

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Middle Bronze Age cemeteries, ‘double barrows’ and mortuary houses in the Upper Dniester Basin, Western Ukraine: Geophysical prospection and archaeological verification

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## Abstract

This article discusses two cases of so-called double barrows from the Middle Bronze Age Komarów culture cemetery in Bukivna, in the Upper Dniester Basin (Ukraine), in order to demonstrate the potential of incorporating geophysical image analysis, excavations and sedimentological studies towards identifying subterranean funerary architecture. The magnetometer prospection of the Bukivna necropolis revealed the presence of a specific dipolar anomaly within the extent of a double barrow. The excavations uncovered burnt wooden-clay constructions related to mortuary houses. The sedimentological samples collected from the features below the mound provided data for the increased ferrous content. Another double barrow located in the Pidhoroddia cemetery was prospected by means of magnetometry, which did not reveal any similar anomaly within the magnetometry plan, thus providing evidence for a possible lack of discussed mortuary structure.

## KEYWORDS

barrow cemeteries, double barrow, geophysical prospection, magnetic susceptibility, magnetometer prospection, non-invasive methods

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

At least several thousand barrows from the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC are still visible in the Upper Dniester Basin, Western Ukraine, a mixed zone between forest and forest steppe. These structures were essential for funerary rites and spatial behaviours of the Late Neolithic Corded Ware Culture and the Bronze Age Komarów culture, the latter

of which is the south-eastern version of the Trzciniec cultural circle (TCC) of Central-Eastern Europe (Makarowicz et al., 2019; see: Sulimirski, 1968). These mounds formed mortuary landscapes through linear and group-like arrangements of hundreds of structures spreading across dozen kilometres, (Fontijn, 1996, p. 78; de Reu, 2012, p. 259; Bourgeois, 2013; Makarowicz et al., 2018, p. 40). The best-preserved clusters are located in the beech and hornbeam forests of