

## **Human remains in a local landscape. Between collective and environmental memory.**

The research concerns functioning of a place of mass murder that contains unmarked, uncommemorated mass graves in the context of collective and environmental memory. The vicinity of unmarked burial grounds containing human remains/ashes influences the local community identity and leads to creating bottom-up ways of processing (including avoiding) the traumatic memory. The functioning of a such place and its neighborhood is a complicated research object and its multilateral analysis does not seem to be possible within one research approach. The research, conducted after the post-humanistic turn, is interested both in the place, its function and shape (landscape studies, forensics) and its relations with the surroundings, neighborhood residents and local institutions.

The task will be researched as a case study of the object, Krępiecki Forest, and villages that surround it. The case study will lead to proposing a small range theory.

The forest, situated several kilometres away from Lublin, was a site of Nazi mass crimes and then became the place where prisoners of the KL Lublin were murdered and people murdered in the camp were buried. In the beginning the bodies were put in the ground then they were dug up and burnt on pyres.

The influence of the place on the identity of the locals is to be researched mainly in the numerous registered interviews with present and former citizens of Krępiec and Kaziemierzówka. It will be also important to examine the landscape and chosen artifacts: unpublished pictures, testimonies made by the witnesses and maps of the place prepared by scouts in 1965. The objects will be treated not just as documents but also as material witnesses of the remembering process. In order to understand how Krępiecki Forest functions in collective imagery and what strategies are taken by inhabitants of the area in order to cope with the - difficult - neighborhood, I will analyse annual religious and patriotic ceremonies conducted at the place (a catholic mass, a commemorative assembly organized by the local school).

The memory of Krępiecki Forest will be analysed as a process, taking into account the most important, determinable changes that the place and the surrounding community were subject to in time.

The analysis is to lead to identifying the most important, human and non-human, actors of local memory, defining mutual interactions between the mass graves, landscape and local community and their influence on the process of remembering. Such an analysis can enrich the research of post-war societies and of the World War II memory in Poland.