



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Deaths in the Family: Cycles of Subsistence, Mortality, and Household Occupation at Chalcolithic Gird-i Surezha, Kurdistan

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## Abstract

Household sizes and shapes changed significantly between the Early (Ubaid) and Late Chalcolithic (LC) periods in Upper Mesopotamia, with a trend toward smaller buildings hinting at the dissolution of the extended-family home. This period (ca. 5500-3400 BCE) also saw the emergence of craft specialization, agropastoral intensification, and sociopolitical hierarchization, but without mortuary data, the human element is (literally) missing. Intramural burials, particularly of subadults, can help characterize and contextualize family life within the household, while pathological analyses of adult skeletal remains add key information to assessments of lifeways, health, and death in antiquity.

U. Chicago excavations at the 22 ha site of Gird-i Surezha have focussed on the architecture, burials, and subsistence practices of the Ubaid and LC periods on the 2.8 ha high mound. This paper draws on bioarchaeological, archaeobotanical, zooarchaeological, and spatio-functional analyses in order to understand household life cycles at Surezha. Numerous intramural subadult burials in the LC 2 levels intimate the biological and environmental challenges of building a family, while pathologies seen in the few adult skeletal remains discovered are consistent with heavy workloads. Overall, this paper considers how family life may have evolved during a period of sociopolitical complexification and economic intensification in Upper Mesopotamia.

## Keywords

Bioarchaeology, Agropastoralism, Household Archaeology, Upper Mesopotamia, Chalcolithic

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