

# A General Overview of the Oxus Civilization Graveyard of Adji Kui in Margiana (South Turkmenistan)

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Questo testo si propone di fornire una prima e preliminare descrizione della necropoli dell'età del Bronzo medio e tardo di Adji Kui, in Margiana (Turkmenistan meridionale). Questo sepolcreto si compone di oltre 800 tombe scavate sia all'interno delle strutture residenziali che componevano i villaggi fortificati di Adji Kui 1 e 9, sia nel terreno posto tra le due fortezze. La maggior parte delle sepolture è rappresentata da fosse terragne e tombe a pseudo-catacomba, ma sono presenti anche mausolei e tombe a cista. Purtroppo numerose sono le tombe saccheggiate così come parecchie quelle distrutte, interamente o parzialmente, dai lavori agricoli avvenuti alcuni decenni fa. Lo scavo ha tuttavia portato in luce anche un ampio numero di tombe intatte e senza segni di effrazione e saccheggio che hanno restituito corredi funerari composti da vasi ceramici, manufatti in rame/bronzo e in metalli preziosi, utensili e strumenti in pietra e oggetti tipici della Civiltà dell'Oxus (nota anche come BMAC – Complesso Archeologico della Battriana e Margiana). Vi erano infatti colonnette in pietra, scettri o bastoni di comando in clorite e lingotti in piombo. L'analisi condotta in questo lavoro permette di datare l'intero contesto archeologico alla fase finale dell'età del Bronzo medio e all'intera età del Bronzo tardo, ovvero agli ultimi secoli del III millennio a.C.

The Adji Kui aggregation of sites consists of nine settlements located in the lower reaches of the Murghab River, about 66 km North of the modern city of Mary and 13.7 km North-West of Gonur-depe, the most important site in Bronze Age Margiana. All nine sites of the Adji Kui cluster, which belong to different chronological phases of the Bronze Age sequence in Margiana, were discovered by I.S. Masimov in 1975-1976. He produced the topographic plans of the ancient villages, as well as carried out a test trench to study the anthropic deposit of the Adji Kui 3 settlement. Moreover, Masimov excavated a ceramic, two-layered furnace in Adji Kui 4 and discovered a grave containing an individual burial<sup>1</sup> at the North edge of Adji Kui 1 (Masimov 1979: 114-117). Then, the archaeological complex was further investigated by V.I. Sarianidi, who opened a large trench to explore Adji Kui 8, which may have served as the “palace of the ruler” of the large Adji Kui aggregation (Sarianidi 1990: 8-10). According to R. Muradov (2021: 152-153), it seemed a typical example of an Oxus Civilization fortified “square house.” Sarianidi also collected some surface material from Adji Kui 9 and dug there small-sized eight test trenches to analyze the anthropic layers (Sarianidi 1998a: 82, fig. 37).

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<sup>1</sup> The skeleton was in a very bad condition of preservation. It was found in flexed position, with the skull oriented towards North. The individual was accompanied by nine pots, of which four were complete: two small jars and two storage vessels. Moreover, there were a stone spindle whorl, several paste beads and a bronze bracelet, while a bronze ring was found near the temporal bone of the deceased.