What else can we know about Bell Beaker people?
An attempt to approach from the body

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introduction

Two main trends of research:

- Bell Beaker people: origins and ways of dispersal
- Bell Beaker context: social hierarchies, prestige goods, ritual feasts

How can we stimulate Bell Beaker’s research?

- Trying to unify the phenomenon as a single reality through funerary record → look for coincidences
- Looking for new models of analysis under different perspectives → THE BODY
an approach from the body

- BODY as a tool for the study of past societies

- BODY (and all activities related to it) reflects coherence with the underlying structure

- BODY becomes a semiotic object capable of expressing deepest foundations of culture and, therefore, processes of identity change
Bell Beakers: first features of individualization

Key moment of **change** and transformation  Neolithic - Bronze Age

Abandonment of communal **patterns** and adoption of new ones

Generalization of **individual burials**

First **kinships** - institutionalization of power

Mechanisms of self-conscience and **differentiation**

Development of a **specific visual language** focused on the BODY
Beakers and body: an explosive mixture

- Transformations in mortuary rituals and the progressive abandonment of collective burials
- Variations in the use of body as the main way of non-verbal communication
- Identity changes as first features of individualization
- Socio-political changes that enhance differences

STRUCTURE in a constant restructuring process
Beakers and body: an explosive mixture

- Single burials - space is limited; unity

- Differentiated funerary offerings belonging to a standardized pattern - visual language

- Specific location of the tomb according to body and grave goods - open ritual; specific identity
Beakers and body: an explosive mixture

- **Reuse and closing of Neolithic funerary structures** - attempts of legitimation

- **Concrete funerary ritual framed into specific people** - direct recognition of deceased; particular ancestor

- **Interior monumentalization of the tomb vs. Exterior** - growing importance of individual over group
conclusions

look for coherence:

transformations

traits of individuality

new mechanisms of body use

new perspectives, new questions
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