

Swimming pool Archeology



Even a tiny archaeological research can bring great results.

A swimming pool phenomenon has begun to spread out soon after the Communist regime falling. Swimming pools started to pop up in Czech family house backyards mainly in the first decade of the 21st century. Nowadays, a swift look on satellite shots of smaller towns and even villages reveals a blue circle or a rectangle in nearly every second garden...

When building a sunken swimming pool, proofs of our ancestors' lives are often disrupted. Unfortunately, a significant part of constructors omits that even swimming pools are subjected to the same regulations as a building of a house itself.

If the ground work is not announced to the relevant authorities in time, a huge amount of archaeological items could be destroyed and lost. Very often, an expert in archaeology gets to the site at the point the hole had been already dug out. In such cases, just the profiles of the digging can be documented. We could discover two objects practically with no material in, as in the Zápý Swimming pool case (**pic. No. 1**)

On the other hand, in the small town of Lázně Toušeň in 2014 in a similar hole, nine objects were documented, mainly from the Early Bronze Age. Part of the archaeological site had been destroyed irretrievably (**pic. No. 2**) In the sites of a supposed archaeological relics, we recommend an **archaeologist would be present from the very first digging minutes. When the ground is out, it could be too late...**

In the centre of Lázně Toušeň in 2017, we managed to document twenty-six archaeological objects at a garden shed construction (**pic. No. 3**). It was evident that partially hidden area for a swimming pool not further than two meters from the garden shed will be very interesting for our research as well.

After a negotiation with the owner of the property, we had dug out the whole area for the future-to-be relax and fun spot by ourselves. This particular approach had brought extremely interesting results in a couple of the following weeks. At the cultural layers uncovering, we have managed to document sixteen embedded holes in different layers at an area of 23 m². It was not quite easy to distinguish archaeological objects in this particular site, about a meter of prehistoric sediments, so called cultural layers, was present. They were not possible to be distinguished by colour. The area of the swimming pool was covered again, part by part, and when identifying the embedded pit layer by a layer, rain showed up to be an invaluable helper to us. While the space around the embedded holes became dry again quite quickly, the holes themselves kept humidity much longer. After the rain, they therefore appeared as “dark spots” in the ground profile showing clearly the presence of archaeological objects (**pic. No. 5**) Fragments of pottery helped us to date the situation in the site to the Early Bronze Age. The most interesting and most significant find was the object No. 1 identified at the very beginning of the research (**pic. No. 10**)

Continually, taking away the infill pieces of pottery were discovered. They seemed to be part of a single vessel. It's a highly unusual finding to discover a storage vessel (for grain or other food) embedded in the place it used to serve its purpose back in its peoples' times. We call this specific situation „in situ“. We suppose that partial embedding served as a stabilizer of incidental movement of the vessel as well as a protection of a constant temperature suitable for certain food.

Such a prehistoric storage place happened to be found in Lázně Toušeň by our team (**pic. 10 -15**)

The fragments of pottery were cleaned in our lab and gained its original shape again (**pic. No. 16 - 21**). If we arrived to the site at the point the hole for the swimming pool had already been dug out, this unique vessel would be destroyed, buried in a huge heap of ground.

The whole archaeological situation would be destroyed as well...

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