

The Bell Beaker Culture in All its Forms

Proceedings of the 22nd Meeting of 'Archéologie
et Gobelets' 2021 (Geneva, Switzerland)

edited by

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Foreword

Marie Besse

Professor at the University of Geneva (Switzerland)

The 22nd meeting of the “Archéologie et Gobelets” Association took place on January 21 and 22, 2021 in Geneva Switzerland under the theme “The Bell Beaker Culture in All its Forms”. However, this conference did not transpire as originally intended because a few months into its organization, we found ourselves in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. While we had considered canceling the conference altogether, it felt important for us to maintain it and we therefore made the decision to continue its organization as an entirely virtual meeting. We believed that the links between friends and colleagues as well as the enriching scientific discussions were especially important during these difficult times.

The “Archéologie et Gobelets” meetings have always combined scientific presentations, informal discussions, visits to archaeological sites and expositions, the observation of archaeological objects, and shared moments of conviviality. For these two days, we tried our best to maintain this spirit despite the virtual format by organizing smaller “breakout” sessions, virtual coffee breaks, and two workshops aimed at discussing case studies in biological anthropology and other artifact studies.

The creation of the Association dates to April of 1996, also in Geneva, with many others joining the following year after a second successful meeting in Feldberg, Germany. Several colleagues and friends who were present during these first meetings also participated in this conference 25 years later. What commitment! And what a pleasure it is to see everybody again at each meeting. As a result, yesterday’s students are more experienced today, and young researchers participated in “Archéologie et Gobelets” for their first time in 2021. This includes the organization of this recent conference, which was primarily managed by young researchers from my laboratory, all of whom today have a PhD in prehistoric archaeology. This includes Claudine Abegg, Delia Carloni, Florian Cousseau, Eve Derenne, and Jessica Ryan-Despraz. I am delighted by their enthusiasm, their rigor, and their desire to organize this event of scientific exchange – and to have done so with such success. And now, less than 18 months after the conference, they are publishing its Proceedings. I would therefore like to take this moment to congratulate them for their hard work and dedication in this achievement. I wish them much success in their future pursuits.

The publication of these Proceedings is structured in three parts, following the three session themes of the conference. Nine articles comprise the section “Archaeological Material”, four in the section “Funerary Archaeology and Anthropology”, and seven in the final section “Reconstructing Bell Beaker Society”. These studies cover a vast geological region, including works from Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. This additionally involves a diversity of research approaches that one will discover throughout this book. It contains articles discussing themes not often addressed in much modern Bell Beaker research, such as the cultural interactions at the edges of the Bell Beaker complex (Aurino and De Falco), “fire” rituals in the Alps (Pedrotti et al.), solar cult rituals and symbolism (Ripoche and Nicolas), and ceremonial landscapes (Turek and Krištuf). Some contributions present studies based on methods rarely applied to Bell Beaker contexts, such as paleopathological analyses (Abegg), network analyses (Caraglio et al.), and the combination of lithic and osteological analyses to assess social organization (Ryan-Despraz and Nicolas). Two major megalithic sites from the Alps also benefit from new approaches: Saint-Martin-de-Corléans in Aoste, Italy (Curdy et al.) and Sion ‘Petit-Chasseur’ in Valais, Switzerland (Derenne et al.). Likewise, it is a pleasure to see the publication of new field data essential to archaeological research (Boenzi and Mancusi; Perez-Romero et al.). To conclude, we also discover important advanced material studies (De Marco et al.; Favrel; Matera and Sarti; Matera et al.; Miranda et al.; Penco and Sarti; Puster; Rey and Treffort; Vitani and Bailly).

I would like to take a moment to remember two colleagues and founding members of the “Archéologie et Gobelets” Association: Alain Gallay, professor at the University of Geneva (Switzerland) and Daniela Kern of the University of Vienna (Austria). We remember them fondly and their families remain in our thoughts.

Lastly, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to one person who hid behind the “Host” panel throughout the two-day duration of our video conference. Mr. Thomas Mugnier (Fig. 01) took care of all the technical aspects of the meeting, which allowed us to concentrate on the science.

We recorded all consenting presentations from the conference and it is possible to access the complete video on the University of Geneva media server found at the following link:

<https://mediaserver.unige.ch/collection/VN4-2044-2020-2021>

Geneva, May 31, 2022

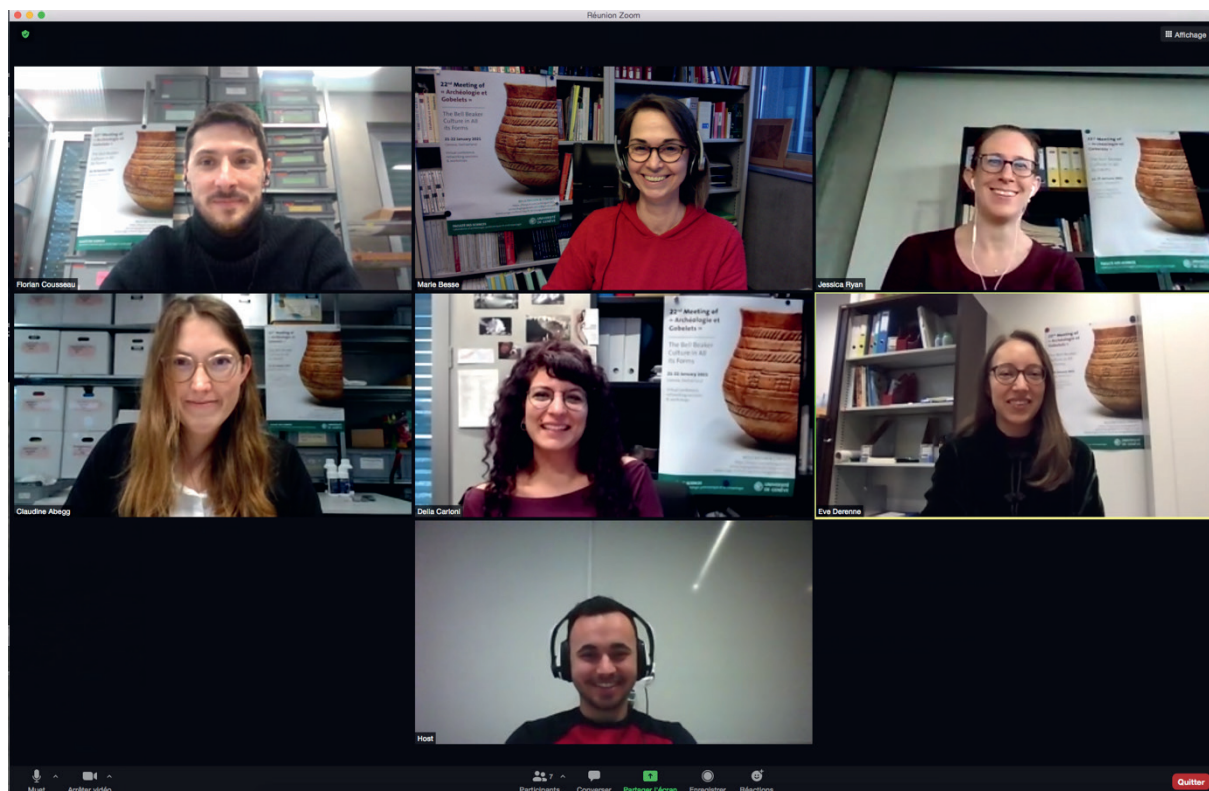


Fig. 01: The conference organizers, from left to right and top to bottom: Florian Cousseau, Marie Besse, Jessica Ryan-Despraz, Claudine Abegg, Delia Carloni, Eve Derenne and Thomas Mugnier, who has our deepest thanks as he ensured the technical success of the conference

In Memory of Daniela Kern



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Shortly before the conference in Geneva, our much-loved colleague Daniela Kern died suddenly and unexpectedly. Daniela's interests and publications spanned the Neolithic and Bronze Age and encompassed a range of topics; from isotopes and mobility, to experimental archaeology, and the archaeology of childhood. A creative and original thinker, much of this research stemmed from her important work on Corded Ware and Bell Beaker cemeteries in the Lower Traisen Valley. This work also led Daniela to explore the Bell Beaker Network in Austria at a national level and also its international connections, which she examined through the prism of the so-called bow shaped pendants. Daniela presented papers on these topics to Archéologie et Gobelets conferences and as the co-organiser of the Beaker Days on the Danube conference held in Bratislava and Vienna in 2014, she was happy and proud to welcome colleagues to Traisen Valley and Vienna, where she did so much work. A warm and welcoming hostess, Daniela embodied the friendship, collegiality and hospitality of Archéologie et Gobelets meetings. In dedicating this book, we remember Daniela with affection and respect.

Daniela Kern: Born Vienna 28.08.1960. Died Laa an der Thaya 05.10.2020.

Andrew Fitzpatrick

In Memory of Alain Gallay



Alain was a man of science and heart who passed away peacefully during the early morning hours of December 21, 2021. As an accomplished archaeologist, prehistorian, anthropologist, ethnologist, colleague, professor, and friend, Alain Gallay helped shape several generations of young scholars at the University of Geneva, all of whom still remember his scientific rigor and his desire to understand the complexities of past societies. His early research focused on the European Neolithic period in general and the Bell Beaker Culture in particular. The Bell Beaker archaeological excavations of Champ Vully-East (canton of Vaud, Switzerland) and the Petit-Chasseur megalithic necropolis (Sion, Switzerland) enabled him not only to reflect on exceptional artifacts, but also the role of the Bell Beaker Culture in Europe. His precise, demanding, and thoughtful work strongly influenced his theories of Bell Beaker networks. His succeeding research also contributed significantly to the development of archaeological theory and ethnoarchaeology, including several innovative projects in western Africa. Alain has left us with a vast human and scientific heritage that is precious to our understanding of the modern and ancient world. Lastly, I am particularly pleased to highlight the fact that Alain Gallay was also present for the very first meeting of the ‘Archéologie et Gobelets’ association in Geneva in 1996.

Alain Gallay: Born in Geneva, Switzerland on March 10, 1938 and died in Geneva, Switzerland on December 21, 2021.

Marie Besse