

### **DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN ENGLISH**

The zone of the western Lesser Poland loess uplands is an area of intense human settlement, from the first farming communities to modern times. It is also an excellent example of a long process of transformation of natural environment into the broadly understood cultural landscape. The aim of this Project is a detailed, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary examination of all archaeological materials, as well as other categories of data, discovered during rescue excavations at site no. 3 in Miechów (district of Miechów, małopolskie voivodeship), which is situated within the loess Miechów Upland, and the creation, on its base, of a model of the cultural space generated by inhabitants of the subsequent settlements, existing at the said site. This model will also include settlement, economic, social, and ideological patterns, characteristic of the successive "Miechów" settlements. Site Miechów 3 has a unique character (not only in a regional scale) due to relative continuity of its occupation, from ca. 5500 BC to ca. AD 1300, so for almost seven thousand years. In the area of 4 hectares (ca. 70% of the whole surface of the site) more than 3,000 anthropogenic features were discovered, including 26 human burials. Preliminary analysis of the archaeological materials demonstrated the occupation of the site in the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, and in the early Middle Ages. Thus, the site creates a unique opportunity to develop a dynamic model of changes in the functioning of settlement, economic, social, and ideological structures in the environmental context of loess upland, in the middle and late Holocene.

In the Project, comprehensive, interdisciplinary investigations and studies of all categories of sources, which are remnants of the successive phases of occupation of the site, are planned. These investigations and studies will allow creating a model of the cultural transformations in the Miechów upland, in the prehistory and early Middle Ages. Obtained information will significantly enrich the existing knowledge on the functioning of past human communities in the western Lesser Poland. Moreover, the schemes developed for the region under discussion will also be used in more general studies of human settlement in the loess upland zone. In the course of the Project many investigations of the innovative nature will be carried out, which have not been previously performed in Polish science (e.g. studies of possible genetic continuity of livestock animals).