

## Bronocice pot: 'Bags of food in the cart'

The Archaeological Museum of Krakow exhibits a famous ceramic vessel called Bronocice pot.<sup>1</sup> Inscribed around the outside of Bronocice pot is a complicated design that includes images of a cart. Dated by radiocarbon to  $3500 \pm 135$  BC, this pot carries the oldest known image of a wheeled vehicle.<sup>2</sup> Found with the pot were the bones of an auroch that drew the cart, with horns worn from a rope tied to a yoke.

The cart is part of a rebus composed of letters from Old European, arranged to look like a cart traveling along a road beside a river flowing through a pine forest. Two rounds of a song comprise the rebus, sung in two parts, cart and driver, whose words lie above the water. In this song, the cart proposes something, the driver answers back. The scribe uses the word 'sled' to mean 'cart', a general term for a conveyance pulled by an animal. Four phrases repeat a syllable three times, a difficult feat of composition.

Figure 1 Bronocice pot photograph and reconstructed cart.<sup>3</sup>

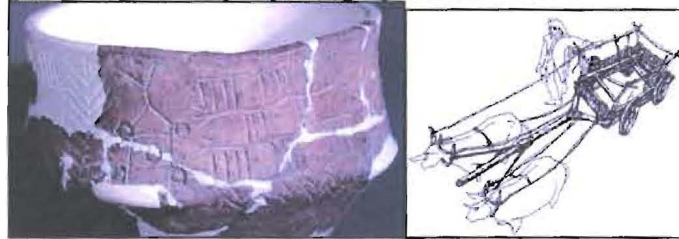
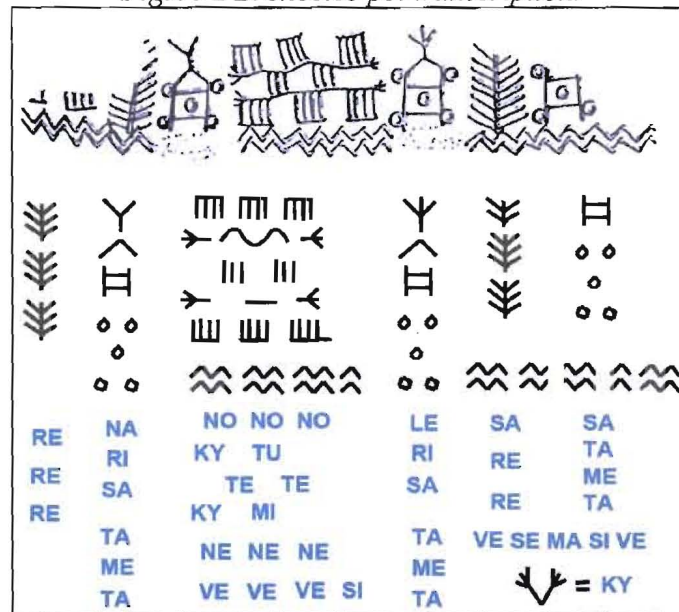


Figure 2 Bronocice pot transcription.



<sup>1</sup> The pot was discovered in 1976 during the archaeological excavation of a large Neolithic settlement in Bronocice by the Nidzica River, 50 km northeast of Kraków, between 1974 and 1980 by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and the State University of New York at Buffalo. Wikipedia

<sup>2</sup> But not the oldest reference to a wheeled vehicle. Freyja drove a cart drawn by two lions circa 5500 BC.

<sup>3</sup> The photograph and drawing are from Museum Archeologiczne Krakowie.

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**Old European**

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RE-KI RE RE RE,  
NA RI SA,  
TA ME TA.

A NO NO NO,  
KY TU TE.  
TE KY MI  
NE NE NE.  
VE VE VE-SI.

RE-KI LE RI SA,  
TA ME TA

A SA, RE, RE  
SA TA ME-TA  
VE SE MA SI-VE.

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**Finnish**

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Reki Re'ut rehun re'en,  
nauhat riia'a sain,  
taian me'en tah'oo.

Ajaja Noua noien noat,  
kyyin tuohon tein.  
Tee kyyin miehuuen  
neien ne neiot.  
Veä velhot vesien.

Reki Lehon riia'a saa'an,  
taian meiän ta'han

Ajaja Saa'aa, Re'en, rehun,  
sa'an taiat meentar.  
Veä sen maahan siveä.

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**English**

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Cart Bags of food in the cart,  
ribbons to woo I've got,  
wizard's mead she wants.

Driver Heed those wizards,  
conveyance that I made.  
Make the conveyance manly,  
for the maiden of those maidens.  
Carry magicians over the water.

Cart Into the grove to woo I drive,  
wizard of our enclosure.

Driver Escort, Cart, the food,  
a hundred wizards of mead spirit.  
Haul these on virtuous ground.

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### Notes on translation

#### **Cart** =====

RE < *re'ut* 'bags'

RE < *rehun* 'of food'

RE < *re'en* 'in the sled, cart'

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NA < *nauhat* 'ribbons'

RI < *riia'a* 'to woo', fr. *riiata*

SA < *sain* 'I have got'

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TA < *taian* 'wizard's'

ME < *me'en* 'mead'

TA < *tah'oo* 'she wants'; fr. *tahtoo*

#### **Driver** =====

NO < *noua* 'heed'

NO < *noien* 'those'

NO < *noiat* 'wizards'

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KY < *kyyin* 'conveyance'

TU < *tuohon* 'that'

TE < *tein* 'I made'

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TE < *tee* 'make'

KY < *kyyin* 'the conveyance'

MI < *miehuuen* 'manly'

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NE < *neien* 'for the maiden'

NE < *ne* 'those'

NE < *neiot* 'of maidens'

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VE < *veä* 'carry'

VE < *velhot* 'wizards'

VE-SI < *vesien* 'over the water'

#### **Cart** =====

LE < *lehon* 'into the grove', fr. *lehdon*

RI < *riia'a* 'to woo', fr. *riiata*

SA < *saa'an* 'I drive', fr. *saatan*

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TA < *taian* 'the wizard'

ME < *meiän* 'of our'

TA < *ta'han* 'enclosure'

#### **Driver** =====

SA < *saa'aa* 'escort'

RE < *re'en* 'sled, cart'

RE < *rehun* 'the food'

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SA < *sa'an* 'a hundred'

TA < *taiat* 'wizards'

ME-TA < *me'entar* 'of mead spirit'

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VE < *veä* 'haul'

SE < *sen* 'these'

MA < *maahan* 'on the ground'

SI-VE < *siveä* 'virtuous'

For questions on this or Old European, email Stuart Harris, [stuhar@onlymyemail.com](mailto:stuhar@onlymyemail.com), or visit the website [www.migration-diffusion.info](http://www.migration-diffusion.info) for a syllabary of Old European and rules of how to read a text. June 2013, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim