

The Northwest Belgian Bronze Age Barrow in Context: A Review of the 14C Chronology from the Late Neolithic to Bronze Age

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Abstract

To formulate a solid chronology of the northwest Belgian Bronze Age barrow phenomenon, a critical review of the available radiocarbon dates was necessary. The resulting 14C chronology of the barrows was compared with the 14C chronologies of the Late Neolithic Bell Beaker graves, the Bronze Age metalwork depositions, the evidence of barrow reuse, and the Bronze Age longhouses. This research revealed interesting patterns concerning the appearance and disappearance of the barrow phenomenon. The earliest 14C-dated barrows are dated during the Late Neolithic and coincide with the presence of the Bell Beaker culture in the region. The peak of the barrow-building practice occurred between 1700 and 1500/1400 cal BC, a period of flourishing trade networks in the regions along the North Sea basin. The period around 1500 cal BC is characterized by the disappearance of barrow-building practices and the sudden appearance of ritual depositional practices, reflecting changes in society.

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Keywords

Barrow; Chronology; Bell Beaker; Metalwork

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