PETER VAN DEN BROEKE · INEKE JOOSTEN · BERTIL VAN OS · PETER SCHRIJVER

AN EARLY IRON AGE MINIATURE CUP WITH SCRIPT-LIKE SIGNS FROM NIJMEGEN-LENT (PROV. GELDERLAND / NL)

In 2011, the sherds of a small cup were recovered among the apparent settlement waste in a shallow pit in Lent (municipality of Nijmegen, prov. Gelderland/NL; **fig. 1**). This pit was the northernmost feature in a cluster of Early Iron Age features adjacent to an Early Merovingian cemetery and military foxholes from Operation Market Garden of the Second World War (**fig. 2**). The site was excavated by the municipal archaeological service (Bureau Leefomgevingskwaliteit/Archeologie, Nijmegen [BLAN]) and has only been provisionally described until now[1], as the site reports are still in progress.

After discovering the pit, its clay filling turned out to contain so many finds that it was excavated by trowel. Some hundreds of sherds of miscellaneous pots, animal bone fragments, and some stones were gathered. There are several indications that the small cup had been deposited complete but fell apart in the second instance.

The discovery of the special nature of the cup followed only after the cleaning of the sherds. Due to its enigmatic script-like signs, it deserves a detailed description and a thorough assessment of the authenticity of both the cup and its engravings.

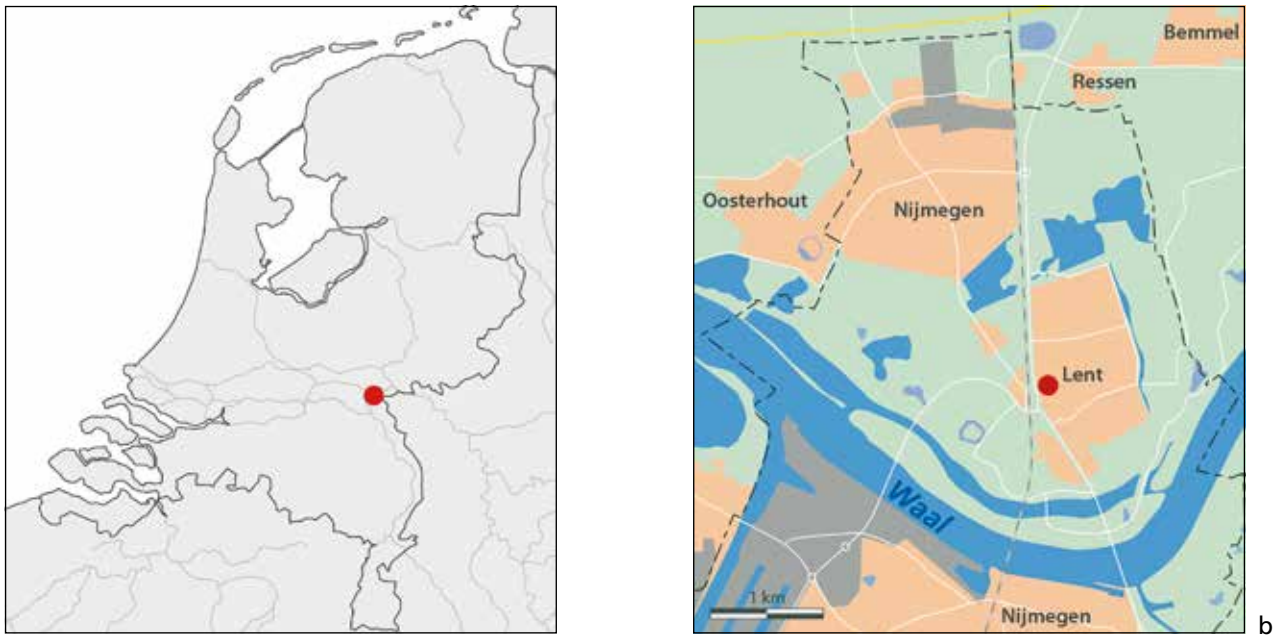


Fig. 1 The location of Lent within the Netherlands (**a**) and the municipality of Nijmegen (**b**). The site is marked by a red dot. – (Illustration R. Mols, Bureau Leefomgevingskwaliteit/Archeologie, Nijmegen [BLAN]).

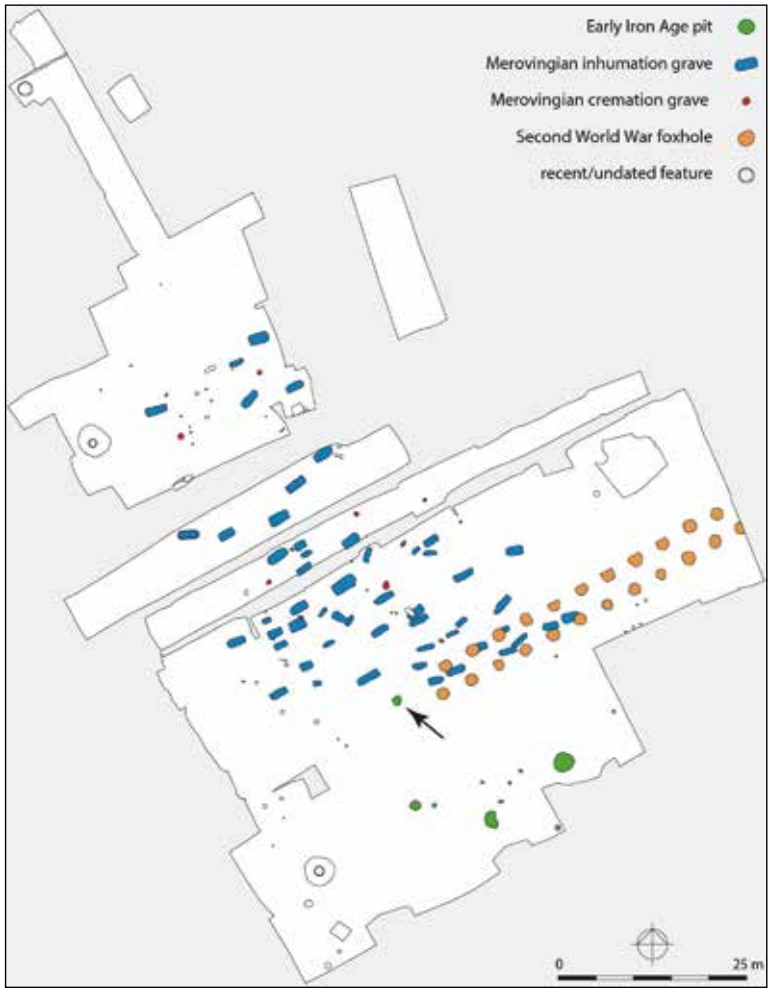


Fig. 2 Excavation plan of the project Nla14/20 in Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL). The predominant traces are those of a cemetery from the Early Merovingian period and a position of foxholes from Operation Market Garden (September 1944). On the southern side, several pits and a single well from the Early Iron Age are shown. The cup was found in the northernmost pit (with arrow). – (Illustration J. Hendriks, BLAN).

DESCRIPTION AND DATING OF THE POTTERY

The simple cup has a rim diameter of max. 4.5 cm, its height is 3.2 cm (**fig. 3**). The rim has been decorated with nail impressions. The tempering material in the clay matrix almost exclusively consists of fine pottery grog, apparently from several pots; fine vegetal inclusions, leaving tiny pores after firing, can also be detected.

The inner side has been left unfinished, but the exterior, even the base, has been rather smoothly finished. The engravings appear to have been made after smoothing, as the grooves have not been smeared. It is even more likely that they have been made after firing. That is, however, not to say that they were produced around the time of the excavations. There are two main arguments against the possibility that we are dealing with a hoax. In the first place, several engravings cross old fractures and have, therefore, undoubtedly been made prior to the apparent ancient fracturing of the pottery. In the second place, the SEM/EDX research by I. Joosten learned that in some of the grooves the same carbon-rich residues are present that are visible elsewhere on the cup, especially on the rim and on the inner side below the rim (**figs 4-5**)[2]. One of many possibilities is that it concerns the remains of fat or oil after the use as a lamp.

The visual impression is that it concerns regionally produced pottery. This is supported by its chemical composition, as determined using X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis with a handheld Niton XL3t on flat and

Fig. 3 Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL). Miniature cup showing some of the eight inscriptions. – (Photo R. Mols, BLAN).

a b

Fig. 4 Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL). Details of the cup: **a** dark residues both on the wall and in the grooves that proved carbon-rich under the electron microscope. – **b** dark residues below the rim on the interior of the cup. – (Photos R. Mols, BLAN).

cleaned outside surfaces by B. van Os. When comparing this cup with five other pottery fragments from the same pit, the XRF scores of the subject were found to be in the margin or the middle of the other scores (**fig. 6**)[3]. They show a slight variation in the values of the elements represented. This was concluded after the comparison with the results of XRF analyzed native-Roman pottery of the Kops Plateau in Nijmegen[4]. The close chemical resemblance to other presumed local pottery makes a provenance of the cup outside the Lower Rhine area unlikely.

Dating the pottery to a detailed level is not an easy exercise based on ^{14}C, as we are dealing here with the »Hallstatt plateau« in the calibration curve. The dates of 2507 ± 15 BP and 2497 ± 15 BP for collagen from two bone fragments from the relevant pit result in c. 775-540 BC after calibration[5]. This date is in line with the first impression of the pottery assemblage from the pit. The pottery itself even includes the key for a more precise date, as it fits within the regionally applicable typo-chronological scheme of Oss-Ussen (prov. Noord-Brabant/NL)[6]. On that site, four pottery phases could be established within the Early Iron Age (800-500 BC). In Lent, the youngest assemblage, stemming from another pit, could be dated around 650-600 BC based on its pottery composition[7]. The pit containing the miniature cup could be determined as the oldest Iron Age feature, dating from about 750-675 BC[8].

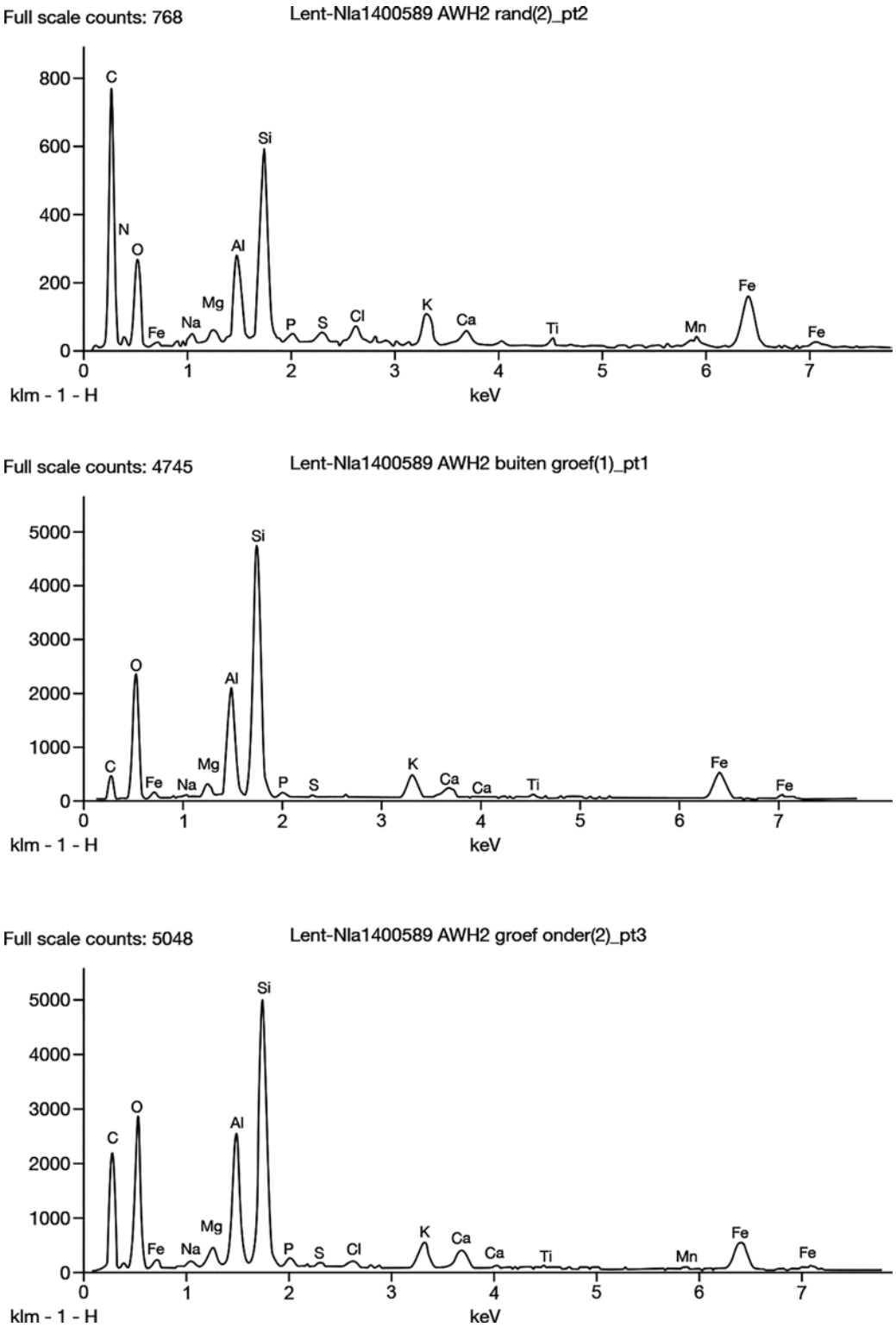
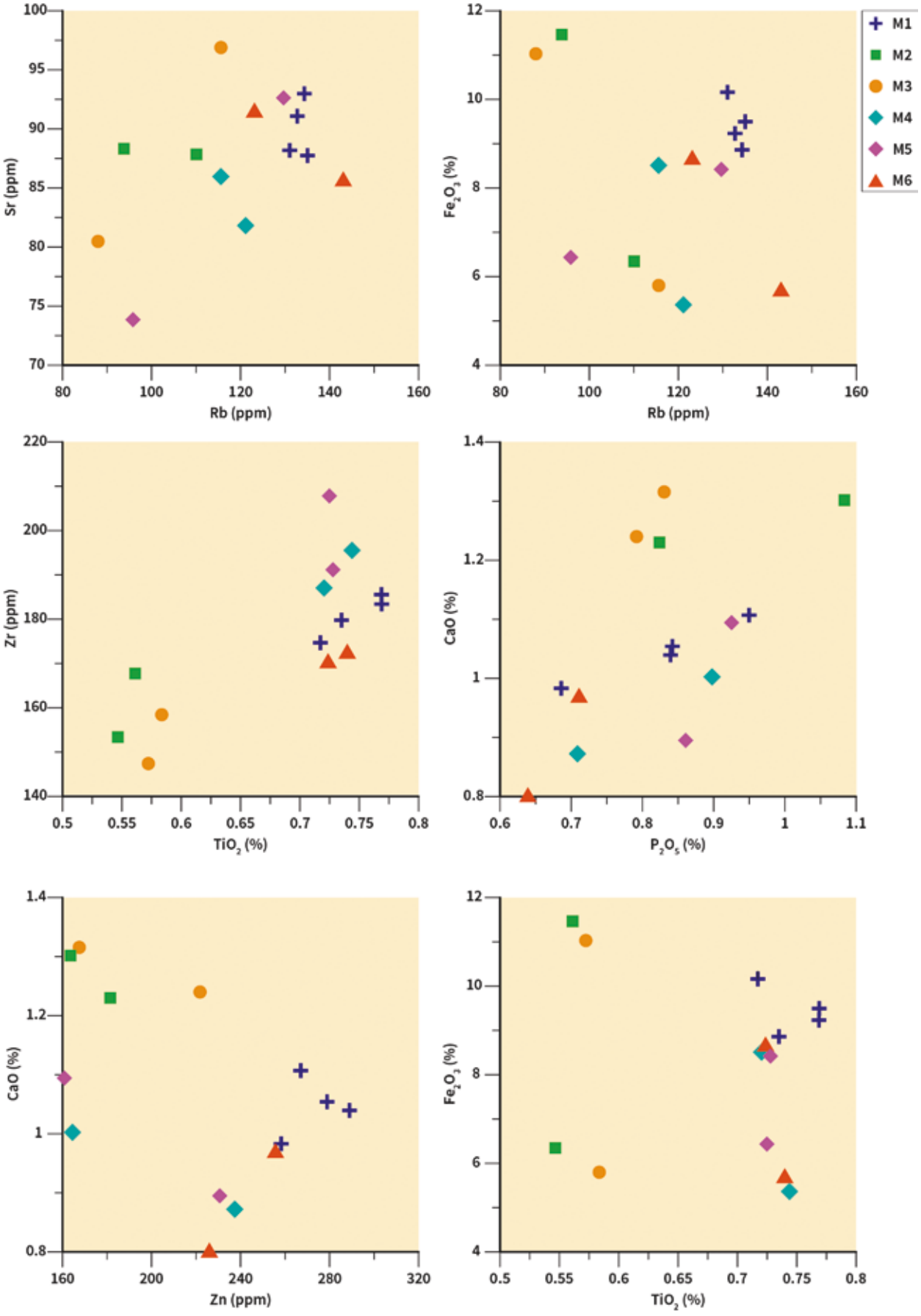


Fig. 5 Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL). SEM/EDX results of some spots on the miniature cup, with divergent scores on carbon (C). – Above: black residue on the rim; middle: clean exterior part; below: black residue in groove. – (Plots I. Joosten; redrawn by R. Mols, BLAN).

Fig. 6 Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL). Diagrams of several chemical elements of six pottery samples from pit S17.2, as detected with a handheld XRF spectrometer. Of each sample, at least two points have been measured. M1 = miniature cup. – (Plots B. van Os; redrawn by R. Mols, BLAN).


Sr (ppm)
Rb (ppm)
Fe_2O_3 (%)
Rb (ppm)
M1
M2
M3
M4
M5
M6
Zr (ppm)
TiO_2 (%)
CaO (%)
P_2O_5 (%)
CaO (%)
Zn (ppm)
Fe_2O_3 (%)
TiO_2 (%)

MINIATURE CUPS IN LATER PREHISTORY

Small Early Iron Age cups of a similar shape to the one from Lent are known from elsewhere in the Lower Rhine area. In settlements, they are relatively scarce. More often, they are found as accessory vessels in cremation graves. In addition, miniature pottery is encountered in a different ritual context, namely as building deposits, in postholes of buildings and outbuildings[9]. In those cases, the small size may be related to a presumed small stature of the receivers, for example, house and earth spirits as they still figured in popular belief in historical times. From the Nijmegen region, such a discovery is known from the posthole of a supposed three-post structure, dating to the Early Iron Age[10].

Because we should broaden our horizons in view of the cryptic signs, it may be noted that miniature pottery in Central and Southern Europe often predominates among the pottery on ritual sites from the period 800-500 BC. In several cases, thousands of them have been deposited in such sites[11]. Usually, they are miniature versions of regular domestic forms, which is not the case for the specimen from Lent.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SCRIPT-LIKE CHARACTERS

The characters that are arranged around the cup make it a very intriguing object (**fig. 7**). They do not in any way resemble decorations on pottery in Northwest Europe and surroundings in late prehistoric times[12]. On the other hand, they do show a resemblance to early forms of writing that we know from the southern half of Europe. That is why they are treated here as separate signs and are provided with a number. Our numbering starts at a random point, as there is no space that marks a beginning or end of the string. The reading direction is not clear.

It may be noticed that there are some signs with approximately the same basic shape. This applies to the numbers 2 and 7, as well as to the numbers 1, 3, and 8. Unlike number 1, the characters 3 and 8 show a purposefully made internal cross line. The vertical line within the oval signs 2 and 7 has also been carefully applied. The characters 4 and 5 may have been intended as identical characters, but the small size and round shape of the surface of the cup may have prevented proper duplication. Sign 6, with the adjacent horizontal groove that continues below sign 7, is the only one that gives rise to questions about the intent of its maker (male/female). It even hampers the proposal that the signs 1-4 mirror the signs 5-8.

The possibility may be excluded that the signs and the making of the miniature cup are child's play. Even the base of the cup is thoroughly finished and the carefully executed incisions, which are only 1-1.5 cm high, require a controlled engraving of the hard clay. They may have been produced with, for example, the point of a metal knife or clothing pin.

In **figure 7**, the supposedly intended version of the signs is also depicted, for the reader's convenience, as the person who engraved the signs had to cope with small pottery dimensions and rather hard or even fired clay, whereas we have to overcome the disturbance by the fractures in the cup. This idealized version of the signs entails a modicum of interpretation.

Written expressions in Europe from the period 800-500 BC are almost exclusively found in the Mediterranean area. In the rare cases that writing appears in more northern regions during this time span, it concerns objects that have been transported from the south to the north[13]. On the enormous Greek bronze krater from Vix (dép. Côte-d'Or/F), dated around 500 BC, loose Greek letters appear, which probably indicate an assembly sequence[14]. The oldest and exceptionally far northern example is the inscription of North Etruscan type on the rim of a bronze ribbed bucket. The object was presumably traded from Ticino in Switzerland to the Lübeck region on the German Baltic coast[15]. With its date of about 750-550 BC (period Montelius VI) it

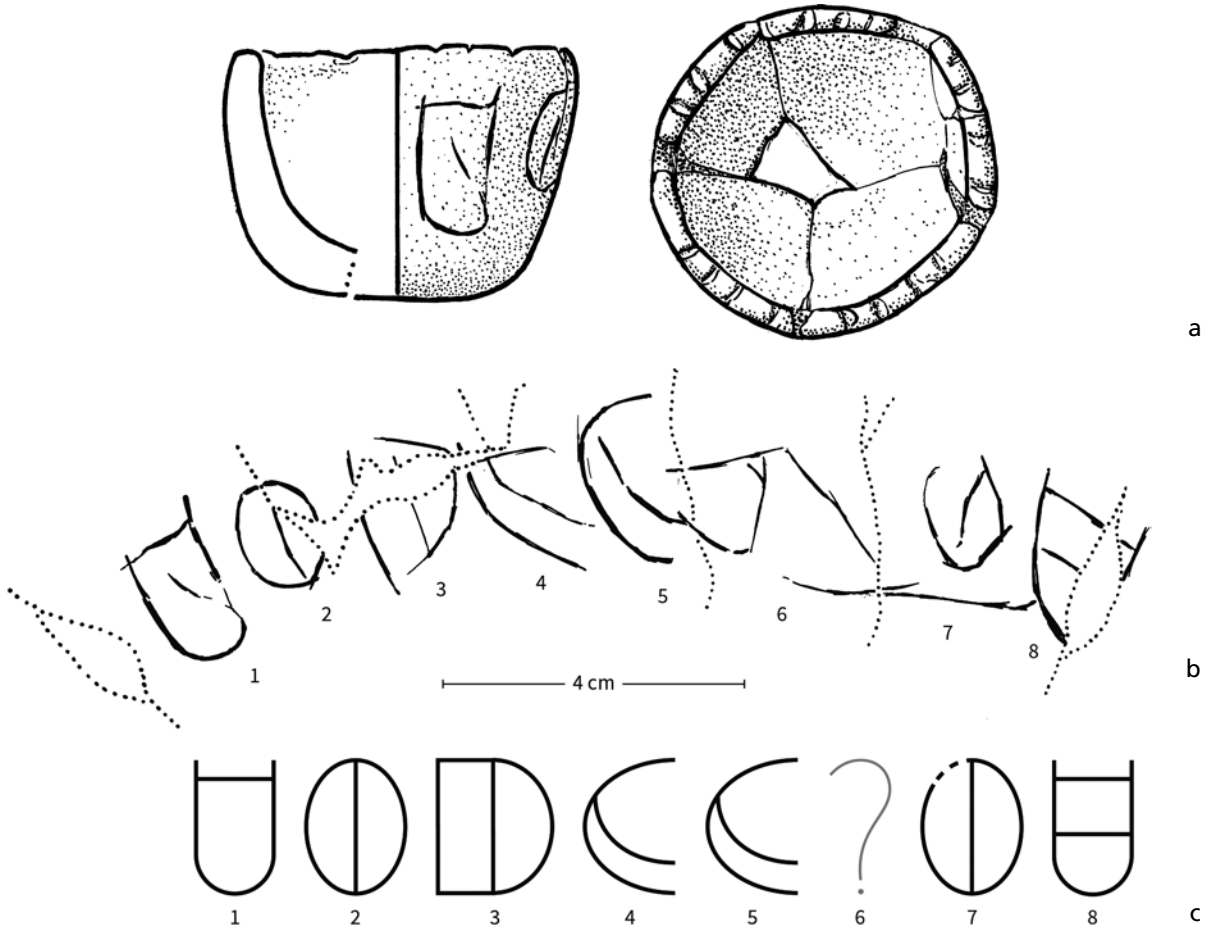


Fig. 7 Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL). The miniature cup and its inscriptions (**a-b**) and their assumed intended form (**c**). – (a-b drawings R. Reijnen; c drawing R. Mols, BLAN). – Scale 1:1.

is the only southern inscription in the northern half of Europe roughly contemporaneous with the cup from Lent. However, the use of writing in the European Mediterranean area to the west of Greece was highly exceptional until well into the 7th century BC[16]. Therefore, this cup, dating from about 750-675 BC, arouses astonishment.

The oldest characters on pottery from the area to the north of the Alps have been found on the shoulder of an angular dish from a cemetery near Bergères-les-Vertus (dép. Marne/F). This dish dates from the second half of the 5th century BC and is therefore younger than the above examples. It concerns locally manufactured pottery, on which the inscription has been applied after firing. However, because the text is only incompletely preserved on a fragment of the dish, its meaning remains uncertain[17]. All the same, it may be mentioned here that in the case of more fully preserved early texts on objects, they often contain the name of a deity, to whom the object – or its content – was devoted[18].

The characters on the cup from Lent have been more or less completely preserved. Yet, not only its meaning but also its geographical origin remains shrouded in mystery. The writing direction (left/right) is unclear, as is the orientation (bottom/top). It can be stated, however, that sign 2/7 occurs in various forms of a script (e. g. Greek, Etruscan, Iberian). The fact that there are more similarities with (North-) Iberian writing (**fig. 8**, esp. *te*/*de* and *ce*) than with North-Italic and Greek alphabets may still be accidental, as the sign forms are simple. Iberian inscriptions are attested from the late 5th century BC onwards[19], which falls outside the time

Fig. 8 Northern Iberian characters and their pronunciation. – (After www.omniglot.com/writing/iberian.htm [12.2.2018]).

frame of the Lent cup. An early form of the Iberian scripts is the script of the so-called Southwestern or Tartessian inscriptions, which is dated to the mid-7th century BC[20] and therefore comes closer to the time span of the characters on the cup from Lent[21]. The Southwestern script is not attested outside the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula, however. Phoenician traders may have been active in Northwest Europe during the early 1st millennium BC and brought along the Phoenician alphabet[22], but the Lent signary does not resemble known forms of the Phoenician alphabet, and there is no evidence for the early presence of Phoenician script north of southern Spain.

Hence, it is altogether impossible to come to grips with the script – let alone the meaning of the text. Since it is so isolated, one may wonder whether it is a script at all rather than a more or less idiosyncratic signary, which may have had symbolic rather than linguistic meaning[23].

The outcome that someone used a script or a script-like signary more than 2500 years ago in an environment where written language would remain unknown for centuries is sufficiently intriguing to speculate about the required knowledge and the reasons it has been applied to a simple cup in Lent.

SOUTHERN CONTACTS

The village of Lent was already known for the discovery of three cemeteries from the period 700/650-400/375 BC, which not only contained graves with cremated remains but also a few dozen inhumation graves. Some other cemeteries containing both cremation and inhumation graves have been found in the near vicinity[24]. This clustering is unusual for the period in which cremation was the norm throughout Northwest Europe. Meanwhile, the analysis of strontium isotopes from bone material has made it clear that several individuals originated from outside the river area of the Central Netherlands, the Rhine/Meuse delta, which also includes Lent. This applies to at least five people from the cemeteries in Lent[25]. However, the isotope analysis does not make clear what the homeland of these people was. Previously, it had already been suggested based on bronze head ornaments found with two skeletons that those individuals were immigrants from the Middle Rhine region[26]. A link with southern European script does, therefore, not come within reach.

The fluviatile area in the Central Netherlands does, however, offer wider views to the south. For decades, the idea has been that some special grave goods in cremation graves from the Early Iron Age reflect direct contacts with the Central European elite. This is because in the intermediate area no finds of the same quality are known. The most impressive example of this is the four-wheeled ceremonial wagon from Wijchen (prov. Gelderland/NL), only 15 km southwest of Lent. At the same time, it reflects the southernmost influences, as its linchpins are decorated with human heads probably in Middle-Italian, Etruscan style[27]. The contacts with southern elites seem to be limited to the Hallstatt C period, broadly dated between 800 and 620 BC, covering the period of the cup from Lent. However, as said, the signs do not suggest an Etruscan or Greek connection[28]. Nevertheless, the latter area may figure here, thanks to the insight that Herodotus gives in the long-distance relations within Europe about 450-420 BC. In his »Histories« (Book IV, 33) he mentions the Hyperboreans, people who live on the northern edge of Europe. They made sure that (indefinite) offerings, wrapped in wheat straw, went to the sanctuary at the Greek island of Delos, where Apollo and Artemis were worshipped. Initially, two young women, who were escorted by five men for their safety, transported the offerings. However, because they did not return, subsequently an indirect transfer of the offerings was chosen. Apart from such envoys/pilgrims, we can also think of merchants, warriors, and even slaves, as people who traveled great distances within Europe[29].

CONCLUSION

The foregoing makes it clear that we should not be surprised if inhabitants of the Lower Rhine area sometimes traveled hundreds of kilometers. At the same time, we can exclude that the cup was a souvenir from more southern regions, even though miniature pottery – without text – was produced by the thousands there, e. g. for pilgrims visiting Greek sanctuaries[30]. After all, in the case of Lent we are dealing with pottery of regional manufacture, as both its appearance and the chemical composition tell us. That means that there are few opportunities left to give a satisfactory explanation here. Was it made by an inhabitant of this region who had come into contact with written text in more southern regions? Or was it a stranger who had settled in Lent coming from southern lands, but who did not have full knowledge of the script used there? In both cases, that person could impress his or her fellows with an unusual skill, and they might be fascinated by magical-looking signs. We certainly cannot assume the latter. Because to what extent did these people have a background in which abstract signs also had a real meaning?
Until the moment that, at least six centuries later, the Romans appeared in these regions and Batavian soldiers had come to learn writing as well, the Lower Rhine area appears to have remained unfamiliar with this skill. Thus, the discovery of the Early Iron Age cup with pseudo-characters from Lent remains covered with a shroud of mystery, but hopefully wider knowledge of its existence may contribute to its disclosure in the near future.

Acknowledgement

During research on the subject, we received help from various sides. We thank Lauran Toorians for his assistance on the linguistic level and for the supply of literature. For the latter, we are also indebted to Erik Drenth. – The expertise of Ronny Meijers (Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen) was very helpful in the assessment of the authenticity of the cup and the inscriptions. – The English text was kindly revised by Eugene Ball.

Notes

1) Hendriks/de Roode 2012.

2) Joosten in prep.

3) Samples M4 and M5 afterward appeared to originate from the same pot.

4) van Os 2014.

5) These dates from the newest Groningen Accelerator Mass Spectrometer (GrM-14123 and 14122 resp.) were calibrated using OxCal 4.3 (Bronk Ramsey 2017) and IntCal 13 (95.4 % probability).

6) van den Broeke 2012.

7) It was accompanied by a ^{14}C date of 2372 ± 15 BP (GrM-14583), calibrated 488-396 cal BC, based on apatite from a (partly) burned animal bone fragment. The partial burning of the bone may have resulted in a younger date than expected (pers. comm. S. Palstra, Centrum voor Isotopen Onderzoek, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen). Two more ^{14}C dates, produced from bone collagen from other features on the site, supposed to hold intermediate chronological positions between the two aforementioned features, read 2531 ± 15 BP (GrM-14124) and 2521 ± 15 BP (GrM-14125).

8) van den Broeke in prep.

9) e. g. van den Broeke 2005, 660 fig. 29, 2.

10) van den Broeke 2009.

11) e. g. Barfoed 2016; Gimatzidis 2011; Kleibrink 1997/1998; Reim 2012, 169-175.

12) See esp. Gomez de Soto 2003.

13) See esp. Egetmeyer 2015.

14) Joffroy 1954, 15-18.

15) Stjernquist 1965, pl. XV.

16) Egetmeyer 2015. – Lorrio/Ruiz Zapatero 2005.

17) Egetmeyer 2015, 147-153; Olivier/Markey 2010. – See Bagley et al. 2010, 82 fig. 12 for possibly older characters, on southern German pottery, but without the certainty that it concerns script.

18) e. g. Amagro-Gorbea 2004; Egetmeyer 2015.

19) Valério 2008, 108; Ferrer/Moncunill/Velaza 2015, 14. – See esp. Untermann 1990 for Iberian sign variants.

20) Correa/Zamorra 2008.

21) The origin of the script may well have been substantially earlier than the earliest preserved inscriptions; see e. g. Untermann 1975, 69-77.

22) It is unclear when the Phoenician activity along the Atlantic coast began, but the *terminus post quem* must be the Phoenician presence in southwestern Spain by the 9th century BC (Valério 2008, 117).

23) As was also proposed by Lauran Toorians (Loon op Zand).

24) van den Broeke 2014.

25) Kootker et al. 2018, fig. 2 tab. 1.

26) e. g. van den Broeke/Hessing 2005. – The supposed woman who wore such rings on both sides of the skull did not appear to have a deviating ^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr ratio (Kootker et al. 2018, fig. 2 tab. 1, grave 8.2). An origin from elsewhere can, however, not be excluded on this ground. It is also possible that she was born in the river area, as a descendant of an immigrant.

27) Recently van der Vaart-Verschoof 2017, 33-34. 63-66.

28) In the material culture of Early Iron Age Northwest Europe neither relations with the Iberian Peninsula can be recognized, nor with Greece. It may, however, be noticed that glass beads with a supposed eastern Mediterranean origin were deposited in a cremation grave, dating from c. 800 BC, near Zutphen (prov. Gelderland/NL), some 50 km northeast of Lent (Huisman et al. 2017).

29) e. g. Renfrew 1993.

30) Gimatzidis 2011.

References

Amagro-Gorbea 2004: M. Amagro-Gorbea, NIETHOS-Néit: The earliest documented Celtic God (c. 575 BC) and the Atlantic relationships between Iberia and Ireland. In: H. Roche / E. Grogan / J. Bradley / J. Coles / B. Raftery (eds), From Megaliths to Metals. Essays in Honour of George Eogan (Oxford 2004) 200-208.

Bagley et al. 2010: J. M. Bagley / Ch. Eggl / D. Neumann / R. Schumann, Die späthallstatt-/frühlatènezeitliche Siedlung an der Haffstraße in München-Trudering. Bericht der Bayerischen Bodendenkmalpflege 51, 2010, 67-125.

Barfoed 2016: S. Barfoed, Cult in context. The ritual significance of miniature pottery in ancient Greek sanctuaries from the Archaic to the Hellenistic Period [PhD thesis Univ. Kent] (Canterbury 2016). http://kar.kent.ac.uk/54772/ (5. 9. 2019).

van den Broeke 2005: P. W. van den Broeke, Gifts to the gods. Rites and cult sites in the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. In: L. P. Louwe Kooijmans / P. W. van den Broeke / H. Fokkens / A. L. van Gijn (eds), The prehistory of the Netherlands (Amsterdam 2005) 659-677.

2009: P. W. van den Broeke, Handgevormd aardewerk en keramische objecten uit de ijzertijd en de Romeinse tijd. In: K. Zee, Archeologisch onderzoek aan de Waterstraat in Beek – gem. Ubbergen. Archeologische Berichten Ubbergen 3 (Nijmegen 2009) 23-26.

2012: P. W. van den Broeke, Het handgevormde aardewerk uit de ijzertijd en de Romeinse tijd van Oss-Ussen. Studies naar typochronologie, technologie en herkomst (Leiden 2012). https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/20033 (5. 9. 2019).

2014: P. W. van den Broeke, Inhumation burials: new elements in Iron Age funerary ritual in the southern Netherlands. In: A. Cahen-Delhaye / G. De Mulder (eds), Des espaces aux esprits. L'organisation de la mort aux âges des Métaux dans le nord-ouest de l'Europe. Études et Documents, Archéologie 32 (Namur 2014) 161-183.

in prep.: P. W. van den Broeke, Handgevormd aardewerk uit de late prehistorie. In: J. Hendriks / P. W. van den Broeke (eds), Sporen uit de vroege ijzertijd en een stelling uit Operatie Market Garden in het Lentseveld. Archeologisch onderzoek in het plangebied Lent-Laauwik, Nijmegen-Noord (project Nla14/20). Archeologische Berichten Nijmegen – Rapport 72 (Nijmegen in prep.).

van den Broeke/Hessing 2005: P. W. van den Broeke / W. Hessing, An alternative to the pyre. Iron Age inhumation burials. In: L. P. Louwe Kooijmans / P. W. van den Broeke / H. Fokkens / A. L. van Gijn (eds), The prehistory of the Netherlands (Amsterdam 2005) 655-658.

Bronk Ramsey 2017: Ch. Bronk Ramsey, Methods for summarizing radiocarbon datasets. Radiocarbon 59, 2017, 1809-1833.

Correa/Zamorra 2008: J. A. Correa / J. Á. Zamorra, Un graffito tartesio hallado en el yacimiento del Castillo de Doña Blanca. Palaeohispanica 8, 2008, 179-196.

Egetmeyer 2015: M. Egetmeyer, Zwei »neue« Inschriften aus Frankreich im Kontext der Ausbreitung norditalischer Alphabete. In: J. O. Askedal / H. F. Nielsen (eds), Early Germanic Languages in Contact. North-Western European Language Evolution Supplement 27 (Amsterdam, Philadelphia 2015) 137-162.

Ferrer/Moncunill/Velaza 2015: J. Ferrer / N. Moncunill / J. Velaza, Towards a systematisation of palaeohispanic scripts in UNICODE: synthesising multiple transcription hypotheses into two consensus encodings. Palaeohispanica 15, 2015, 13-55.

Gimatzidis 2011: S. Gimatzidis, Feasting and offering to the gods in early Greek sanctuaries: Monumentalisation and miniaturisation in pottery. Pallas 86, 2011, 75-96.

Gomez de Soto 2003: J. Gomez de Soto, Oiseaux, chevaux, hommes et autres images. Les »signes« sur céramique en Gaule, du Ha A2/B1 au Ha D. Genèse, apogée, décadence et postérité. In: Décors, images et signes de l'âge du Fer européen. Actes du XXVI^{e} colloque de l'Association Française pour l'Étude de l'Âge du Fer, Paris et Saint-Denis, 9-12 mai 2002. Supplément à la Revue Archéologique du Centre de la France 24 (Tours 2003) 11-25.

Hendriks/de Roode 2012: J. Hendriks / F. de Roode, Het vroeg-Merovingische grafveld van Lentseveld. Archeobrief 16/1, 2012, 20-26.

Huisman et al. 2017: D. J. Huisman / J. van der Laan / G. R. Davies / B. J. H. van Os / N. Roymans / B. Fermin / M. Karwowski, Purple haze: Combined geochemical and Pb-Sr isotope constraints on colourants in Celtic glass. Journal of Archaeological Science 81, 2017, 59-78.

Joffroy 1954: R. Joffroy, La tombe de Vix (Côte-d'Or). Monuments et Mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot 48/1, 1954, 1-68.

Joosten in prep.: I. Joosten, Technisch onderzoek naar de authenticiteit van inscripties in een ijzertijdpotje. In: J. Hendriks / P. W. van den Broeke (eds), Sporen uit de vroege ijzertijd en een stelling uit Operatie Market Garden in het Lentseveld. Archeologisch onderzoek in het plangebied Lent-Laauwik, Nijmegen-Noord (project Nla14/20). Archeologische Berichten Nijmegen – Rapport 72 (Nijmegen in prep.).

Kleibrink 1997/1998: M. Kleibrink, The miniature votive pottery dedicated at the »Laghetto del Monsignore«, Campoverde. Palaeohistoria 39/40, 1997/1998, 441-512.

Kootker et al. 2018: L. M. Kootker / C. Geerdink / P. W. van den Broeke / H. Kars / G. R. Davies, Breaking traditions: an isotopic study on the changing funerary practices in the Dutch Iron Age (800-12 BC). Archaeometry 60, 2018, 594-611. DOI: 10.1111/arcm.12333.

Lorrio/Ruiz Zapatero 2005: A. J. Lorrio / G. Ruiz Zapatero, The Celts in Iberia: an overview. e-Keltoi 6, 2005, 167-254.

Olivier/Markey 2010: L. Olivier / Th. Markey, Un graffite en caractères lépontiques du V^{e} siècle av. J.-C. provenant de la nécropole gauloise de Montagnesson à Bergères-les-Vertus (Marne). Antiquités Nationales 41, 2010, 37-50.

van Os 2014: B. van Os, Röntgenfluorescentie-analyse (XRF). In: H. van Enckevort (ed.), Odyssee op het Kops Plateau 2. Aardewerk en fibulae uit Nijmegen-Oost. Archeologische Berichten Nijmegen – Rapport 47 (Nijmegen 2014) 62-68.

Reim 2012: H. Reim, Felstürme, Höhlen, heilige Zeichen. Zur Sichtbarkeit des Religiösen in der frühkeltischen Eisenzeit Südwestdeutschlands. In: A. Bräuning / W. Löhlein / S. Plouin (eds), Die frühe Eisenzeit zwischen Schwarzwald und Vogesen / Le Premier Âge du Fer entre la Forêt-Noire et les Vosges. Archäologische Informationen aus Baden-Württemberg 66 (Stuttgart 2012) 146-179.

Renfrew 1993: C. Renfrew, Trade beyond the material. In: Ch. Scarre / F. Healy (eds), Trade and exchange in prehistoric Europe. Proceedings of a conference held at the University of Bristol, April 1992. Oxbow Monograph 33 (Oxford 1993) 5-16.

Stjernquist 1965: B. Stjernquist, Die Bronzeciste von Pansdorf, Kreis Eutin. Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde 45, 1965, 117-126.

Untermann 1975: J. Untermann, Monumenta linguarum Hispanicarum. I: Die Münzlegenden; 1: Text (Wiesbaden 1975).

1990: J. Untermann, Monumenta linguarum Hispanicarum. III: Die Iberischen Inschriften aus Spanien; 2: Die Inschriften (Wiesbaden 1990).

van der Vaart-Verschoof 2017: S. van der Vaart-Verschoof, Fragmenting the Chieftain. A practice-based study of Early Iron Age Hallstatt C elite burials in the Low Countries. Papers on Archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities 15 A (Leiden 2017).

Valério 2008: M. Valério, Origin and development of the Paleohispanic scripts: the orthography and phonology of the Southwestern alphabet. Revista Portuguesa de Arqueologia 11/2, 2008, 107-138.

Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Ein früheisenzeitlicher Miniaturbecher mit schriftartigen Zeichen aus Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL)
Ein sorgfältig gefertigter Miniaturbecher aus einer Abfallgrube in Nijmegen-Lent ist wegen der umlaufenden zeichenartigen Gravierungen ein besonderer Fund. Trotz der Tatsache, dass in Ha C weitreichende südliche Kontakte zum Niederrhein bestanden (Oss, Wijchen), und obwohl einige der Zeichen mit denen der frühen südeuropäischen Schriften übereinstimmen, erschwert die frühe Datierung des Bechers (ca. 750-675 v. Chr.) eine genauere Bestimmung. Der rätselhafte Charakter des Bechers wird überdies durch seine anscheinend lokale Herkunft verstärkt.

An Early Iron Age Miniature Cup with Script-like Signs from Nijmegen-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL)
A thoroughly finished miniature cup, found in a waste pit at Nijmegen-Lent, is a special find because of the character-like signs all around it. Despite the fact that far-reaching southern contacts with the Lower Rhine area existed in the Hallstatt C period (Oss, Wijchen), and although some of the signs match those in early southern European scripts, the early date of the cup (c. 750-675 BC) hampers any sound identification. The enigmatic character of the cup is augmented further by its apparent local origin.

Un gobelet miniature du Premier âge du Fer avec des signes ressemblant à de l'écriture en provenance de Nimègue-Lent (prov. Gelderland/NL)
Un gobelet miniature soigneusement réalisé a été trouvé dans une fosse à déchets à Nijmègue-Lent. Cette découverte est spéciale en raison des symboles que présente le gobelet sur son pourtour, signes ressemblant à l'écriture. Bien que des contacts de longue distance aient eu lieu entre le Sud et le Rhin inférieur pendant le Hallstatt C (Oss, Wijchen), et bien que certains signes correspondent à ceux des premières écritures du Sud de l'Europe, la datation du gobelet (environ 750-675 av. J.-C.) limite une identification précise. Le caractère énigmatique du gobelet est également augmenté par son origine qui paraît clairement locale.

Schlüsselwörter / Keywords / Mots clés

Niederlande / Niederrhein / frühe Eisenzeit / Keramik / Zeichen / Schrift
Netherlands / Lower Rhine / Early Iron Age / pottery / signs / script
Pays-Bas / Bas-Rhin / Premier âge du Fer / céramique / signes / écriture

Peter van den Broeke
Gemeente Nijmegen
Bureau Leefomgevingskwaliteit/Archeologie
Postbus 9105
NL - 6500 HG Nijmegen
p.van.den.broeke@nijmegen.nl

Peter Schrijver
Universiteit Utrecht
Departement Talen, Literatuur en Communicatie
Trans 10
NL - 3512 JK Utrecht
p.c.h.schrijver@uu.nl

Ineke Joosten
Bertil van Os
Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed
Smallepad 5
NL - 3811 MG Amersfoort
i.joosten@cultureelerfgoed.nl
b.van.os@cultureelerfgoed.nl