Bell Beaker Common Ware during the third Millennium BC in Europe

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SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT
BELL BEAKERS IN EUROPE

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During the Third Millennium BC in Europe

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Summary

The Bell Beaker Culture embodies the transition between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age during the third millennium BC. It is generally defined by different types of decorated pottery, by the undecorated Bell Beakers and by a set of artefacts such as archer’s arm-guards, Palmela points, tongued daggers and arciform pendants. Another pottery style is associated with this culture: the Begleitkeramik, or common ware.

Although several studies have been carried out on this time period, it is still badly defined as a whole. Does it represent an ideology? Populations? Migrations of one or several human groups? In one or several peopling waves? Coming from and going where?

This study attempts to answer these questions based on Bell Beaker common ware, despite the heterogeneous nature of archaeological documentation, whereas preceding research has focalised on decorated pottery.

Our research is based on the study of Bell Beaker sites with common ware in continental Europe. Eight hundred sites have been studied, located in the eleven following countries: Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Switzerland. The pottery was grouped in eighty-three types. Preferential associations of these pottery types with a particular type of site (settlement, grave, deposit) as well as their geographical distribution, have made it possible to interpret synchronically the cultural components acting during the third millennium BC in Europe. Furthermore, to determine the geographic zones from which originate some components, the origin of the main pottery types was sought for in the Late Neolithic substratum. Three cultural domains were discovered: the eastern Domain, centred on the Czech Republic, the northern Domain, centred on the Netherlands, and the southern domain, including France and northern Italy. Thus, the transition mechanisms between the Late Neolithic and the Bell Beaker Culture are very different from one domain to another. The cultural changes are so important in the southern Domain that one can invoke an important (population?) renewal, whereas the eastern and northern Domains are characterised by transition without a major discontinuity.

This study has made it possible to propose a synthesis of the pottery components in Europe during the third millennium BC, and also to differentiate the geographical areas responsible for their formation.

Introduction

The Bell Beaker Culture embodies the transition between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age during the third millennium BC. It is generally defined by different types of decorated pottery, by undecorated Bell Beakers, and by a set of artefacts
such as archer’s arm-guards, Palmela points, tongued daggers and arciform pendants. Another pottery style is associated with this culture: the Begleitkeramik, or common ware.

Although several studies have been carried out on this time period, it is still badly defined as a whole. Does it represent an ideology? Populations? Migrations of one or several human groups? In one or several peopling waves? Coming from and going where?

This study attempts to answer these questions based on Bell Beaker common ware, despite the heterogeneous nature of archaeological documentation, whereas preceding research has focalised on decorated pottery.

The relation with the substrate where the Bell Beaker Culture emerged and developed needs to be studied systematically. In all of Bell Beaker Europe – with the relative exception of Corded Ware pottery distribution – there is a discontinuity between pottery from the regional substrate and Bell Beaker decorated pottery. In effect, not a single pottery belonging to the cultures of the regional Late Neolithic or Chalcolithic carries the same decorations as those belonging to the Bell Beaker Culture. This gives reason to wonder whether there exists Bell Beaker common ware of a type already present within the regional substrate (Late Neolithic or Chalcolithic), that is, if there may be a relationship between Late Neolithic and Bell Beaker Cultures based on the common ware.

Archaeologists generally discern three categories of Bell Beaker objects according to the context of their discovery (Besse / Strahm 2001). Bell Beaker pottery consists, on one hand, of decorated Bell Beaker Culture; this is the standard defined by Laure Salanova (Salanova 2000) (category 1), and on the other, of decorated Bell Beaker pottery of the regional facies (category 2).

We also admit that common ware consists on one hand of Bell Beaker common ware (category 2) and on the other, of Bell Beaker common ware of regional tradition (category 3).

Methods

We have built a dataset of 800 sites located in Germany (n=283), Austria (n=18), Belgium (n=6), France (n=140), Hungary (n=13), Northern Italy (n=34), the Netherlands (n=7), Poland (n=18), the Czech Republic (n=274), Slovakia (n=1) and Switzerland (n=6) (Besse 2001) (Fig. 1).

We have described the common ware from each site according to pottery types. We defined 83 types (Besse 2001, Fig. 47), which we compared, at each site, to pottery from the regional Late Neolithic substrate, which made it possible to differentiate Bell Beaker common ware from pottery of regional traditions.

According to the frequency of each pottery type in a known context, we determined main and secondary types. For the graves, the main types are those present at 25 sites at least. However, this limit was fixed at 10 sites for the settlements. In this way, we selected 26 main pottery types (Fig. 2). The 57 remaining types are considered as being secondary.
Fig. 1. Map of the geographic distribution of the sites with Bell Beaker common ware in continental Europe.

Main pottery types (n=26): geographical distribution

Type 1: undecorated Bell Beaker, tall type. S-shaped profile. Generally flat-based. The ratio of the height over the body diameter is greater than one

Type 1 has been identified at 66 sites, including 43 graves, 19 settlements and 4 discoveries out of context. This pottery type is not present in Austria, Belgium, Hungary and Slovakia. It is most frequently encountered in Germany and in Western France, and most often associated with a funerary context, with the exception of southern and central France, where it is found in settlements.

Type 2: undecorated Bell Beaker, low type. S-shaped profile. Generally flat-based. The ratio of the height over the body diameter is equal to or less than one

Type 2 has been identified at 173 sites, including 116 graves, 36 settlements, and 21 sites out of context. It is one of the most frequent pottery types, particularly in the region of Elbe-Saale in Germany where it is found inside graves. It is also present in the South of Germany and in the Czech Republic. In Moravia, it is equally represented in settlements and graves.

Type 4: edge underlined by a cordon which is most often triangular in section.

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Fig. 2. The twenty-six main types of Bell Beaker common ware in continental Europe.

Type 4 was present at 24 sites, including 2 graves, 19 settlements, and 3 sites out of context. It is most frequently found in the South of France, as well as in eastern and central eastern France. Several regions do not possess this pottery: Germany (with the exception of Bavaria), Austria, Belgium, northern and western France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Po-
land, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. It is clearly associated with settlements.

**Type 5: horizontal cordon which is, most often triangular in section, and obviously placed under the rim**

Type 5 has been identified at 95 sites, including 13 graves, 64 settlements, and 17 sites out of context. It is found in several regions, but it is absent from northern Germany (western Mecklenburg-Pomerania and Northwest), in Austria, Poland and Slovakia. It is mainly associated with settlements, in particular in southern, central-western, northern and eastern France, as well as in northern Italy.

**Type 6: horizontal cordon, position on the vase unknown**

Type 6 was present at 37 sites, including 3 graves, 29 settlements, 1 deposit and 4 sites out of context. As the type is represented by a horizontal cordon whose position on the vase is unknown, it might be covered by type 5 (cordon under the rim). Type 6 is mainly encountered in the southeastern half of continental Europe, France and northern Italy. It is almost exclusively associated with settlements.

**Type 7: rim underlined by a row of traversing and equidistant perforations**

Type 7 was present at 26 sites. It is mainly encountered in settlements (n=23), but was also found in 3 graves. It is predominant in the South of France and is absent from the eastern regions. It has mostly been discovered in settlements in the South of France.

**Type 8: rim underlined by a row of traversing and equidistant perforations above a horizontal cordon, which is most often triangular in section**

Type 8 was identified at 40 sites. It was mostly found in settlements (n=34) and was identified in 2 graves and 4 out of context discoveries. It is predominant in southern France and northern Italy, and is clearly associated with settlements. It is not found in the northern part of continental Europe.

**Type 9: fingernail (or small spatula) decorations; disordered fingernail marks**

We identified type 9 at 21 sites, including 4 graves, 13 settlements, and 4 sites out of context. It is mainly known in settlements in northern Italy and France.

**Type 10: hand-grip under the rim**

Type 10 has been recognised at 66 sites including 48 settlements, 14 graves and 4 sites out of context. It is mainly present in Moravia; more precisely in settlements.

**Type 11: handle which cannot be located on the pottery**

Type 11 has been identified at 65 sites including 53 settlements, 8 graves and 4 sites out of context. It is similar to type 34 (handle attached to the pottery’s rim, possibly a pitcher) and to type 35 (handle clearly attached under the pottery’s rim, possibly a pitcher). Type 11 is mainly found in settlements in Moravia and northern Italy.
**Type 12: small hemispherical round-based bowl**

Type 12 was present at 19 sites, including 13 settlements, 3 graves and 3 discoveries out of context, mostly in settlements in the South of France.

**Type 13: carination**

We identified type 13 at 23 sites, including 15 settlements, 6 graves and 2 sites out of context. This type was discovered in several regions, with the exception of the most northern part of continental Europe. It is mainly linked to settlements.

**Type 14: spoon**

Spoons were identified at 18 sites, including 15 settlements, 2 graves and 1 site out of context. It is located in several regions and, naturally, in settlements.

**Type 19: flat-based bowl**

Type 19 was found at 106 sites. It is one of the most often represented types. It is preponderant in graves (n=76) and quite frequent in settlements (n=23). Some discoveries were made out of context (n=7). It is mainly located in the eastern half of continental Europe in a funerary context.

**Type 22: fingered cordon**

The fingered cordon is present at 72 sites, including 55 settlements, 9 graves and 7 sites out of context. It is spread sporadically over several regions, with the exception of settlements in Moravia and northern Italy, where it is well represented.

**Type 26: hand-grip, position on the vase unknown**

We identified type 26 at 17 sites, including 14 settlements and 3 sites out of context. It is thus exclusively associated with settlements, and can be found in France, Bavaria and Moravia.

**Type 28: rim notched with fingernail or spatula impressions**

We recognised Type 28 at 31 sites, including 39 settlements, 7 graves and 4 sites out of context. It was mainly identified in settlements in Moravia and northern Italy.

**Type 29: polypod cup**

Type 29 was discovered at 78 sites, including 14 settlements, 56 graves and 8 sites out of context. It is one of the most frequent types of the Bell Beaker Culture in continental Europe. It is mainly represented in a funerary context in the Czech Republic and in the Elbe-Saale region in Germany. Some settlements scattered over several countries also contained this pottery type.

**Type 31: fingernail (or small spatula) decoration: aligned fingernail marks**

Type 31 was identified at 63 sites, including 24 settlements, 15 graves and 24 sites out of context. This pottery type is found in all of continental Europe with the exception of its most eastern regions, that is, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. It is found in settlements as well
as in funerary contexts according to the region under consideration. In northern Italy, it is only found in settlements, whereas in South-West Germany, it is found in settlements as well as in graves.

**Type 34: handle attached to the rim of the pottery: possibly a pitcher**

Type 34 is frequent, with 269 cases, including 47 in settlements, 202 in graves, 1 in a deposit and 19 discoveries out of context. It is the most frequent pottery type in continental Europe. It is mainly located in graves, in the Czech Republic, in Bavaria, in Austria and in the Elbe-Saale region (Germany). It is also present in a few settlements, in Moravia, northern Italy, and Bavaria.

**Type 35: handle clearly attached under the rim of the pottery: possibly a pitcher**

We identified type 35 at 128 sites, including 17 settlements, 100 graves, 1 deposit and 10 discoveries out of context. This pottery type is clearly associated with graves in the eastern part of the Bell Beaker Culture. It is mainly found in the Czech Republic and the southern part of Germany (South-West, Bavaria, Elbe-Saale region). In some rare instances, it was also identified in settlements in France, Italy, and Hungary.

**Type 63: straight rim and flattened lip**

We recognised type 63 at 48 sites, including 37 settlements, 4 graves, 1 deposit and 6 sites out of context. It is mainly found in settlements in almost all of continental Europe, in particular in settlements in France, Moravia and Italy.

**Type 67: horizontal corrugation**

Twenty sites contained type 67 potteries, including 10 settlements, 5 graves and 5 sites out of context. It is mainly, and sporadically, found in northwestern Germany, the Netherlands, northern France and in the Elbe-Saale region (Germany). It is associated with settlements and graves.

**Type 72: low bowl with a ribbon-like handle**

Type 72 concerns 48 sites: 15 settlements, 31 graves and 2 discoveries out of context. It is mostly found in the eastern part of the Bell Beaker Culture’s distribution, that is, in the Czech Republic, in the Elbe-Saale region (Germany), in Bavaria, Austria and Hungary. It seems to be mostly associated with graves, although in Moravia the settlements with this pottery type were almost as numerous as the graves.

**Type 78: bowl with a flattened rim, T-shaped lip**

Type 78 was identified at 157 sites, including 60 settlements, 83 graves and 14 sites out of context. This pottery type is one of the most frequent in continental Europe, being found primarily in the Czech Republic. In Moravia, it is most often found in settlements rather than in graves, whereas in Bohemia, it is very frequent in graves. Southern Germany (South-West and Bavaria) as well as Austria, Hungary and Poland rarely contain samples of this pottery type in graves.
**Type 81: bowl with a horizontal handle or a perforated hand-grip**

Type 81 was found in 39 sites, of which 6 settlements, 31 graves and 2 discoveries out of context. It is mainly found in the eastern part of the Bell Beaker Culture. This pottery type was most often found in graves in the Czech Republic and Bavaria. In northern Italy, three settlements contained this pottery type.

**Association of the main pottery types with settlements and graves**

The types mainly present in settlements are types 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 26, 28, 31, 63 and 67, type 26 being found only in settlements (Fig. 3). Types found mainly in a funerary context are types 1, 2, 19, 29, 34, 35, 72, 78 and 81 (Fig. 4).

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![Figure 3](image1.png)

**Fig. 3.** Common ware during the Bell Beaker Culture in continental Europe: histogram indicating in descending order the number of settlements possessing the pottery types.

![Figure 4](image2.png)

**Fig. 4.** Common ware during the Bell Beaker Culture in continental Europe: histogram indicating in descending order the number of graves possessing the pottery types.
Analyses

In order to measure the degree of inter-association of these pottery types, we carried out multidimensional scaling and cluster analyses. These two types of analyses were based on Euclidean distances calculated from the frequencies of the pottery types in each region. Multidimensional scaling concerned pottery types (Fig. 5) and regions (Fig. 6). First of all, and very interestingly, the central European regions (Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, Hungary, Bavaria and Poland) cluster together very clearly (Fig. 6, 7), and are distinct from the rest of continental Europe. Secondly, as for countries which aren't associated with central Europe, France, with the exception
of its western part, clusters with Switzerland and Italy. Finally, a third group associates western France, Belgium, the Netherlands, north-western Germany, Mecklenburg-Pomerania and south-western Germany (Fig. 7). According to the distribution of the pottery types, we can identify three geographically distinct cultural groups: an eastern domain, a northern domain and a southern domain (Fig. 8). The eastern

Fig. 7. Illustration of the multidimensional scaling analysis based on the twenty regions: the ellipses were added later.

Fig. 8. Bell Beaker common ware in continental Europe: presentation of the three cultural domains.
domain includes the Czech Republic, Bavaria, Elbe-Saale in Germany, Austria, Poland and Hungary. The southern domain includes Switzerland, northern Italy and France with the exception of the most western and eastern reaches of this country. The northern domain includes Belgium, the Netherlands, north-western and south-western Germany and the eastern part of France near the German border.

The eastern domain

Twelve pottery types were observed in the eastern domain: types 2, 10, 19, 22, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 72, 78 and 81 (Fig. 9).

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**EASTERN DOMAIN**

- Bell Beaker Culture
- Corded Ware Culture
- Vuocoil
- Northern Domain
- Southern Domain
- Regional adaptation?

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Fig. 9. Bell Beaker common ware from the eastern domain: components and possible influences.

When studying Bell Beaker Culture common ware, one realises that it is a reflection of the complex relationships existing between different cultural groups, and that the regional substrate represented by the Corded Ware Culture plays an important role. Some forms of common ware are already present during the Corded Ware Culture of this region. These are types 2, 19, 34, 35 and 72.

**Bavaria:** Engelhardt (1978, Fig. 3; 1986, Fig. 15; 1991, Fig. 1, 2; 1989, Fig. 28), Hoppe / Weiss (1983, Fig. 18), Kreiner (1983, Fig. 20), Nadler / Sörgel (1997, Fig. 24), Matuschek (1998, Fig. 1, 3, 7, 8, 9), Krautwurst (1999, Fig. 2), Pfaudt (1987, Fig. 22), Birken (1933, Fig. 1) and Rieder (2000, Fig. 7).

**Bohemia:** Pleslova-Štirova (1972), Kytlicova (1960, Fig. 15-17), Havel (1978, Pl VI), Havel / Kovarik (1992, Pl. 2-3), Buchvaldek (1978, Pl. 4-5, Fig. 5-8; 1981, Pl. 1-3; 1986, Pl. 44, 46, 48-49; 1992, Fig. 1-3), Neustupny E. / Smrz (1989), Buchvaldek / Koutecky (1970, Fig. 1-127), Brezinaova / Tuber (1999, Fig. 6, 9), Buchvaldek / Novotny / Pleslova-Štirova (1988, Fig. 4).
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Moravia: Šebela (1981, Fig. 2, 1993, Fig. 126, 128-132), Mikulková (1999, Fig. 1, 2), Peška (1989), Peška / Rákovský (1990, Fig. 6, 7), Buchvaldek (1966, Pl. I – XXIII; 1986, Pl. 60-61; 1981, Fig. 4; 1992, Fig. 1-3), Ludikovský / Ondráček (1970-1971, Fig. 2), Buchvaldek / Novotný / Pleslová-Stírková (1988, Fig. 5).

These pottery types are predominant in the Czech Republic, in particular Bohemia.

Two pottery types originate from the local substrate and are also found in the substrates of other regions. These are types 2 and 34. The pitcher with a handle (type 34) is present during the Corded Ware Culture of this eastern group, but also in other cultural groups, for instance Vučedol in Croatia (Schmidt 1945, Neustupný 1984), in the groups of Makó-Kosthú-Caka in Hungary (Moucha 1981) and of Somogyvár, in the Carpathian Basin (Buchvaldek 1981). Some authors believe that the Begleitkeramik originates from the Carpathian Basin (Bertemes / Heyd 1996, Turek 1998). The undecorated low Bell Beaker (type 2) is present during the Bohemian Corded Ware Culture (Czech Republic), in the German region of Elbe-Saale, but also during the Corded Ware Culture of the northern region, in particular in the Netherlands and in north Germany (Louwe Kooijmans 1974, Fig. 6, 46, 48-52; Lanting 1973).

Bowls with flat bases and T-shaped lips (type 78) are occasionally decorated. This pottery type seems to be a local adaptation of a type of decorated pottery.

The same is true for polypod cups, which are also occasionally decorated. However, it seems that the situation here is more complex, as some rare cases have been discovered in the Corded Ware Culture of western Mecklenburg-Pomerania (Niciris 1981); the Bell Beaker Culture of this region does not possess any such cups. Admittedly, the latter is not very well known, and it is often assimilated with the „Individual Burials Civilisation“. Some polypod cups have also been found within the context of the regional Corded Ware Culture, in particular in the Elbe-Saale region (Matthias 1974, Pl. 94, 5, Pl. 113) and in Denmark, during the „Individual Burials Civilisation“ (Lichardus / Lichardus-Itten 1985, Fig. 43, 33). Some of the corded polypod cups from the Elbe-Saale region are decorated; others are made of wood (Behrens 1973, Pl. 54; Buchvalder 1978, Pl. 5, 1). While we wish to remain cautious given the small amount of remains of this type, we can tentatively propose that these Bell Beaker polypod cups originated locally, from the Corded Ware Culture. They seem to represent an adaptation of this pottery type, which can be detected either by the transition from corded decorations to Bell Beaker decorations, or by the complete disappearance of decorations. Influences from the north or from the south may also have played a role. In the Mediterranean Basin, polypod cups are numerous and are often decorated (Atzeni 1987, Fig. 9; 1995, Fig. 31, 3; 1998, Fig. 5, 15). Other examples are not decorated (Tusa 1997, Fig. 17; Atzeni 1998, Fig. 5-7). Thus, we can also imagine influences stemming from the Mediterranean Basin; initially, these may have induced the presence of polypod decorated cups in central Europe, which then lost their decorations. This corresponds to the chronology which is generally proposed for these regions, with decorated pottery being present during early phases and undecorated pottery appearing during more recent phases.
Flat-based bowls (type 19) occasionally bearing a small vertical handle (type 72) are present within the regional substrate \textit{(Marshall 1983, Pl. 2, b; Matthias 1974, Pl. 96, 1)}, whereas bowls with a horizontal hand-grip (type 81) - a perforated hand-grip or a handle - originate from somewhere else.

Decorations with impressed fingernail or spatula lines (type 31) are present during the Corded Ware Culture of the northern domain, in particular in the Netherlands and north-western Germany \textit{(Lanting / Van der Waals 1976; Van der Beek / Forkens 1998)}.

Small hand-grips under the pottery rim (type 10) are found in different pre-Bell Beaker cultural groups in Western Europe, such as the Vérainien and the group of Górd-Deûle-Escout, but they are uncommon during the Bell Beaker Culture of these regions. It is therefore difficult to imagine an influence from the south-west towards the north-east, as these hand-grips are more numerous in the eastern domain. As for vases with notched lips (type 28), they are sparsely distributed over the whole of continental Europe and seem to come from a pre-Bell Beaker Culture in northern Italy \textit{(the White-Ware group) (Barfield \textit{et al.} 1975-1976, Fig. 23)} and from the Tuscan Eneolithic \textit{(Martini / Morandi 1986-1987)}.

Thus, many external influences may have acted in this region. Nevertheless, the stock from the regional Corded Ware Culture substrate seems to dominate, as the types which are most frequently encountered originate from the substrate of the regional Corded Ware Culture.

The regional Neolithic basis - the substrate - is therefore central to the emergence of the eastern domain Bell Beaker Culture.

\textbf{The northern domain}

Fourteen pottery types belong to the northern domain: types 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 22, 27, 28, 31, 29, 34, 35 and 67 (Fig. 10).

![NORTHERN DOMAIN](image)

\textbf{INFLUENCES}

Corded Ware Culture

Southern Domain

Eastern Domain

Fig. 10. Bell Beaker common ware from the northern domain: components and possible influences.

The Corded Ware Culture plays an important role in the evolution towards the Bell Beaker Culture. Types 1, 2, 7, 9, 22, 27, 31 and 67 are present during both Cultures. Apart from the undecorated bell beakers (types 1 and 2), these are mainly types of decoration (corrugations, circular impressions, fingernail or spatula decorations, impressed cordons).
Corrugations also exist within the regional Corded Ware Culture substrate, as well as in the Elbe-Saale region (Matthias 1987, Pl.1, 7).

Impressed cordons are present in the Corded Ware Culture of the Middle Rhine region (Bantelmann 1989, Pl.1, 7).

Influences from the eastern domain can be inferred from the presence of single-handled pitchers (types 34 and 35) and polypod cups (type 29).

Influences from southern Europe are also perceptible. These may have followed the Rhine-Rhône axis, as edges underlined by a cordon are abundant in pre-Bell Beaker Culture contexts in the southern domain.

Influences from the south are also apparent in type 8 potteries (rim underlined by a cordon with a row of traversing perforations between the rim and the cordon), but the situation is slightly different from type 5, as type 8 has not been discovered within the substrate. It is probably associated with decorated Bell Beaker pottery. Its southern origin can be inferred from its density, which is more important than in northern continental Europe. As for vases with notched lips (type 28), they are sparsely distributed over the whole of continental Europe and seem to come from a pre-Bell Beaker Culture in northern Italy (the White-Ware group) (Barfield et al. 1975-1976, Fig. 23) and from the Tuscan Eneolithic (Martinelli / Morandi 1986-1987).

In this region, the regional Neolithic substrate plays an important role in the emergence of the Bell Beaker Culture, as the most frequent types originate from the Corded Ware substrate.

The southern domain

Nineteen types associated with the common ware were identified (Fig. 11): types 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 19, 22, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35 and 63.

**SOUTHERN DOMAIN**

Bell Beaker Culture

Late Neolithic groups

Northern Domain

Eastern Domain

**Fig. 11.** Bell Beaker common ware from the southern domain: components and possible influences.
The types which originate from various Late Neolithic groups are:

- pottery represented by edges underlined by a triangular cordon (type 5)
  
  Vérazien: Abelanet (1980, Fig. 1, 2), Barbaza (1980, Fig. 1), Duday / Guilaine (1980, Fig. 1, 2, 4), Grimal (1980, Fig. 1), Guilaine (1980, Fig. 1, 2, 3, 5), Guilaine / Jacobieski (1980, Fig. 1), Guilaine / Vaquer / Bouisset (1980, Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Martin Colliga (1980, Fig. 1, 2), Taaffanel / Taaffanel (1980, Fig. 1, 2), Tarrus (1980) / Vaquer (1980, Fig. 1; 1998, Pl. 9, p. 491);

- Tuscan Eneolithic: Cremonesi et al. (1998, Pl. 8), Martini / Morandi (1986-1987, Fig. 3-8), Sarti / Carlini / Martini (1999-2000, Fig. 3-10), Cocchi Genik (1998), Cocchi Genik / Cremonesi (1989);

- the small round-based hemispheric bowl (type 12)
  
  Vérazien: Abelanet (1980, Fig. 1, 2), Barbaza (1980, Fig. 1), Duday / Guilaine (1980, Fig. 1, 2, 4), Grimal (1980, Fig. 1), Guilaine (1980, Fig. 1, 2, 3, 5), Guilaine / Jacobieski (1980, Fig. 1), Guilaine / Vaquer / Bouisset (1980, Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Martin Colliga (1980, Fig. 1, 2), Taaffanel / Taaffanel (1980, Fig. 1, 2), Tarrus (1980) and Vaquer (1980, Fig. 1, 1998, Pl. 9, p. 491);

- Late Neolithic of Provence: D'Anna (1995a, Fig. 2, 4, 1995b, Fig. 1, 2, 4, 1999, Fig. 2, 3), Guthertz / Jallon (1995), Vaquer (1998, Pl. 13, p. 495), Courtin (1974, Fig. 68, 69, 70, 76, 77, 83, 103, 111, 113, 114);

- vases with hand-grips under the rim (type 10) Jeunesse / Petrequin / Piningre (1998, Pl. 27 and 28);

- carented containers (type 13)
  
  Fontbousse: Vaquer (1998, Pl. 12, p. 494), Guthertz (1975) and Gasco (1976); Gord-Deule-Escat: Blanchet (1984, Fig. 18, 19, 21, 22, 24), Constantin / Blanchet (1998, Pl. 11) and Praud / Martal (2000, Fig. 2);

- fingered cords (type 22)
  
  Fontbousse: Vaquer (1998, Pl. 12, p. 494), Guthertz (1975) and Gasco (1976);

- Tuscan Eneolithic: Cremonesi et al. (1998, Pl. 8), Martini / Morandi (1986-1987, Fig. 3-8), Sarti / Carlini / Martini (1999-2000, Fig. 3-10), Cocchi Genik (1998), Cocchi Genik / Cremonesi (1989);

- and notched edges (type 28)
  


Three pottery types appear at the same time as the decorated beakers and do not originate from a pre-Bell Beaker horizon in continental Europe. These are potteries with straight rims and flattened lips (type 63), potteries rimmed by a triangular cordon (type 4) and potteries whose rim is underlined by a row of traversing perforations, which are themselves situated above a triangular cordon (type 8). The type consisting of a small bowl with an umbilicated base can be added to this list (type 36), as it has been found at seven sites in southern France and does not
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originate from Late Neolithic cultures of this region. Misaligned fingernail or spatula impressions (type 9) are present in scarce pre-Bell Beaker levels in northern Italy and northern Europe. It is therefore difficult to settle where this type of decoration comes from.

Influences from the eastern domain can be detected in several instances: single-handled pitchers (types 34 and 35), low undecorated Bell Beakers (type 2), and flat-based bowls (type 19). Polypod cups may also reflect eastern influences, unless they are adaptations of Mediterranean decorated types.

High undecorated Bell Beakers (type 1), circular impressed decorations (type 27) or rows of spatula impressions (type 31) and potteries with rows of perforations under the rim (type 7) all reveal influences from the northern domain.

In this region, only six of the 19 pottery types present (types 5, 10, 12, 13, 22 and 28) originate from cultural groups of the regional substrate. There are therefore 13 types specific to the Bell Beaker Culture, and some bear traces of external influences. We can assert that the typological assortment is largely renewed when these series are studied at the level of a domain.

Conclusions

It is essential to grasp the importance of the regional Neolithic basis in the emergence of the Bell Beaker Culture, as well as the influences that the regions occasionally exert over each other. During the Bell Beaker Culture, several networks of influences acting between the different domains can be perceived. They vary in their importance.

The regional substrates of the eastern and of the northern domains, that is, the Corded Ware Culture, seem to play a major role in the emergence of the Bell Beaker Culture. Some Corded Ware Culture pottery types persist during the Bell Beaker Culture, and make up the best part of the latter's pottery types. Furthermore, decorated pottery in this region is proportionally less frequent than undecorated pottery.

This is not the case within the southern domain, where the transition between the Late Neolithic and the Bell Beaker Culture is more radical. Bell Beaker pottery types are new; few of them originate from cultures of the regional substrate during the end of the Neolithic. Furthermore, sites with decorated pottery are much more numerous than sites with common ware only, which emphasizes the renewal of cultural components during the Bell Beaker Culture.

In the southern domain, the substrate does not seem to herald the Bell Beaker Culture, whereas in the northern and eastern domains, the Corded Ware substrate seems to have played an important role in the founding of the Bell Beaker Culture.

What is more, the Bell Beaker sites of the southern domain do not occupy the same locations as Late Neolithic sites. This is not the case during the Corded Ware Culture: Bell Beaker sites seem to have been founded as a function of the latter. Also, the Bell Beaker Culture is often contemporaneous with the Corded Ware Culture, or at least with a recent phase of the Corded Ware Culture.
At the end of the Neolithic, the southern domain is characterised by multitudinous regional groups whose geographic extension is limited, whereas at the same time, the Corded Ware Culture occupies most of central and eastern Europe. The importance of the Corded Ware Culture is also perceptible in the continuity of funerary rituals. Where the Corded Ware Culture is accompanied by single graves, the same is true for the Bell Beaker Culture. A different situation prevails in the southern domain, as collective graves exist from the Late Neolithic onwards, whereas during the Bell Beaker Culture, these are reused, or else individual graves are built (Fig. 12).

Fig. 12. Distribution map of the individual and collective graves with common ware during the Bell Beaker Culture in continental Europe.

Thus, the transition mechanisms leading to the Bell Beaker Culture are very different. These changes are very important in the southern domain, whereas in the eastern and northern domains, the transition is much smoother.

(Translation: Suzanne Eades)

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Similar but Different. Bell Beakers in Europe


