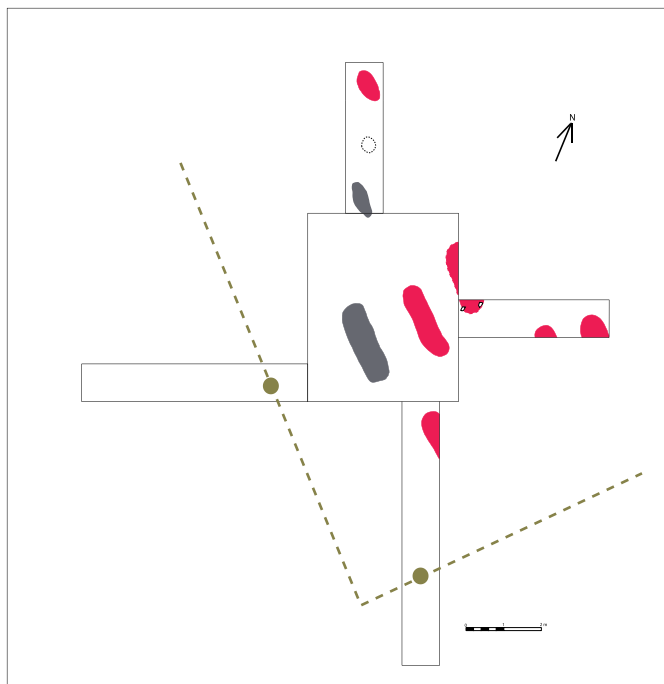
Archaeological research so-called Gypsy camp in Lety, 2019

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Camp cemetery research

After several trial interventions with negative results the graves were finally identified east of the monument of Zdeněk Hůla. Excavations of an area reaching 30 m² revealed south-western part of the cemetery with 8 graves. By agreement with relatives of victims, only two graves were excavated (no exhumation was performed) and in other cases only the uppermost parts of grave-pits were documented. A young woman was buried in one grave and a new born child in the other. Anthropological analysis was carried out on the site and several samples of human remains were taken including DNA. Relatives of victims were present during excavations and subsequently a ceremony was held to commemorate the deceased prisoners of the camp organized by the Museum of Romani Culture and the Committee for the Compensation of Roma Holocaust Victims on 11th September 2019.



Picture 1. Uncovered part of the victim's graveyard (probably the southwest part). Gray dashed lines – range of archaeological probes, gray graves uncovered, red – identified grave pits that have been uncovered, brown – pits along the columns probably cemetery enclosures, brown dashed – reconstruction of the cemetery enclosures (plan by P. Vařeka).

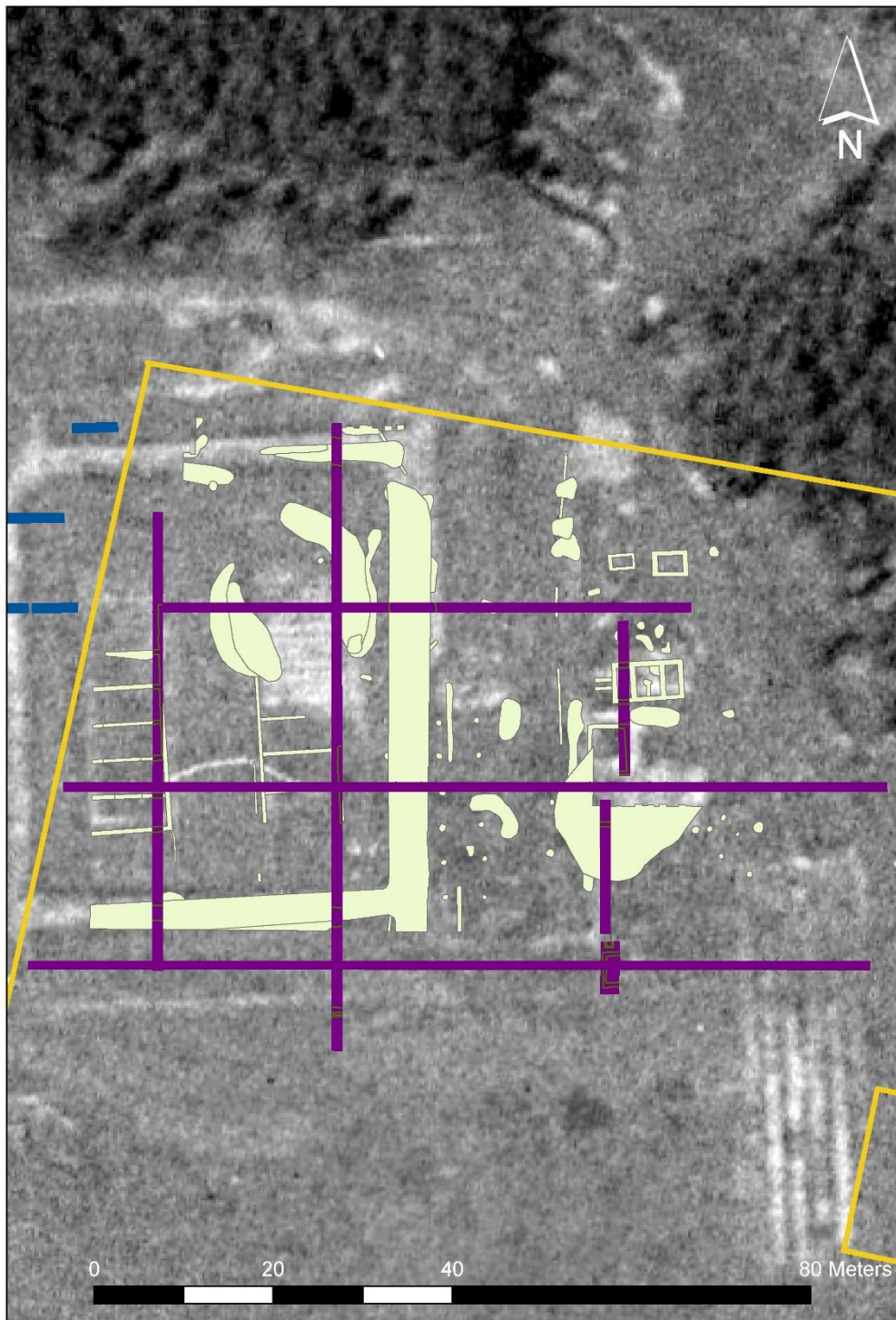
Camp research

Second phase of the archaeological excavations of the Lety Roma camp was undertaken in late August to November 2019 (first phase in 2017 focused on the camp area outside the pig-farm).

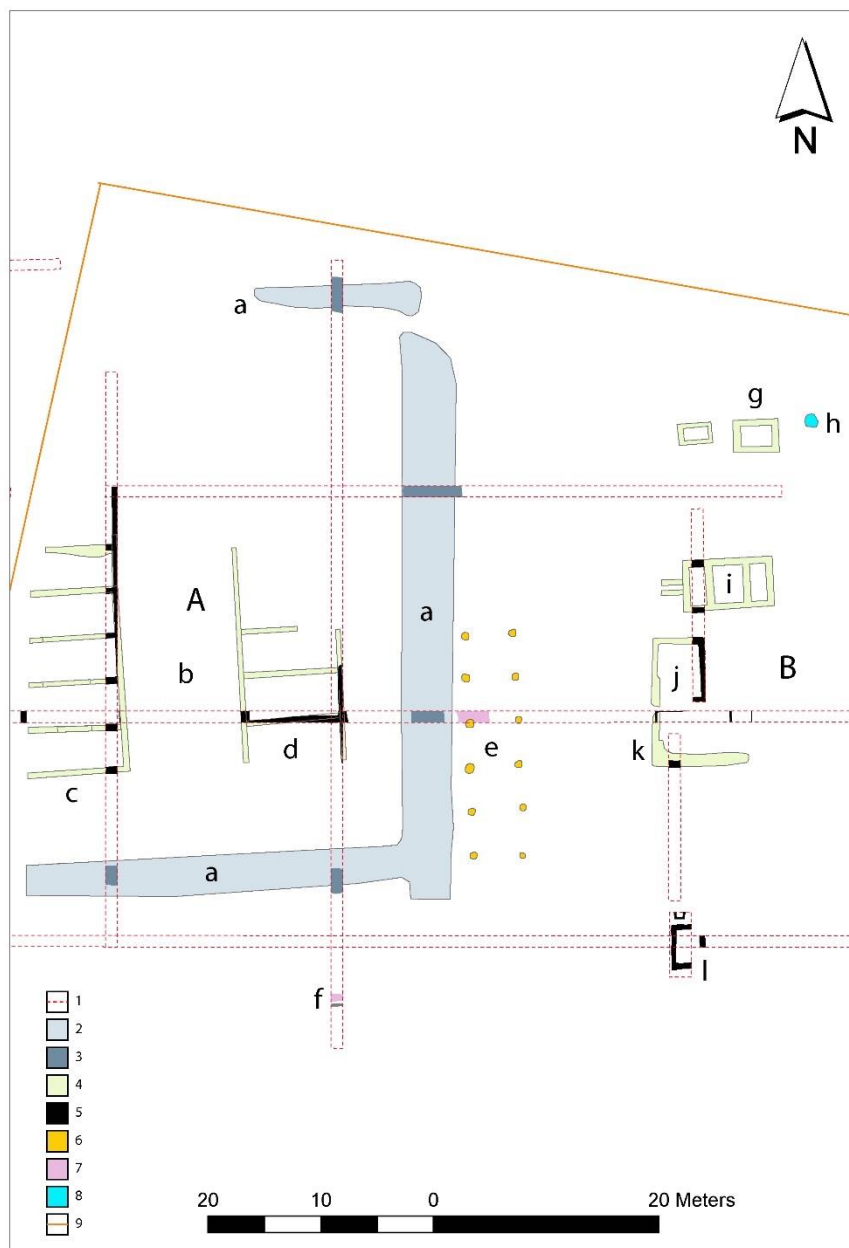
The main aim of the research was to detect the character of archaeological remains of the camp inside the industrial pig-farm (the area was not accessible until recently), to assess their interpretation possibilities and to collect material evidence which may elucidate everyday life of prisoners and living conditions in the camp. A total of 412 m² was excavated providing a representative sample of the camp (ca. 5% of its whole area). The research showed that ca. 20% of the camp area was destroyed during building of the pig-farm in 1970s, however the rest was covered with redeposited soil from the construction site. Thus archaeological research revealed well preserved remains of the most part of the "Zigeunerlager" as foundations of prisoners' barracks, original surface of the yard, communication areas and building remains of individual components of operational and economic hinterland of the camp (disinfection station, washroom, laundry and stable). Due to the fact that the camp was burnt down during its liquidation in 1943, "in situ" burnt debris of some buildings including their inventory have preserved. The fill of the camp cess-pit produced exceptional assemblage of artefacts including organic materials as prisoners' footwear, clothing, dress accessories and other personal items but also unique material evidence of forcible transformation of human beings into prisoners – hair and braids as a result of the induction procedure when detained Roma and Sinti had all the hair on their bodies cut and shaved off.



Picture 2. Projection of archaeological probes from 2017 (blue), 2019 (violet) and extent of georadar survey (yellow) to ASP from 1949 (Archive of aerial survey images of Military Geographical and Hydrometeorological Office in Dobruška) with outlines of today's pig farm.



Picture 3. Projection of archaeological probes from 2017 (blue), 2019 (violet) and results of georadar survey (all detected anomalies – light green) to ASP from 1949 (Archive of aerial survey images of Military Geographical and Hydrometeorological Office in Dobruška) with outlines today's pig farm (yellow).



Picture 4. Camp in Lety – results of non-destructive research (GPR – georadar) and archaeological sounding. A – western part of the camp with quarters with prison barracks, B – operational part of the camp, a – roadside on the edge of the yard (gravel belt) lining wooden houses, b – camp yard, c–d – additionally built large barracks in the yard with stone walls, e – house with supporting pillar structure (?), f – remains of fencing of the yard, g – probably water reservoir (captured by georadar), h – probably well (captured by georadar), i – extermination station, j – stable, k – washroom and laundry, l – cess-pit; 1 – archaeological probes, 2 – paved road captured by georadar, 3 – uncovered parts of paved road, 4 – masonry captured by georadar, 5 – uncovered parts of masonry, 6 – probable column pits captured by georadar, 7 – scorched areas (significant traces of fire), 8 – probable well (captured by georadar), 9 – pig farm fencing.



Picture 5. Archaeological research in 2019 – overall view of the explored area.



Picture 6. Archaeological research in 2019 – overall view of the explored area.



Picture 7. Exposing the stone foundations of the prison barrack in the courtyard (western barrack).



Picture 8. Demonstration of a preserved stone foundation of a large prison barrack in the courtyard.



Picture 9. Remains of a large wooden house in the southeastern courtyard. Gravel-reinforced communication belt visible in front.



Picture 10. Detail of the relics of a large wooden house in the southeastern part of the yard – burnt soil under the floor (evidence of the camp's destruction by burning) and traces of lime filling (whitish stains).



Picture 11. View of the foundations of the stable (front) and extermination station (rear) in the operational part of the camp.



Picture 12. Detailed view of the foundation and floor level of the stable with preserved parts of wooden structures.



Picture 13. Washroom / laundry relics with preserved foundations and floor level.



Picture 14. Part of the preserved washroom / laundry floor with visible concrete foundations.



Picture 15. Walled cess-pit with cleaned level from the time of the camp's liquidation in 1943.



Picture 16. Detail from the cess-pit filling with the destruction of the camp.



Picture 17. Detail from the cess-pit filling with the destruction of the camp.



Picture 18. Detail from the cess-pit filling with the destruction of the camp.



Picture 19. Leather shoe retained in the cess-pit.