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## NOVOKORSUNSKAYA 2/18, A GRAVE WITH A WAGON: WORK ON MISTAKES

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Elena Izbitser

*Keywords:* Early Bronze Age, Maikop culture, Novosvobodnaya culture, kurgan graves, Krasnodar kray, wooden wagons.

A grave of the Novosvobodnaya culture (or the Novosvobodnaya stage of the Maikop culture) with remains of a wooden wagon came to the attention of Western European scholars after its English-language publication in 2002 (Rasamakin 2002, 53) and, especially, in German (Trifonov 2004; Gej 2004). However, practically all work on various aspects of early wheels and wheeled transport that mentioned the grave repeated its erroneous location that was given in first Russian publication of the grave. More serious mistakes related to it were made for a number of reasons and, primarily, due to a lack (by some scholars) of professional knowledge of the subject, archaeological context, and even geography. These issues are briefly outlined below.

In 1985, an expedition of the Krasnodar Regional Museum led by B.A. Tarabanov (Expedition Director) and A.V. Kondrashev (Expedition Leader) excavated two kurgans in the village of Novokorsunskaya located in the Timashevsk district of the Krasnodar kray (fig. 1). According to the field report, the kurgans were located on the right shore of the Levyi Beisuzhek River at the northwestern outskirts of the village, at the crossroad of Chkalova and Urozhainaya streets; distance between the tips of two mounds were 102 m (Тарабанов, Кондрашев 1986). Both kurgans contained burials accompanied by wooden wagons: three of them were discovered in kurgan 1, and four – in kurgan 2, all made in the Early Bronze Age but from various periods. From a chronological point of view the most interesting turned out to be grave 18 in kurgan 2 (fig. 2), with grave goods typical for the Novosvobodnaya stage of the Maikop culture. The first time it was published in 1988 (Кондрашов, Резепкин 1988); however, the name of the place was erroneously



Fig. 1. Location of kurgans excavated in Novokorsunskaya in 1985.

printed as Starokorsunskaya, Dinskoi district of the Krasnodar kray. As such, the grave has been subsequently mentioned numerous times in works on various aspects of early wheels and wheeled transport.

The correct name of the grave was used by A. Gej in his article about the Novotitarovskaya culture, though referencing its first publication in 1988 he did not mention the error (Gej 2004, 186). Now, with the grave properly named, a mistake was made in the description of the wagon's remains. As a result of an incorrect translation of Gej's article from Russian into German, the number of wheels unearthed during the excavations was reduced from two to one: "Ein Scheibenrad stammt aus Novokorsunskaja 85, Kurgan 2, Grab 18 in Kubangebiet (Kondrasov u. Rezepkin 1988)" (Gej 2004, 186). And this led some scholars to believe that there were two different graves. The table "The appearance of wheeled vehicles: a review of the evidence" lists them as follows: "Starokorsunskaya, Mound 2, Grave 18, Russia, Wooden wheels, Majkop culture" – under no. 19 and "Novokorsunskaya 85, Mound 2, Grave 18, Ukraine, Wooden wheel, Majkop culture" under no. 23 (fig. 3) (Mischka 2011). To add to the confusion, the location of the excavated grave was moved by

the author of the table from Russia to Ukraine. For a similarly unknown reason, the locations of the settlements given by the author under no. 22 is also indicated as Ukraine, while the first two (spelled incorrectly) are located in the autonomous republic of Adygea, Russia, and Konstantinovskoe – in the Lower Don region, also Russia. And the fact that the Maikop culture does not spread to the territory of Ukraine is not known to the author.

Interest for a whole range of issues regarding the prehistoric wheel and wheel transport has inspired many studies. But an approach to include in tables, diagrams, and graphics as much data as possible, without familiarizing themselves with materials and an understanding of the subject, leads to an inaccurate presentation of the data and creates mistakes.

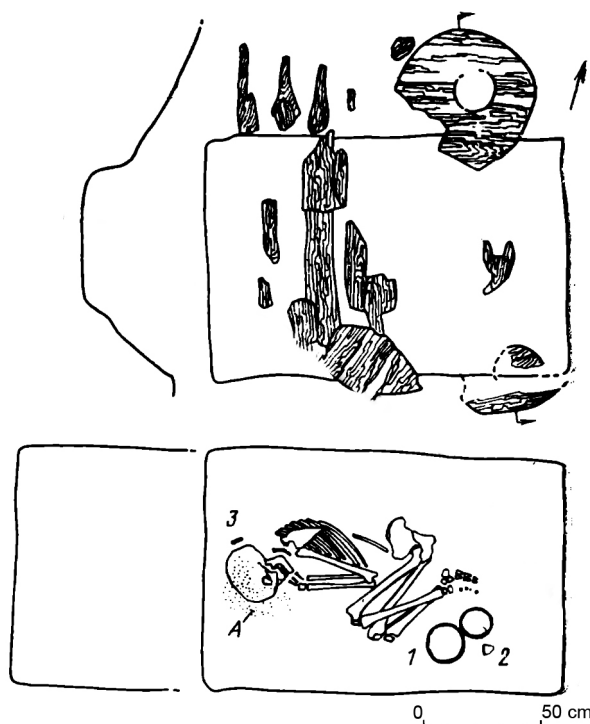


Fig. 2. Novokorsunskaya 2/18: A - ochre, 1, 2 - vessels, 3 - charcoals (after Кондрашов, Резепкин 1988).

Category B2: definite vehicles, no scientific dates						
19	Starokorsunskaya Mound 2, Grave 18 Russia Wooden wheels Maikop culture			>3370 BC		Maran 2004b: 436–8; Trivonof 2004: 169–72
20	Koldyri Mound 14, Grave 7 Russia Wooden wheels Maikop culture			>3370 BC		Maran 2004b: 436–8; Trivonof 2004: 169–72
21	Mari, Tell Hariri Mesopotamia Bitumen imprint of 2 wheels			>2850 BC		Butterlin & Magueron 2006: 319
5						
22	Čŕcho, Rsekujchabl' Konstantinovskoe Ukraine Clay models from settlement layers Maikop culture			>3370 BC		Trivonof 2004: 169–72
23	Novokorsunskaja 85, Mound 2, Grave 18 Ukraine Wooden wheel Maikop culture			>3370 BC		Gej 2004: 186

Fig. 3. Table “The appearance of wheeled vehicles: a review of the evidence”, a fragment (after Mischka 2011).

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### Mormântul cu car Novokorsunskaya 2/18: corectarea unor erori

*Cuvinte-cheie:* epoca bronzului timpuriu, cultura Maikop, cultura Novosvobodnaya, morminte tumulare, regiunea Krasnodar, care de lemn.

*Rezumat:* Mormântul cu car de lemn, atribuit culturii Novosvobodnaya (sau etapa Novosvobodnaya a culturii Maikop), a fost descoperit de către expediția Muzeului regional Krasnodar în localitatea Novokorsunskaya, în anul 1985. În prima publicație locul descoperirii a fost indicat greșit, Starokorsunskaya. Ulterior, aceasta a indus în eroare pe unii cercetători, care au considerat că ar fi existat două înmormântări cu denumiri diferite.

*Lista ilustrațiilor:*

Fig. 1. Locul amplasării tumulilor, descoperiți în anul 1985 în localitatea Novokorsunskaya.

Fig. 2. Mormântul Novokorsunskaya 2/18: A - осру; 1, 2 - vase ceramice; 3 - cărbuni de lemn (după Кондрашов, Резепкин 1988).

Fig. 3. Fragment din tabelul „The appearance of wheeled vehicles: a review of the evidence” (după Mischka 2011).

### Погребение с повозкой Новокорсунская 2/18: работа над ошибками

*Ключевые слова:* эпоха ранней бронзы, майкопская культура, новосвободненская культура, подкурганное погребение, Краснодарский край, деревянные повозки.

*Резюме:* Погребение новосвободненской культуры (или новосвободненского этапа майкопской культуры), сопровождавшееся деревянной повозкой, было открыто в одном из курганов, раскопанных в 1985 г. в станице Новокорсунской экспедицией Краснодарского краеведческого музея. При первичной публикации была допущена ошибка, и название станицы обозначено как Старокорсунская. В дальнейшем, другие неточности при публикации погребения привели некоторых исследователей к выводу о существовании двух погребений с разными названиями и на разных территориях.

*Список иллюстраций:*

Рис. 1. Месторасположение курганов, открытых в 1985 г. в станице Новокорсунской.

Рис. 2. Погребение Новокорсунская 2/18: А - охра; 1, 2 - глиняные сосуды; 3 - угли (по Кондрашов, Резепкин 1988).

Рис. 3. Фрагмент таблицы «The appearance of wheeled vehicles: a review of the evidence» (по Mischka 2011).

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Dr. Elena Izbitser, New-York, USA, e-mail: eizbitser@gmail.com

