

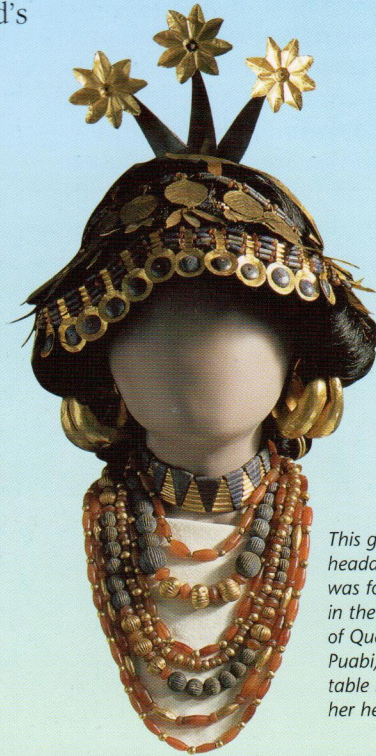
THE ROYAL TOMBS OF UR

Some of the most dazzling archaeological treasures ever discovered were found in the royal tombs of the Sumerian city of Ur. Excavations there, led by British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley, lasted twelve years between 1922 and 1934, and produced a detailed picture of life in one of the world's earliest civilizations.

FIT FOR KINGS

Woolley discovered a cemetery at Ur containing 1,840 graves. Seventeen of these were probably built for important officials or kings, as they were much larger and better constructed than the others.

Although most of the tombs had been robbed centuries ago, luckily two of them managed to survive intact. These tombs belonged to Kings Meskalamdug and Akalamdug of Ur and dated to around 2500BC.



This gold headdress was found in the tomb of Queen Puabi, on a table near her head.

ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN

The staggering wealth of the objects in the graves provided evidence of the incredible skill of the artists and craftspeople who worked in Sumerian cities. Judging from what was left in the graves, the royal palaces at Ur must have been decorated with beautiful furnishings and musical instruments.

LUXURY TRADE

Archaeologists found amazing necklaces, headdresses and rings of gold and semi-precious stones. The materials they used - lapis lazuli, carnelian and even gold - were not native to the region and must have been imported from as far away as Afghanistan and northern India. This gives some idea of the vast trading networks that must have existed.

A gold helmet from one of the tombs at Ur



Archaeologists constructed this amazing object (left) from hundreds of pieces of shell, red limestone and lapis lazuli found in the tomb. No one knows exactly what it was for.

