

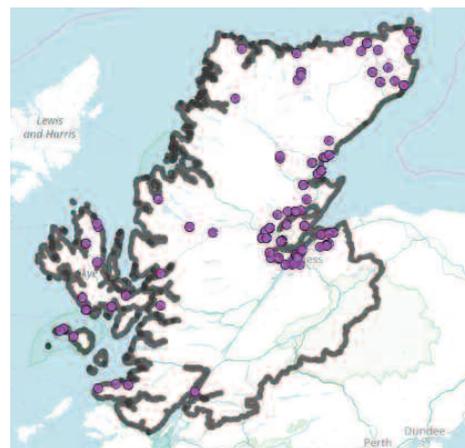
# Beaker Pots

**Period:** Bronze Age (c. 2500 – c. 800 BC)

**Material:** ceramic

## Complete items

These ceramic pots, known as 'beakers', represent a new kind of pottery synonymous with the Early Bronze Age. They are found in burials from the Early Bronze Age (c. 2200 – c. 1500 BC).



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*Beaker pots found at Balblair, Beaulie, now in Inverness Museum. Was the smaller one for a child?*



© Susan Kruse

*Finely decorated beaker pot from cist burial at Dalmore, near Alness, now in Inverness Museum*

impressed into the wet clay using combs and string before the clay was fired to turn it into hard ceramic.

Pottery vessels were being used for a variety of purposes, including for the cooking and storage of food, and to contain liquids such as milk and beer. Later in the Bronze Age larger urns were buried with cremated human remains inside.

Many beaker pots were buried as grave goods with individual burials, usually within a stone-lined grave (a 'cist') with the person's body laying on their side, their knees drawn up to their chest. This type of burial is distinctive to the Bronze Age and

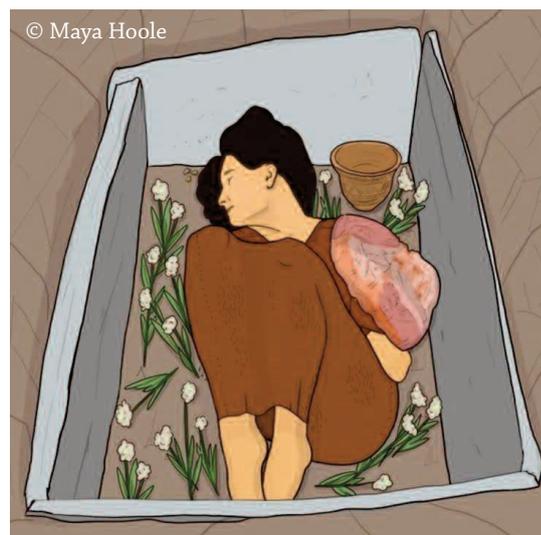


Fig. 2. Urn from the Cist at Acharole. (4.)

*Sketch of beaker found in cist burial at Acharole, Caithness, now in the NMS, Edinburgh*

associated grave goods have led these people to be labeled 'the Beaker People'. These examples are inspired by a pair of beakers found in just such a stone-lined cist burial at Balblair, near Beaulie.

The shape of these pots is distinctive – with a rounded 'belly', large straight rim and 'S-shaped' profile. Some but perhaps not all beakers contained food or drink for the deceased to take into the afterlife. The beakers are usually decorated with lines cut or



© Maya Hoole

*Reconstruction of cist burial with beaker at Achavanich, Caithness*

## What might these pots tell us about people's beliefs?

### See also:

CT Making Prehistoric Pottery

When? Bronze Age

Additional Images: Highland Bronze Age Beakers; Culduthel Cist Burial Gravegoods

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