The Spinning of Ur

How Sir Leonard Woolley, James R. Ogden and the British Museum interpreted and represented the past to generate funding for the excavation of Ur in the 1920s and 1930s.

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

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## Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMME</td>
<td>British Museum Middle East Dept. (formerly Ancient Near East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMCA</td>
<td>British Museum Central Archives Dept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMCA SC</td>
<td>British Museum Central Archives, Standing Committee Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMRL</td>
<td>British Museum Research Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSAI</td>
<td>British School of Archaeology in Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>BISI</td>
<td>British Institute for the Study of Iraq (BSAI before 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA,BM</td>
<td>Egyptian Antiquities Dept. BM</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAA,BM</td>
<td>Egyptian and Assyrian Dept. BM</td>
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<tr>
<td>EES</td>
<td>Egypt Exploration Society</td>
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<td>PEF</td>
<td>Palestine Exploration Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>PENN</td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania, University Museum, Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILN</td>
<td>Illustrated London News</td>
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<td>OFA</td>
<td>Ogden family archive</td>
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Abstract

This thesis examines the representation in both the public and academic arenas of the archaeological excavation at Ur, southern Iraq, during the 1920’s and 30’s through a study of the main characters involved. Sir Leonard Woolley’s excavation is still fundamental to our knowledge of archaeology in that region. Current thought criticises his approach to and interpretation of his work, as having been “Bible driven” and of little scientific validity, but ignores the value of understanding the relationship between the excavator and the wider community from which his funding derived. Drawing on the Ogden archive, this study is our first opportunity to examine how knowledge about the Ur excavations was disseminated, how the archaeological past has been created and used, and how these interpretations presented entered the zeitgeist and still resonate today.

As a result of my initial research findings, I gained access to the family archives of the goldsmith James Ogden, a substantial but previously unresearched body of material that provides an almost complete photographic record of the inter-war archaeology in this region as well as a comprehensive record of press coverage and public reaction. It also contains many unpublished letters between those involved at the time, explaining their methods and motivations. This archive complements substantial quantities of unstudied material in other archives of museums and learned societies. Taken together, the archival material provides a fuller understanding of the motivations behind a highly choreographed publicity campaign that successfully enabled the excavation to continue when threatened by inter-war financial shortages. This research elicits an understanding of the social, cultural and economic factors that shaped archaeology in a society that was uneasily assimilating the impact of the new sciences on a still largely Bible reading public.

I analyse all the archives in the wider context of the role played by this campaign in shaping contemporary knowledge of the archaeology of Iraq, as well as reflecting inter-war British and Iraqi society. Archaeological activity was being conducted against the dramatically changing backdrop of the Near East after the First World War, the emergence of the nation states of the area, and a growing aggression and hostility to western occupation. The traditional imperialist view of the right to possession of the excavated antiquities was being challenged as the power structure in the region began to shift and new regional identities were forged.
DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Acknowledgements

This research project could not have been achieved without the archive left by James Ogden; my first thanks therefore must go to him.

Jack Ogden and Glen Ogden – thanks must particularly go to Ogden’s two great grandsons who represent both sides of Ogden; the scholar and the jeweller. Without their help and support this project would not have left the starting gate. I particularly appreciate their patience in allowing me to be “the mad woman in the attic” while I rummaged through their family history, and for answering endless questions about the enigmatic Mr O.

Bob Partridge (Chairman Manchester Ancient Egypt Society) for believing in this when others were convinced that Ogden was no-one of significance. Unfortunately Bob died in July 2011 and did not see the finished project, but without his initial encouragement this journey would not have begun.

Ina Berg and Stuart Campbell – my supervisors at Manchester University who kept me focused and dragged this thesis kicking and screaming into the world. The numerous discussions we had about my research have a value beyond measure.

Phil Freeman and Chantal Conneller – my examiners for their detailed, helpful comments that greatly improved the narrative.

Trustees of the British Museum- ME dept. particularly Sarah Collins, St John Simpson and Henrietta McCall; Central Archives – Gary Thorn; and Research Laboratory Archives – Stephen Gallagher.

Harrogate Museum and Arts - Alastair Smith for all the pep talks (and the suggestion that perhaps I should do this as an M.Phil. or PhD!).

Leeds University, Brotherton Library, Special Collections – Chris Sheppard.

Malcolm Neesam, Harrogate Historian and author, for all the biographical information of Ogden’s early years, and the history of the Ogden business.

BISI – for their assistance in giving me a grant to visit the museum at Philadelphia.
Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

Yorkshire Post (Archive Library).

Harrogate Reference Library.

TGH James for reading my early notes on Ogden. Also for his help in contacting Lord Carnarvon and Jonathan Carter and in sorting out the murky waters of copyright on private letters.

Lord Carnarvon for copyright permission.

Jonathan Carter – for his kindness in approving copyright permission for the previously unpublished Howard Carter letters.

Griffith Institute – J. Malek and D. Magee.

Egyptian Exploration Society – Chris Naunton and P. Spencer. Thanks to Chris for photocopying Ogden’s letters so that I did not have to travel down to London again.

Nicholas Reeves for helping me contact Jack Ogden.

Richard Zettler for being so enthusiastic about my work at a time when I would have preferred to give it all up.
Preface

In August 2002, as a lay member of the public, I visited an exhibition at the Harrogate Royal Pump Room Museum called “Land of the Pharaohs”. This exhibition was based on the private collections of two of Harrogate’s former well to do citizens – one of whom was James R. Ogden. The short biography stated that Ogden had a combined passion for jewellery and the history of languages, and that this had brought him to the attention of Howard Carter who had used Ogden’s expert knowledge to assist him with reports on the gold work at the tomb of Tutankhamun. This intriguing snippet of information appeared to be all that was known about Ogden, except that the jewellery dynasty he founded was still based in a shop in Harrogate. Thus began my introduction to academia and a long and complex journey through archaeology in inter-war Britain.

My first point of contact was with the Ogden family who helped me with some biographical information about James Ogden and were able to point me in the direction of some of Ogden’s collections of artefacts. The next part of the process was to spend many hours in the British Museum reading countless letters between Ogden and the various department keepers there. After two years of contacting many newspaper archives, museums and societies, I was able to write my first article on Ogden’s work with the British Museum and Howard Carter (Millerman, 2004a).

It was only at that stage that the Ogden family invited me to take a look in their attic where they thought there might be some items of interest although nobody seemed to be quite sure what was there. The archive had been neglected for decades, being far too big and heavy for anyone to move. Its size was also a daunting prospect for anyone wanting a casual look. However, my parents were unwell and I needed to spend a lot of time with them in Harrogate. It became apparent quite quickly that my starting point of an Egyptology connection was only the tip of the iceberg. Letters that made no sense on their own in the BM now matched letters in the attic. In 2008 I visited Philadelphia with a grant from BISI, and slowly, complete conversations evolved.

Ogden was the catalyst for this research. His letters, lecture notes and newspaper and journal cuttings gradually made me aware that the Ur excavation was not quite as it seemed. Fortunately for us today, Ogden left quite a paper trail. It has been a long and challenging journey following it.
The Spinning of Ur

How Sir Leonard Woolley, James R. Ogden and the British Museum interpreted and represented the past to generate funding for the excavation of Ur in the 1920s and 1930s.

~

“He said: ‘I hunt for objects made
   By men where’er they roam
   I photograph and catalogue
   And pack and send them home.
   These things we do not sell for gold
   (Nor yet indeed for copper!),
   But place them on museum shelves
   As only right and proper.’”

(Christie 1999: 10)
## The Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laypeople</th>
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<tr>
<td>James Roberts Ogden</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Archaeologists</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Leonard Woolley</td>
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<td>Max Mallowan</td>
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<td>Stephen Langdon</td>
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<td>R. Campbell-Thompson</td>
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<td>Howard Carter</td>
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<tr>
<th>The British Museum (Wilson, 2002)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frederic Kenyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.J. Plenderleith</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.R.H. Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.J. Gadd</td>
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<td>A.J.K. Esdaile</td>
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<th>The University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia</th>
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<tr>
<td>George Byron Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Legrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horace Jayne</td>
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</table>
The following served on the staff at Ur under the Directorship of Woolley (Mallowan 1960: 17). Note spellings may be variable with other sources.

Katharine Woolley 1925-34 Volunteer artist, married Woolley in 1926 and became a paid general assistant

Sidney Smith 1922-23 Epigraphist

A.W. Lawrence 1922-23 General assistant

F.G. Newton 1922-24 Architect

C.J. Gadd 1922-24 Epigraphist

G.M. Fitzgerald 1923-24 General assistant

L. Legrain 1924-26 Epigraphist

M.E.L. Mallowan 1925-31 General assistant

A.S. Whitburn 1925-27, 1929-30 Architect

E. Burrows 1926-30 Epigraphist

C.P. Winckworth 1930-31 Epigraphist

P. Railton 1930-31 General assistant

J.C. Rose 1930-32 Architect

R.P. Ross Williamson 1931-32 General assistant

F.L.W. Richardson 1931-32 Architect

Cyrus B. Gordon 1931-32 Epigraphist (part-time)

P.D. Murray Threipland 1932-33 General assistant

A.E.F. Gott 1932-34 Architect

Hamoudi ibn Sheik Ibrahim 1922-34 Foreman
Chapter One

Introduction

Between 1922 and 1934, Leonard Woolley led the ‘Joint Expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia’, to Ur in Southern Iraq. This was a highly successful venture that brought to the world’s attention treasures equal to those being found at the excavation of Tutankhamun’s tomb, running concurrently in Egypt. However, despite the wealth of these discoveries in intrinsic terms and the knowledge gained from them, the legacy of Woolley’s long and distinguished career is that he is remembered as the archaeologist who claimed to have uncovered ‘Ur of the Chaldees, the birthplace of Abraham’ and the site of the ‘Biblical Flood’ (Romer, 2000: 128).

This thesis, by researching and examining primary source evidence of the relationships between Woolley, his colleague the goldsmith and collector James R. Ogden, and the two participating museums, re-examines this important part of archaeological history. Ogden amassed a large archive concerning the Ur excavation which had so far remained unresearched. My access to these archives, as well as the archives in the two museums, enabled me to study the Ur campaign from the viewpoint of the participants, rather than from hindsight.

This thesis, by examining the archives, questions the traditionally held views of Woolley’s raison d’être, “that by going to Ur he would bring to life the Old Testament” (Mallowan, 2001: 34; Goode, 2007: 190; Bernhardsson, 2005: 132) and challenges the opinion that his work at Ur was defined by his biblical upbringing (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 8; Bernhardsson, 2005: 132). By studying the excavation from within its contemporary setting, I analyse the motivations for the interpretation and presentation of Ur that has been criticised as being biblically driven, prone to exaggerated claims and descriptions that could not be upheld, and consequently of little scientific validity (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 8).

This thesis will argue that these opinions ignore the value of understanding the relationship between the excavator and the wider community from which his funding derived; a relationship in which all sides had their own expectations and needs and in which the dynamics of the relationships were constantly changing. My study will also illustrate how knowledge is disseminated, how the archaeological past has been
created and used, and how the interpretations presented at the time entered the zeitgeist and still resonate today.

This thesis is not intended to be a biography of Woolley, nor an apologia on his behalf to his critics. It is instead an opportunity to examine whether the criticisms of Woolley, made repeatedly over the last few decades, are valid. The subject of this thesis therefore brings together the disciplines of archaeology and social history. It is not just about the Ur excavation and its presentation; it is about the social history of the Ur excavation. Understanding the behaviour of Woolley and his colleagues throughout the Ur excavation leads to a deeper understanding of the desires and fears of Britain in this period. This was a period that saw the end of British certainty in its own superiority and status in the world, the end of a political era in the Near East and the emergence of nationalism in the area. Britain was moving from a Bible-reading, powerful empire, sure of its traditionally held views, to a nation whose beliefs were being challenged from every quarter. As the ‘new sciences’ challenged the basis of long held biblical views, so the new self-identities of the Near Eastern countries after the First World War began challenging long held colonial assumptions. Givens (2008: 178) commented on the need to examine the work of archaeologists within their intellectual climate rather than from today’s viewpoint.

This re-appraisal of the excavation explains much about the workings of British and American archaeology during the inter-war period, about the various aspects of contemporary society and the attitudes of the excavating and host nations at that time. It also illustrates the pressures on the excavation caused by the opposing interests of the nations involved during a time of huge political change in the Near East.

This thesis will examine the reasons that Ur was chosen as a suitable site for excavation, the decision of the two museums to co-operate and the appointment and remit of Woolley as its Director. Ur was not chosen by Woolley for excavation as is the commonly held view today (Goode, 2007: 190) but by the common consent of Kenyon and Gordon, the Directors of the two participating museums (Winstone, 1990:114-120; Bernhardsson, 2005:131-134). They were eager to examine an area with a long tradition of biblical association and which early soundings showed held the promise of extraordinary finds. Woolley was chosen by them to lead the campaign because of his acknowledged experience in the region rather than because of any religious affinities he may have had.
The Ur excavation was a joint project between the British Museum and University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia (hereafter the BM and Penn) – the partnership and its problems had a profound impact on the expedition. Although the partnership initially enabled the excavation to take place, the difficulties it experienced nearly brought it to a premature end, and influenced much of Woolley’s behaviour throughout.

The Ur excavation, like many others before and since, was dogged by financial shortfalls which threatened it with closure through much of its 12 year duration. My research shows why Woolley worked painstakingly to raise the profile of the Ur excavation and translate the results into a language accessible to the public. His methods of promoting the campaign, his flair for publicity and his eloquent writing style (Bernhardsson, 2005: 132), won him legions of followers and thereby gained the funding he needed for the excavation to continue.

Instead of judging Woolley’s work at Ur from a modern perspective with the benefit of hindsight as has been the recent norm in critique, it is essential to look at the actions of those concerned in their contemporary context. The thesis therefore examines Woolley’s actions in direct response to the financial and political circumstances in which he found himself, rather than as behaviour designed to promote his perceived personal religious agenda. This reappraisal highlights the problems caused by imposing modern judgements and theoretical paradigms on earlier archaeology, rather than recognising that every era of archaeology operates within its own society norms and responds to them (Trigger, 2006: 543).

This research will also show that Woolley was not alone in his promotion of the Ur excavation, but was closely assisted by the goldsmith James R. Ogden (Figure 1) who will be discussed in Chapter 3. Ogden became identified with Woolley to such an extent that in 1930 he was described at an exhibition of Ur discoveries, as “Mr Woolley’s assistant” (Manchester Guardian, 1930: 11; Manchester City News, 1930: no page,). It is necessary to understand Ogden’s interests and the reason behind his involvement with the excavations to explain how a non-academic, from a very different educational and social background, became involved with archaeology in the 1920’s and 30’s. I examine his direct involvement, his contribution to the promotion and financial support of the excavations and his relationship with the BM and the archaeologists concerned. His records, and the wider sources of information they lead to, help us reach a better understanding of the motives and actions of the archaeologists and the BM. My research into Ogden has provided intriguing insights into how the complex relationship between the BM, archaeology and the collectors
generally worked in the inter-war years, a time of great social, political and archaeological change.

The methods employed by Woolley, Ogden and the BM to promote the Ur excavation and raise the funding it required to continue, involved imaginative and innovative use of the media through articles in newspapers and journals, radio broadcasts, the publication of official reports and books, alongside books intended for a wider, more popular audience. There were also numerous lecture tours to inform, excite and involve the public and enlist their financial support. Woolley and Ogden were a perfect partnership in this almost unprecedented strategy of marketing their product, the Ur Excavation, a strategy that could be described as perhaps the most modern aspect of the entire excavation.

![Ogden lecture flyer](North_Yorkshire_Reference_Library_Harrogate.jpg)

**Figure 1**: Ogden lecture flyer, North Yorkshire Reference Library, Harrogate.
Woolley realised early in his career the power of publicity (Winstone, 1990: 18). Ogden, a very astute and successful businessman had also learned the importance of advertising and using the media, particularly the local press, in an attempt to reach the public’s imagination. Mass communication was not a term yet in use, but communication through a variety of methods was now reaching the masses on an unprecedented scale (Mowat, 1968: 240-241). Woolley and Ogden launched a long, widespread and persistent publicity campaign on behalf of the Ur excavation, describing the discoveries in a colourful and accessible style, emphasising the biblical traditions of the site based on claims that Ur had been the birthplace of the patriarch Abraham, the Ziggurat was the origin of “Jacob’s Ladder” and that it was the site of the ‘Biblical Flood’. This thesis examines the reasons for such a campaign, the ‘Spinning of Ur’, and the methods employed to achieve its goals. It also questions the role of the press, and whether this was a mutual relationship with editors eager to increase circulation figures with dramatic headlines. This was a period when archaeology became a ‘source’ for literature, entertainment and the arts (Colla, 2007: 180). The discoveries in Egypt and southern Iraq spawned a new genre of books and films such as “The Mummy” and “The Beetle” (Marsh, 2004).

My research argues that the interpretation and promotion of the Ur excavation was not a reflection of Woolley’s personal beliefs, nor did it stem from an epiphany during the campaign. Rather it was a deliberate, targeted and highly choreographed publicity campaign by Woolley and his associates, to raise funding for an excavation constantly threatened with closure. I also examine which claims, if any, Woolley maintained throughout his career, or which, as was later claimed by Winckworth, one of Woolley’s assistants at Ur, he dismissed as just being “good for publicity” (Winstone, 1990: 183).

It is necessary to establish the context in which Woolley and Ogden were operating and the influences on society at this time. Britain was emerging from a period still assimilating Darwin’s writings and the new discoveries in geology that challenged established views. During the late 19th century, travel and communications improved making exotic places more accessible. Britain gradually moved from a climate where “Gladstone had referred to the Bible as ‘the impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture’ to one where George Bernard Shaw called it ‘an old collection of myths and fairy tales’” (Marston, 1934: 1). The Bible itself had appeared to be under siege. A movement began to ‘prove’ the Bible, and biblical archaeology became formalised as a sub-discipline of archaeology (Wilson, 2002: 154).
Not only did many excavators reflect the beliefs and attitudes of their time, but so did the museums and institutions they represented. The BM reflected the contemporary mood and Mitchell described a tradition at the BM of staff who manifested similar interests (1988: 12): Samuel Birch, keeper at the BM in the mid to late 19th century, founded the Society of Biblical Archaeology in 1870 with Joseph Bonomi, head of the Soane Museum and gave the inaugural address (Wilson, 2002: 154). George Smith, discovered a tablet in 1872 while working at the BM, bearing part of the Babylonian flood story of Gilgamesh and wanted to settle some of the questions about Assyrian history in relation to the Bible (Mitchell, 1988: 12). In 1873, Wallis Budge and C.M. Thompson prepared an index for “Helps to the Study of the Bible” in 1900, re-edited by Hall and Smith in 1931.

Not only the staff reflected this tradition; the BM itself was also seen as the repository of items associated with the Bible, thus emphasising the Biblical link. A very popular, best-selling book in 1921 was F. G. Jannaway’s “The British Museum with Bible in hand: Being an interesting and intelligent survey of all the exhibits on view at the British Museum which confirm the absolute accuracy of the Holy Scriptures”. Before that particular publication is dismissed as an anachronism however, it should be noted that demand for this type of book continues to the present day. Available to the wider public visiting the BM, Through the British Museum with the Bible is a 2008 guide to the BM and its relationship with the Bible (Edwards & Anderson, 2008). The chapter containing references to the discoveries from Ur is tellingly entitled “Father Abraham”.

The public perception of a link between archaeology, the Bible and the BM is apparently not restricted solely to Woolley’s time, but is still courted today by the BM in some of their sales material. Biblical associations are also maintained in the way the two museums identify some of their displays. Both the BM and Penn still refer to two statues discovered at Ur as ‘Ram in the Thicket’ in their displays.

Nevertheless, doubt about the relationship between the Bible and archaeology started to creep in during the inter-war years. As excavations seemingly failed to answer biblical questions, a more perspective viewpoint was taken. Kenyon, Director of the BM during most of the Ur excavation, wrote about the apparent contradictions between archaeology and the Bible in 1940, after retiring from his position at the BM, commenting that

“[t]here have been (and still are) those who look at archaeological discoveries solely from the point of view of whether they do or do not ‘prove the Bible’- by
which they generally mean their own conception of the Bible. And this last is a highly important consideration; for men’s conception of the Bible has varied greatly at times, and each age and school of thought is inclined to believe that its conception is the only true one, and that to attack its manner of thinking is to attack the value of the Bible” (Kenyon, 1940: 17).

He added that archaeological discoveries seldom bear directly or immediately on the biblical text (Kenyon, 1940: 28). His opinion was that, while archaeology was not providing direct evidence for Biblical study, it was enhancing the setting of the Bible. Rather than seeing the excavations as vehicles to ‘prove the Bible’, their purpose was to unearth the history of the sites concerned “whatever that may or may not prove” (Kenyon, 1940: 278).

Another dimension to this thesis is that the Ur excavation took place in the inter-war years, a time of social crisis and uncertainty following the carnage of the First World War. The British self-confidence in its own status in the world that grew during the Victorian era of empire had been severely shaken. Stout remarked that the inter-war years were a period of great change, where the past at least appeared certain, and “scientific archaeology, with its emphasis on ‘fact’, was as reassuring as penicillin” (2008: 233). The idea that archaeology was seen in Britain between the Wars as a science is in total juxtaposition to the modern view that it was anything but scientific because of the societal influences on it. However, Goode commented that in America “[a]rchaeologists [from the 1920’s] considered themselves scientists, and their reports and letters are full of references to the scientific nature of their work. This claim put them at the leading edge of development in 1920’s America, where scientific and technological advancement seemed to hold endless promise” (2007: 7).

Archaeology was not immune to the changing mood and attitude; ideas do not exist apart from the influences of society (Overy, 2009: 5). Therefore Woolley’s interpretations need to be considered in conjunction with the British ‘mind-set’ between the wars. Overy described how the growth of archaeological research, particularly in the Near East, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, reflected a popular fascination with past civilisations that continued unabated through the inter-war years (2009: 33). There was an eagerly enthusiastic and receptive audience in Britain and America, for news about the excavations in the early decades of the 20th century. The
previously ‘exotic’ and foreign sites of excavations were now becoming more accessible as the growing forms of communication improved literacy, education and travel. The excavations made front-page news, attracting much public interest and scrutiny. Visits to the excavations became an integral part of the grand tours for those totally ignorant of biblical archaeology and those obsessed by it. This was a great source of private contributions (Silberman, 1982: 97). For those who could not afford to travel to the sites to see the ‘amazing discoveries’ first-hand, there was a burgeoning of illustrated popular magazines to satisfy them, as is described in Chapter 7.

Archaeologists reacted differently to this added ‘public’ dimension. When Carter opened Tutankhamun’s tomb in November 1922, in a series of staged official openings at the behest of Lord Carnarvon and the Egyptian Antiquities Service, he was torn between the conflicts that existed between public archaeology and public entertainment (Colla, 2007: 195). The excavation at Tutankhamun’s tomb had a profound influence on politics and culture within Egypt and around the world, but Carter regarded outside interest as disruptive and at times was openly hostile to it (Colla, 2007: 192). As this excavation was being funded wholly by Lord Carnarvon, Carter was under no pressure to involve the public – it was left to Carnarvon to recognise the advantages of involving the press and the public, and he forged a deal with The Times for exclusivity. This deal was to have repercussions as the remaining press became openly critical of the deal and made circumstances even more trying for Carter (Colla, 2007: 192).

Flinders Petrie was another archaeologist averse to the attention of the public. He deterred unwanted visitors to the pyramids during his work there in the 1880’s by “working in the pyramids’ hot chambers in his underwear” (Fagan, 2003: 79). Woolley and Ogden were to have no such reservations about the value of public interest and as will be demonstrated, tapped into this market with extremely successful results. The campaign to involve the public in the Ur excavation, raise its profile and increase subscription to it was so successful that it eventually became almost self-sufficient as will be examined in Chapter 6.

Another aspect in this thesis is an examination of the history of archaeology to explain the gradual development and professionalization of archaeology up to and including the inter-war period, focusing particularly on the Near East and the associated tradition of biblical interest. I will then explore how and why Ur was chosen for excavation immediately following the First World War and what the expectations of the two participating museums were. The funding of archaeology generally during this period,
and the problems associated with the funding of the Ur excavation in particular, are examined, looking at the changing role of the collectors and private, moneyed interests as this gave way to the involvement of the public. As Wheeler (1954: 192) phrased it “the popes and princes of the renaissance have in fact been replaced by the British taxpayer”.

The funding crisis faced by the Ur excavation illustrates this transition and is the basis for Woolley’s and Ogden’s media and publicity campaign. The official reports to the museums and the Society of Antiquaries were not regarded as the wider audience they needed to reach during their campaign to raise funding. I examine how they used the media in promoting the expeditions, the methods involved and who they saw as their target audience in Chapter 7. They made every use of the increase in written outlets during this period as well as the recent availability of radio broadcasts to entice the public to subscribe, with the promises of rewards of mementoes for those who did.

This is followed by a study of the role played by lectures and photography. The lecture tours not only informed the public of the discoveries in archaeology and increased subscription; it was also a source of income for many of the archaeologists, few of whom were in regular employment. The lectures were illustrated by up-to-the minute photographs, including aerial photography, bringing a new immediacy to the reports of the excavations and a more intimate connection with the public.

All this activity was being conducted against the dramatically changing backdrop that was the Near East in the aftermath of the First World War, a period that saw the end of the Ottoman Empire and the contest between the rising imperial powers of Europe for influence in the region. Silberman (1982: 4) commented that

“[t]he search for biblical antiquities became therefore a subtle means of western penetration and competition in one of the most strategic areas of the world – a quiet extension of the ‘Eastern Question’ waged on the battlefield of the past”.

Following the First World War, the territories that were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, became subject to Mandate administration. This newly arrived Western imperialism however was no more welcome than had been the previous centuries of Ottoman imperialism and was met by the emergence of the nation states in the area, as well as a growing aggression and hostility to western occupation (Karsh & Karsh, 1999: 293). The age of imperial domination had been succeeded by “an era of
independent nation-states in conflict”, commented Silberman (1989: 9-10). The traditional imperialist view of the right to possession of the excavated antiquities was about to be challenged and changed forever as the power structure in the region began to shift; a shift that reflected the nature of the struggle against western involvement in the region.

The widespread contemporary belief that Britain and its Empire had been, and would continue to be, the hub of the western world was now confronted by changes in empire, growing pacifism and social awareness following the First World War, loss of confidence as a nation and the realisation that industrial growth and progress were not permanent (Overy, 2009: 6-7). Britain was to be confronted by the growing mood of Nationalism that was starting to be felt in the areas previously regarded as extensions of Britain’s possessions. The attitudes to the end of British influence throughout the Empire were reflected in the attitudes to the archaeologists by the host nations. Spin worked both ways as the newly emerging nation states began to claim their heritage, and introduced new and more severe restrictions on the removal of artefacts. Britain had to contend with loss of status as the BM’s annual exhibitions of artefacts from the excavations became displays of copies of items instead of originals. This had a major impact on the way archaeology was conducted, the ability of archaeologists to attract funding and the ‘rewards’ they were able to offer their sponsors and subscribers.

The End of an Era?

Gates commented that no excavations begun in the Near East since the 1950’s have enjoyed such popularity for source material among historians as those conducted before the Second World War (2007: 66). The most obvious reason for this “is that excavations were carried out on a scale appropriate to recovering historical information” (Gates, 2007: 66). She added that archaeologists could expose entire cities without being encumbered by the strictures of modern techniques or recording requirements (Gates, 2007: 66). The Ur excavation, which at one time employed as many as 400 men (Maisels, 1998: 108), is seen now as the end of an era, conducted on a vast scale and using outdated methods. Crawford (1991: 4) wrote:

“The mammoth expeditions of the past, employing hundreds of workmen, are now themselves historical curiosities and financially unthinkable, even if enough skilled supervisory staff could be found to meet modern requirements”.

“
McCall commented that by the 1950’s the carefree days of these excavations, which had run rather like private house parties in exotic settings, were gone forever. The progress of archaeology was becoming strictly scientific, peopled by new, younger generations of trained professionals (McCall, 2001: 174).

Although this view reflects the approach of ‘New Archaeology’, that there was a need for scientific methodology to be applied to archaeological study if archaeology was to progress, the Ur excavation in 1922 was in fact lauded in the contemporary press as being a showcase of the newest and most professional techniques. The New York Morning Post described how “explorers would sweep away the dust of ages to bring light to Father Abraham’s home as modern trucks roared through streets buried for 3,000 years” (New York Morning Post, 1922: no page).

Likewise, the American journal Popular Mechanics reported that

“[f]ew of the difficulties that have hitherto interfered with the work of exploration in Mesopotamia will have to be contended with by the Joint Expedition of the BM and the University of Pennsylvania Museum in their exploration of the ruins of the city of Ur, the ancestral home of the patriarch Abraham. This expedition will be fully equipped with excavating machinery and means of transportation that will make comparatively easy the exploration of these ruins that have been buried for 3000 years. A military railway and motor trucks will maintain communication with headquarters of the expedition at Baghdad” (Popular Mechanics, Undated, no page).

The modern criticism of the Ur excavation belonging to ‘another time’ is an example of judging yesterday’s archaeology by today’s criteria, with the benefit of hindsight. The Ur excavation was seen at the time as being representative of the highest state of the art. It is only in later years that there has been a need among archaeologists to distance themselves from early methods, to establish archaeology today as reaching the pinnacle of progression by criticising the methods of the past. Fagan described how archaeologists had spent years turning archaeology into a highly specialised academic discipline (2005: 254). However he argued that archaeology has reached a low point now “because of our arrogance, and also because communicating with the public and working across cultures have not been fashionable issues in the archaeological world” (2005: 255).
Is it possible to examine earlier methods, compare and contrast them with today’s methods, while still appreciating the contribution made to the knowledge we have now? Crawford thinks we have much to be grateful for:

“While looking back at the way in which these excavations operated in the 1920’s and 30’s, we should perhaps feel gratitude that they were in fact carried out in the way they were as there may never be the chance to excavate on such a scale again. Archaeology has moved away from large scale operations to the solution of specific, well defined problems or rescue projects. Much smaller teams are involved now including specialists such as photographers, conservators and architects as well as site supervisors” (Crawford, 1991: 4).

Whilst recognising that these different aspects of the Ur excavation were interwoven, it is necessary for the purpose of clarity to examine all the aspects separately in different chapters. Thus, to establish the setting of the Ur expedition, Chapter 2 will examine the history of the Near East and the political changes following the First World War, followed by the history of archaeology in the area up to the conclusion of the Ur excavation. Chapter 3 introduces James Ogden, as his archives were the initial basis for this research. I examine his background, his relationship with the archaeologists and the BM and the reasons why a non-academic became involved. Chapter 4 starts with a brief biography of Woolley, his work at Ur and the criticism that his interpretations of his findings attracted. Chapter 5 examines funding issues for archaeology and the role of private sponsorship, particularly problems posed by sponsors with specific agendas. It also looks at the proposed expedition to Ur and the agreement between the two museums. Chapter 6 is an in-depth, season by season analysis of the Ur excavation’s funding issues and how Woolley reacted to these. Chapter 7 examines the promotion campaign, ‘The Spinning of Ur’, and concerns the methods used by Woolley and Ogden to deal with the problems described in Chapter 6. This focuses on the use of the media, Woolley’s communication skills and the use of biblical reference to engage the public. Chapter 8 continues the promotion theme by looking at the lecture tours undertaken by Woolley and Ogden to ensure their message reached the widest possible audience. Finally, Chapter 9, the Conclusion will evaluate Woolley’s legacy and highlight that the ‘Spinning of Ur’ was a complex and multi-layered campaign which helped change archaeology’s relationship with the public and with itself in a manner that resonates today.
The Archives

The archives form the foundation of this thesis. An understanding of their nature, scale as well as the challenges and opportunities they provide is essential to the interpretations put forward in this work.

The archives I consulted for my thesis are:

a) The private family archives of James R. Ogden
b) The correspondence archive in the BM, Middle Eastern Department
c) The correspondence archives in the BM, Research Laboratory
d) The Woolley papers, Ur papers, Standing Committee Minutes, in the BM, Central Archives
e) The correspondence archives in the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia
f) The newspaper archives in the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia
g) The newspaper archives in Harrogate Reference Library
h) The newspaper archives of the Yorkshire Post
i) The newspaper archives of Manchester Central Reference Library
j) The newspaper archives of the British Library
k) The correspondence and artefact archive of the Brotherton Library, Leeds University
l) Ogden archive, Palestine Exploration Fund

Together, they enabled me to reconstruct the tentative written conversations among the key players in the Ur campaign and gain a valuable insight into how the excavation was funded and promoted. In total I spent five years researching the archives and consulted hundreds of private documents.

The three greatest challenges to my archival research were: 1) the location, transcription and integration of widely dispersed primary source material, 2) the fact that most documents were uncatalogued and 3) the lack of provenance for newspaper and journal cut-outs. The Ur expedition was jointly launched and funded by the BM and Penn, therefore letters and reports are dispersed among museums and societies in both countries. In several instances, a complete conversation between the parties concerned was scattered across all the different archives and took many months to uncover. The thesis therefore draws on all the relevant sources consulted with specific itemised referencing. If there was no referencing for an item, that is also noted. As regards the state of the archives’ catalogue, they were largely missing or inadequate in
detail. The consequences of this were that it required considerably more time to be spent on basic tasks as much cross referencing was needed to try and identify sources, particularly newspaper and journal articles which in many instances were unprovenanced (and sometimes undated). The frequent lack of catalogue numbers meant that there are no references to aid future researchers, except locations and correspondence dates. The consequences of this lack of accreditation means that it is sometimes uncertain who the intended audience was or even who the article was written by. It also causes an inability to link to a specific temporal sequence of events and a lack of contextual information.

**The Ogden Archive**

The Ogden Archive was the most important and extensive of the archives consulted for my thesis. Ogden accumulated an extraordinary record of early 20th century archaeology. The archive brings together documents from all aspects of Ogden’s life and reflects Ogden’s multiple roles as a lecturer and promoter of the excavations as well as an expert in metallurgy, while his letters with Leonard and Katharine Woolley are a record of their relationship and the methods they used to promote the excavation. The records also throw some light on the role played by Katharine Woolley who, largely as a result of anecdotal evidence, has received a particularly unflattering press through the years. A detailed breakdown of the content of Ogden’s archive can be found in Appendix 3.

His collection consists of 10,000 glass lantern slides and a library of contemporary newspaper cuttings, magazine articles, lecture notes and letters. His lantern slides are stored in several tea chests in the attic of the Ogden family business which is still in Harrogate. The large size of the archive has been its salvation – as the lantern slides are extremely heavy, fragile and not easily moved – they, as well as the remainder of the archive, have survived the challenges of time comparatively well. Slides occur in positive and negative forms, and are often repeated several times as he used them for his different lectures or lent them to other lecturers. A large percentage of the slides are the official photographs of the excavations, providing a complete pictorial record of much of Near Eastern archaeology at the time. Some slides are his own pictures taken during visits to the sites. Many are broken or in poor condition – therefore their quality is not always of a very high standard, but they are nevertheless unique in many cases.

By far the greatest challenges for working with the archive today are the uncertainties around future access and the lack of a catalogue. As there is no catalogue, and items
are stored randomly, the research process is very time-consuming in difficult circumstances. Documents cannot be removed so photocopying was done in the company office when possible or transcribed by hand when not. I was given permission to remove lantern slides for digitising, which I did for about 300 images.

Because of the aforementioned challenges in working with this archival material in addition to uncertainties about access to the collection by other scholars in the future due to safety concerns for the jewellery business, I quote from it frequently and in depth to provide a record of the most salient information contained in the documents for future reference.

The archive of letters, lecture notes and newspaper and journal cuttings is stored in two cardboard boxes. These boxes were hidden from view behind the lantern slide chests and had been forgotten about for decades. Unfortunately, some items had been damaged by damp and dust and were not redeemable. The lecture notes are not filed, paginated or catalogued but are mostly loose sheets of paper stored randomly.

The current state of the archive contrasts starkly with that known while Ogden was alive. During his lifetime everything was so efficiently collected and stored that his collection was referred to as “a lecture factory” (Yorkshire Evening Post, 1931: no page). One full room of his house was devoted to his theology collection, another to archaeology and a third was dedicated to the ‘production’ of the archive. However, referencing and accreditation requirements have changed since Ogden amassed his collection, simply for his own use on his lecture tours and fund raising campaigns. Not every newspaper article is identified or dated and some cuttings are incomplete having been preserved scrapbook style. None of his own photos are labelled, but the lantern slides in many cases are identified, albeit sometimes simplistically e.g. ‘Ur from the Air’ (undated).

Where I have not acknowledged the identification of a newspaper or magazine article, it is because the identity has been removed. Ogden was obviously more concerned with the content than the source. He kept cuttings from every newspaper and magazine that had relevant articles (from The Times and The Telegraph to Popular Mechanics and The Sunderland Echo and Shipping Gazette), rather than just refer to one or two select ones. Despite much time searching through newspaper archives, I have not always found it possible to identify which paper or journal a cutting is from. However, as the wide range of press cuttings provide such a vivid snapshot of how archaeology
was seen and reported during this time and how differently the archaeological findings were interpreted for a population where the Bible was still widely read and believed, I occasionally felt it useful to refer to these articles despite their lack of accreditation. Ogden’s vast collection of contemporary articles reflects how events were being portrayed in the media and the debate and controversy that followed many of the claims being made by the archaeologists. As the intention of this research is partly to demonstrate the use of the media by Woolley and Ogden, it has been found prudent to give many examples of press articles as illustrations.

Ogden was not directly involved in some of the archaeological events taking place, his actions mainly being concerned with metallic expertise, publicity and promotion, but his comprehensive records of them make him, in effect, a conduit to the past. My thesis therefore reflects this as he moves in and out of the narrative. I have included some material simply because it gives us a clearer, more detailed picture of the time and the circumstances in which the archaeologists were working. In Chapter 7 for example, Ogden’s large collection of contemporary articles on competing claims by archaeologists to have found the ‘Biblical flood’ illustrates clearly their manipulation of the press and the public, in pursuit of funding, although he himself seems to have been merely an observer.

It is also essential to consider the activities of the archaeologists in the context of the political situation in the Near East between the Wars. Ogden amassed a comprehensive collection of contemporary reports on the newly emerging state of Iraq, the British attitudes to it and the debates about Iraq’s admittance to the League of Nations, and these documents are also referred to at relevant points throughout the thesis.

**The British Museum Archives**

The British Museum houses several archives that hold documents relevant to Woolley’s excavation at Ur. They are the Middle East Archives, the Central Archives and the Research Laboratory Archives. At the time of writing, the BM, in conjunction with Penn, are digitising the Ur project. When I researched the archives at different times between 2002 and 2012 for this thesis however, this resource was not available, the letters between the two museums and Woolley are stored chronologically under the names of the correspondents in the Middle East Archives, i.e., Ogden, Woolley, Kenyon, Hall, Smith, etc., or in the ‘Ur’ files or ‘Woolley’ papers in the Central Archives.
The BM Central Archive contains seven boxes of correspondence and other papers relating to Ur, dating from 17th December 1922 to October 1939 with one paper dated 21st January 1949. It also contains 12 files of Woolley papers. The British Museum Standing Committee Minutes are available at the museum on microfiche. This archive is catalogued and available for access by appointment. In the BM Research Laboratory Archive, the papers relating to Woolley and Ogden are stored under the name of ‘Plenderleith’ (Millerman, 2008) and are not catalogued but stored in date order.

**The Pennsylvania Archives**

Since my two visits to the University Museum at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2008 and 2011, a digitisation project has been initiated for the Ur Archive; the full archive will eventually be available online. However, when I carried out my research, this resource was not available. In the Archaeology Archives at Penn, letters were filed in date order under the correspondents’ names, i.e., Woolley, Gordon, Kenyon, Langdon, etc. or in the ‘Ur’ files. These were all uncatalogued but available by appointment with the curator. The lack of a catalogue meant again that the research was a very time consuming process as every item needed to be located using the date order. Newspapers cuttings were stored scrapbook style with dates and titles but no page numbers. The correspondence between Gordon, the Director at Penn, and Stephen Langdon, excavator at Kish, filed in the Langdon Papers at Penn, were particularly useful in highlighting the reasons for Penn being so eager to excavate at Ur.

**Other Archives Consulted**

Newspaper archives were searched via microfiche at Manchester Central Reference Library, Harrogate Public Library, the British Library’s newspaper archive and the archaeology and library archives at Penn. The national newspapers were also searched electronically but this access option was not available for the plethora of smaller regional papers in both countries. Cuttings from these had been kept scrapbook style in the library archives and then put on microfiche. Unfortunately, although the cuttings were (mostly) accredited, page numbers were not usually given and could not always be located.

**A Brief Note on Quoting Primary Sources**

The primary source data for this study consists almost wholly of private letters. To avoid cumbersome interpretation of these, or the use of an appendix of letters, which would impede the general flow of the text, I have used the letters as illustrations and quote them directly throughout the text. In order to provide a record for future
generations of researchers of the inaccessible material, namely the Ogden Archive, I again quote as fully and frequently as possible.

Direct quotes also have the benefit of allowing the reader to come to their own conclusions about the topic discussed. Interpretations, unavoidably, add another layer of distortion in the presentation of the facts. Importantly, however, this duty to be ‘precise’, must not just apply to current criticism of past archaeologists’ failings in this respect, but must also apply to the current tendency of writers to base these criticisms on recycled opinion. Current criticism has tended to be made without researching the primary sources to examine whether this inherited and recycled view is in fact an accurate representation of events, or merely another layer of interpretation.

It is necessary therefore to try and examine the facts whilst recognising, as Stout (2008: 3) states,

“[b]ut these facts are also artefacts, human–made, since they’re meaningless without interpretation, and interpretation is inevitably subjective. In short, there is no way of getting at the past except through a set of subjective tools and filters; all ‘truth’ about it must therefore be relative.”

In an attempt to avoid another layer of interpretation clouding the issue, I allow the letters between the key players to speak for themselves where possible. The editorial stance I have taken has been limited to removing personal chatter, rather than picking only those letters that support a particular interpretation. However, ‘facts’ without a narrative context are not always comprehensible (Shanks & Tilley, 1987: 19), and it is necessary on occasion to take a narrative stance.

Some of the letters and notes I quote containing Ogden’s remarks are from his unpublished personal papers and lecture notes. I have tried to reproduce letters, notes and articles as they were written using the same spelling that was being used at the time, e.g. “Irak”. Sometimes the spellings of place names changed within a few lines in the same extract, not just in different contexts. In addition, individuals were often referred to by different names or titles. Ogden and Woolley, for example, were well acquainted, Woolley frequently staying with Ogden in Harrogate, but this did not prevent Ogden from referring to Woolley differently, labelling him Mr, Major, Captain, Dr or Professor at any particular time.
The referencing of the private Ogden papers, letters, lecture notes and lantern slides will be referred to as Ogden family archive, hereafter “OFA”, as distinct from museum and institutional archives. Newspapers will be referenced specifically where I have been able to trace a cutting or report. If it is an unidentified cutting that I have not been able to verify, it will be identified as OFA. The British Museum Middle East, Central and Research Laboratory archives are cited as BMME, BMCA and BMRL. The Archives at Philadelphia are cited as Penn.
Chapter Two

Archaeology in the Near East

The Near East is a region that was also referred to as the “Lands of the Bible”, the “Holy Land” or the “Fertile Crescent”, a term coined by Breasted in 1916 (Breasted, 1935: 128). The area encompassed – in modern terminology - Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. It was for many the supposed site of the Garden of Eden, the setting of all stories known from the Bible and the area to which the human race looked for the beginnings of their civilisations (Ogden, 1934, no page; Bernhardsson 2005: 24).

Figure 2: Lantern slide. Map of Fertile Crescent. OFA.

1 BMCA WY1/6/2, 29th December, 1926, Kenyon letter to Woolley enquiring how he was enjoying himself in the Garden of Eden, while he was working at Ur.
The Near East is an area that has undergone dramatic change. The First World War completely altered its political make-up as boundaries were redrawn. Prior to World War One, Britain had control of Egypt since 1888 and India since 1857. The area between these two strategic zones was largely part of the Ottoman Empire under Turkish control. After the war the Turkish sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire had all but disappeared, replaced by smaller nation states largely dependent for their existence on European governments. This ‘mandate system’, according to prevalent views at the time, was based on the principal that the inhabitants of certain territories were not sufficiently civilised or experienced to safeguard their own (or others’) interests and that “such territories should be placed in the care of a nation which should not selfishly exploit the territory but should treat it as a trust on behalf of the League of Nations” (Brett, 1964: 495). Britain’s role was now seen to be more benevolent than its previous imperialist role, intending to have a civilising effect in organising matters within the areas (Bernhardsson, 2005: 93-94).

By 1922, the area termed the “Holy Land” had become Class A Mandate, with Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq placed under British authority, and Syria and Lebanon under French authority. Class A Mandate comprised the territories which had been part of the Ottoman Empire which it was felt were developed enough for provisional independence. Palestine was completely under British administration with a governor and occupying troops, because of the obligation undertaken in the Balfour Declaration and repeated in the mandate, to facilitate the creation of a Jewish national home (Hourani, 1991: 318) and including “a discrete Department of Antiquities” (Hallote, 2011: 157). The area of Transjordan was established as a principality under British administration and in 1921, Iraq was created from the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, also under Class A Mandate. Oil reserves had been discovered in Iran early in the 1900’s and the importance of the area changed as the significance of oil began to be realised; the oil-bearing province of Mosul was therefore added to Basra and Baghdad. These provinces, though part of Greater Mesopotamia, could in no way be described as a cohesive unit, representing very different parts of the area, geographically and culturally. In 1921 a limited monarchy was established under King Faisal with Britain carrying out its mandated role under a High Commission. This situation continued until 1932 when Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations and the Mandate was ended (Yaphe, 2004:19-20,163).

However the creation of a new country with the new name ‘Iraq’ led to some confusion among the western public. Although the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers
had been referred to since the tenth century by the local inhabitants as Iraq, mid-19th century Europeans had increasingly made use of the Greek name, Mesopotamia (Shaw, 2003: 61). Iraq was very much in the news during this period but not many people could point to it on the map without hesitation. The popular view in Britain was that Iraq was a tiny country with nothing more than a population of a few scattered Arab tribes. In reality it had an area of 143,250 square miles and a population of 3 million. Ninety per cent of the bigger towns of Iraq are found on the banks of the two rivers with the vast majority of Iraqis living within sight of either the Tigris or the Euphrates.

Confusion over the new status and name of Iraq was so pronounced, that Sir Percy Cox, former High Commissioner for Iraq, speaking at a dinner on the 12th February 1929 given in his honour by the Royal Empire Society (The Times, 1929: 6) referred to the pronunciation of Iraq, saying "[i]t is pronounced with a short "i" and a long "a", and I appeal to you all to take your courage in both hands and challenge the other pronunciation whenever you hear it".

The spelling of the name was also causing confusion. The Star, reporting on conditions there reported:

"Irak to look at is a peaceful if slightly depressing country which no sane man would dream of fighting for. When you decide to fight, the country, as well as the enemy, opposes you by below the belt stratagems. Thirst, flies, implacable sun, endless rain, freezing nights, sandstorms, loneliness. If this was the cradle of the world, why did not someone rock the beastly thing to pieces?" (Betts, 1928: no page).

In 1923, there was a view that the failure of Britain to re-establish relations with Turkey meant that it was impossible to reduce British forces in the Near East at continuing great expense (The Contemporary Review, 1923: 409-415). The northern border of Iraq was seen to be vulnerable to threat from Turkey and was maintained by British forces. The hopes that Mosul was rich in oil were thought now not to be the case and that there would be no reward for this huge outlay. Others, including the former Assistant Political Officer for Mosul, F.W. Chardin felt that the expenditure was worth the "moral and probable commercial advantages to be gained" (Chardin, 1925: 462-4).

By 1924 the situation concerning Britain’s mandate and the role of Faisal was far from settled, there was still much debate in Britain about what the political arrangement meant. There was unease about the British role in Iraq, the question of whether Turkey
wanted the return of Mosul, and discontent within Iraq about the position of King Faisal (Shields, 2004: 53-59; Yaphe, 2004: 32-33).

Lord Raglan opposed extending the mandate and thought that it was unlikely post-war Turkey offered much of a threat. He felt it “doubtful whether the Arab or Kurd can find much to sympathise with in the narrow, ultra-national Turkey of today, with its religious innovations and its panama hats”. However he thought that the monarchy imposed on Iraq was too expensive. In October 1925 he wrote:

“Even if Faisal were the rightful king, which he is not; even if he had any following in the country, which he has not; and even if he were loyal to us, which he is not, we should still have the right to say: ‘We are very sorry, but the country is bankrupt and you must retire”’ (Raglan, 1925: 478-483).

Instead, he favoured the appointment as President of some prominent Iraqi on “a salary of say, £2000 per annum”. Chardin, writing in the same journal, acknowledged that the Kurdish race were at present “wild and uneducated, but given suitable education and careful guidance, they can become a very substantial element in the population”. He argued that Britain had a responsibility to see through their “political experiment” having established one realm under one crown (Chardin, 1925: 484-93). These conflicting views meant that the future of Iraq was still questionable.

The western attitude to the creation of Iraq as a separate country however, ignored the nationalist need to create an identity, a debate inseparable from the country’s archaeology (Bernhardsson, 2005: 16). Iraq, the inheritor of ancient Mesopotamia, the ‘cradle of civilisation’ with its ties to biblical history, had long been of interest to the western search for its own identity. From its early origins in antiquary, and travellers searching for tangible links to biblical sites, archaeology in the Near East had been entwined with its political history.

**Archaeology in the Near East: Bible versus Science**

A belief in the longevity of mankind had already been expressed by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians and Greeks. However, the Bible’s chronology and history of the creation of the world offered a much-reduced timeframe (Schnapp, 1996: 224). In 1650, Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher calculated that the earth had been created 4004 years before the birth of Christ and this view became widely accepted (Maisels,
However, attitudes were beginning to change and during the 19th century there was growing interest in the idea of the antiquity of man, directly challenging the biblical view that mankind was 6000 years old. Scholars were beginning to question the ideas of those who believed the literal history of the origins of man as interpreted from biblical sources and who used those biblical texts to study chronology.

The Bible had been central to intellectual thought at the start of the century, but the discoveries from explorations, and the developments in the biological and geological sciences, meant that by the end of the century, the assumptions previously held were starting to be severely challenged (Maisels, 1998: 6). The discovery of the Rosetta Stone during Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt in 1798 and the subsequent decipherment of hieroglyphs by Champollion and Young transformed Egyptology. Fifty years later, Layard’s discoveries of cuneiform inscriptions at Nineveh, and Rawlinson’s decipherment of cuneiform from the trilingual inscription at Behistun, had a similar effect on archaeology in Mesopotamia (Maisels, 1998: 42-45). The West’s interest in the ancient past of the Near East became fully aroused. However, the translations of the hieroglyph and cuneiform texts, with their revelation of a very ancient world and cultures which had lived unaffected through the apparent time of the Biblical Flood, implied new criticism of the Bible, and the search began for “confirmation, or at least illumination, of episodes in the Old Testament” (Wilson, 2002: 154).

One area attracting growing interest was Mesopotamia. The name itself reflects the ‘Orientalist’ attitude in that the area was given a Greek name rather than an indigenous one (Bohrer, 2003: 48-9). The interest in Mesopotamia began with the explorations of the British Resident in Baghdad in the early 1800’s, Charles James Rich. Strategic and commercial interests in the region helped stimulate antiquarian research and indeed Rich’s own painting of Nineveh inspired that by Turner on the subject (Bohrer, 2003: 60-61). The activities of men working in government service, military men and scholars drew the world’s attention to the archaeological wealth of Mesopotamia, although foreign travellers and merchants had been visiting the area since the Middle Ages. Crawford (1991: 1) stated that these visitors had “contributed to the growing fever of interest in the lands of Assyria and Sumer, the home which Abraham had left at the beginning of his wanderings”.

Interest in the archaeology of the region however remained the pursuit of wealthy travellers and antiquaries who sought to discover meaning in the relics of the past (Maisels, 1998:15). The search for archaeological finds became more systematic in
1818 when, with royal approval, a professorship in Geology was established at Oxford, still entrenched in religious tradition (Cadbury, 2001: 62). This had the primary intention of corroborating the scriptures by finding geological evidence to support biblical events such as the Flood. Much of the evidence found, however, had the opposite view. Instead of supporting the view that the earth and mankind had been recreated 4004 years ago, Charles Lyell’s work, The Principles of Geology (published 1830-33), introduced the idea of an essentially limitless time, a slow but relentless change in the landscape (Cadbury, 2001: 167). Jacques Boucher de Perthes, excavating in the Somme Valley in 1838, was arguing that man had been contemporaneous with animals that were now extinct (Maisels, 1998: 9), and Falconer and Pengelly, excavating at Brixham Cave in south Devon were making the same claims (Maisels, 1998: 13; Trigger, 2006: 146).

The British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) was founded in 1831 as a rival to the Royal Society (founded in 1660), with the aim of opening up a wider forum of scientific debate, but was subject to the powerful influence of members who wanted to ensure that it promoted “God’s order and rule” (Cadbury, 2001: 201). However, in 1859, a group of scientists from the BAAS who had visited the sites of de Perthes' research, reported to the society’s conference that they agreed that there was now solid evidence that human beings had coexisted with extinct mammals at a far distant time. In the same year, Darwin published his Origin of Species linking mankind to “some antecedent form” which had an immense impact on 19th century society and the practice of science, with an increasing acceptance of human antiquity (Maisels, 1998: 13; Stocking, 1987: 172). However the process of evolutionism led to questioning why societies apparently developed at vastly different rates, with some societies remaining almost static (Trigger, 2006: 166-167). Darwinism argued that human groups varied from those who were highly evolved to those only slightly superior to apes (Trigger, 2006: 170).

This theory posed the question that if man was perfection, was there a civilisation that was ‘ethnically superior’? (Kuklick, 1996: 28). There emerged a desire to chart the ‘Progress of Civilisation’ in antiquity. This view had its origins in Aristotle’s ‘Great Chain of Being’, which suggested that all creatures could be placed along a scale, from the lowest plants up to the perfection that is man, in a chain of creation. Jenkins (1992: 9) identified a desire to chart this progress through the sculpture galleries of the BM, a process of arranging the sculptures that last until the early twentieth century. Kuklick (1996: 29) stated that “[p]rogress could be illuminated by looking at the western
European nations in contrast to those of the Orient”. The British Empire was now seen as the perfection of the progress of civilisation. Cannadine (2001: 5) commented that “[l]ike all post-Enlightenment imperial powers, only more so, Britons saw themselves as the lords of all the world and thus of humankind”. The British saw themselves as being at the top of the scale in terms of their civilisation and achievement, with all other races ranked below them.

There was a growing belief that ‘natural selection’ could be applied to the human race and that the progress, or not, of civilisations was more determined by racial composition than by other factors. The archaeologist Flinders Petrie became a supporter of this idea and it guided much of his work (Silberman, 1999: 69-77). It was an idea which strengthened the middle class view of the inferiority and ‘otherness’ of native people. History was being interpreted along Eurocentric lines emphasising the decline of the Near East, giving way to the ascension of the classical world, then Western Europe and North America and their natural inheritance of these areas. This ‘otherness’, called “Orientalism” by Said (2003), was a means of justifying British colonial policies of political and economic control. The Orient was “Europe’s other, a land of exotic beings and exploitable riches that could service the economy and imagination of the West” (Dirks, 1992: 9).

The 19th century philosophy was of ‘the white man’s burden’ with many believing in the inability of the Arabs and Africans to rule themselves and the white mans’ duty to impose his rule upon the world. Imperialistic patriotism went hand in glove with the doctrine of Britain as the ‘chosen people’. Rudyard Kipling was a great exponent of Imperialism and Empire, claiming that the British were God’s chosen people, chosen not so much for privilege as for service, to rule a quarter of the globe and bear the white man’s burden (Ogden & Milburn, 1936). The like-minded Cecil Rhodes famously remarked, “[t]o be born British was to draw a winning ticket in life’s lottery” (Meyer, 2004: 7).

This view was exemplified in the policies of the museums which reflected the nationalism, patriotism and culture of the time and shaped their attitude to forming their collections (Stocking, 1985: 5-6). Antiquities were regarded as international and could therefore be excavated and removed without restriction. These items were then placed in a “sophisticated display in a museum or university where they could be observed and appreciated by enlightened Europeans” (Bernhardsson, 2005: 16). These
traditionalist views lasted well into the 20th century. Bernhardsson (2005: 74) quoted a BM report of 1918 sent to military authorities, which declared that

“[t]he BM is the central archaeological museum of the capital of the empire and (that) science, fully as much as political considerations, demands that its contents should represent the archaeology of the British possessions”.

The ‘Scramble for Antiquities’

Paul-Emile Botta, French Consul at Mosul, began excavating at Nineveh and Khorsabad in the 1840’s. The British traveller and scholar Henry Layard excavated at Nimrud from 1845 to 1847 and then other sites in Assyria and Babylonia through the 1850’s. Henry Rawlinson, while pursuing his military and diplomatic career in the East India Company in the 1840’s, risked life and limb to decipher the trilingual inscriptions on the great Behistun rock in western Persia. Until the second half of the 19th century, excavations were about the recovery of specific items, particularly clay tablets, for ownership or display in museums rather than an examination of a complete site with regard to discovering successive occupations (Daniel, 1950: 164). The discoveries made by Botta were sent back to The Louvre who were funding his excavations but there seemed to be reluctance by Britain to back Layard officially.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the early excavators in Mesopotamia were experiencing the same frustrations of not being able to accomplish all their plans because of financial restrictions as many later archaeologists would. In an attempt to prevent the French from taking sole advantage of the antiquities, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Stratford Canning decided to sponsor Layard himself but the relationship between excavator and funder was strained. When Layard began excavating at Nimrud, he complained to Rawlinson about the lack of funds to continue the work from his mentor. Rawlinson replied:

“If I were you I would ask his Excellency’s leave to send home a prospectus in order to obtain voluntary contributions from the Societies and patrons of art in England […] I believe you might get a couple of thousand pounds subscribed in England at any rate” (Adkins, 2003: 212).

Layard received advice from another colleague to “fish up old legends and anecdotes and if you can by any means humbug people into the belief that you have established any points in the Bible, you are a made man” (Bernhardsson, 2005: 44-45).
These early references indicate the importance of sponsorship, even in these early archaeological expeditions. They also show the manner of manipulating evidence, particularly in relation to the Bible, used by archaeologists to keep these patrons and the public happy, rather than reflecting the personal beliefs of the archaeologist concerned. Once Layard began to send his finds back to the BM, it sparked the beginning of an antiquities race between the French and the British as the BM belatedly realised the possibility of losing exclusivity in the area. The fruits of these excavations were exhibited in the BM and attracted visitors in great numbers. Bohrer (2003: 135) said that when *The Illustrated London News* covered the exhibition of Layard’s finds in 1847, they raised the importance of the objects “*for the illustrations which they afford of passages in ‘Holy Writ’*. However the following discussions of the discoveries bore no further Biblical corroboration, being instead “*a continuous narrative of the exploits of a king*”. The headlines were enough to attract huge crowds to the exhibitions. That the headline bore little relation to the following report was a method that became standard during the press coverage of archaeological excavations 80 years later, when archaeologists found themselves competing for attention against the mighty publicity bandwagon that was Tutmania. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Botta had beaten Layard in the race between France and Britain to be the first to bring Assyrian remains back to Europe, but Layard achieved a higher and longer lasting profile “*largely due to his genius for publication within the favourable English milieu*” (Bohrer, 2003: 4). Layard reviewed Botta’s discoveries for *Athenaeum*, which was picked up by the more popular *Penny Magazine*. Although not in Layard’s original review, they added a mention of the biblical value of the artefacts: “*Though antagonistic to most organised religion, Layard later used this very biblical text (Ezekiel 23; 14, 15) as the epigraph of his ‘Nineveh and its Remains’*” (Bohrer, 2003: 101). Bohrer added that although not denoting personal belief, the Bible emerged as an available touchstone, “*although notably less appealed to, for evaluating the artefacts and bringing them to the capabilities and interests of the larger British public*” (Bohrer, 2003: 101). The *Penny Magazine*’s publishing of Layard’s review reflected awareness by the editors of the growing interest among the public for the discoveries, and a new and growing audience among the lower and middle classes. Despite all Layard’s complaints about the struggles he had experienced, his recognition of what mattered to the public was what eventually made him famous (Bohrer, 2005: 105).
In 1854-55, the British Vice-Consul at Basra, J.E. Taylor, excavated at Tel-Mukayyar (Arabic for “Mound of Pitch”) through the top of what turned out to be a ziggurat and found inscriptions which then were translated as referring to Ur of the Chaldees, traditionally thought to be the biblical home of Abraham. Following these early successes, there was a further surge of interest in the area in 1872 when George Smith, a self-taught Assyriologist working at the BM classifying cuneiform texts, was able to complete part of the Babylonian flood story of Gilgamesh. He gave a lecture to the Society of Biblical Archaeology in December 1872 that stirred up so much public excitement that the *Daily Telegraph* offered Smith £1000 to undertake an expedition to recover the remaining sections of the Gilgamesh legend (Daniel, 1950: 132-3; Bernhardsson, 2005: 49). Smith accepted and travelled to Kuyunjik in 1873, where, according to Maisels, he found the texts within a week (Maisels, 1998: 48). When the *Daily Telegraph* refused to extend its funding he turned to the BM to pay for two further expeditions which he carried out until he died of cholera in Aleppo in 1876.

Trigger commented:

“While Egypt and Mesopotamia were now beginning to produce spectacular archaeological discoveries that were to excite the public in their own right, those that related to the Bible and appeared to confirm scriptural accounts ensured widespread support for archaeological research in these countries as well as in Palestine” (Trigger, 1989: 103).

The scramble for antiquities was no longer restricted to the British and French as the Germans and Americans began to sponsor archaeological expeditions in the area (Bernhardsson, 2005: 50). The American biblical scholar Edward Robinson had set about reconstructing the historical geography of the region in the middle of the 19th century. His thorough knowledge of the Bible allowed him to compare biblical place names with Arabic place names and he claimed he could identify dozens of biblical sites (Davis, 2008: 54). A movement began to ‘prove’ the Bible, and Biblical archaeology became formalised. In 1865 the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) was founded (Silberman, 1982: 86) with a remit to investigate “the archaeology, geography, geology and natural history of Palestine” (Watson, 1965: 7). Britain at this time was a country not only of the Bible, but was also a colonial power with military might. When the PEF was established, the work it carried out for the first few decades was undertaken by Royal Engineers and a small group of archaeologists. In 1870, the Society of Biblical Archaeology was founded. At the inaugural address, Samuel Birch,
the society’s founder stated the aim as “its scope is Archaeology, not Theology; but to Theology it will prove an important aid”. In March 1882, the Delta Exploration Fund (later the EES) was established, to bring together scholars and other interested parties such as the writer Amelia Edwards who travelled to Egypt in 1863. In 1883, Flinders Petrie was appointed Field Director by the EES, and is credited with being the first archaeologist to demonstrate the importance of stratigraphy and artefact typology in archaeological methodology (Silberman, 1999: 69). The Delta Exploration Fund’s aim was to conduct fieldwork in the Nile Delta, where “undoubtedly lie concealed the documents of a lost period of Biblical History” (Bahn, 1996: 150).

After 1882, there was a lull in the BM’s activities in the area as they ceased to sponsor any Mesopotamian excavations for many years and focussed more on their own redevelopment. Wilson (2002: 100-102), suggested that the visiting public became more discerning after the successful Great Exhibition of 1851. Woolley in contrast, speculated that the cause of this may have been that the public had tired of the post-Layard accounts of discoveries in an area that was less accessible to them, or that the Trustees felt that the collections of sculptures and reliefs had reached saturation point (Lloyd, 1947: viii). Whatever the reason, no more expeditions took to the field, but Woolley’s comments are an indication of how his interests may have been roused by the more accessible writings of Layard than by the later work of others.

The Americans and the Germans became more involved in the Near East towards the end of the 19th century, and both exerted a strong influence. The German institution Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft started expeditions in Mesopotamia in 1898, sponsoring Koldeway’s expedition to Babylon in 1899 (Bernhardsson, 2005: 53-54). American involvement in the early years of Near Eastern archaeology was largely motivated by biblical and theological concerns (Dever, 1999: 91; Bernhardsson, 2005: 55). Kuklick said that the Bible supplied the intellectual framework for most Near Eastern scholarship, and provided most of the information that was known about the past, adding “for the Americans, the Bible was a more fundamental text than it was for the Europeans” (Kuklick, 1996: 41). It would seem to follow, therefore, that for many archaeologists, though certainly not all, and for the museums and institutions they were representing, the Bible would be used as a point of reference for their discoveries, if not the reason for the excavation itself. This tradition was stronger in America, than in Britain, led by archaeologists James Breasted, founder of the Oriental Institute of Chicago and William Albright, the foremost authority on biblical archaeology in Palestine (Goode, 2007: 8-9).
The American School of Oriental Study and Research was founded in 1900 to facilitate American undertakings in Palestine and setting the stage for Albright’s career as the “father of biblical archaeology” (Hallote, 2011: 156). Its first director, and later chairman, Charles C. Torrey, wanted the school to be “the glory of America, which has in the past shown so much interest in the elucidation of the Bible, to be on the forefront of those engaged in this work” (Hallote, 2011: 159). American interest expanded into Iraq and a branch of the ASOR was opened in Baghdad in 1921. The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia was launched by a group of philanthropists in 1887, with a proposal to send a team to explore Babylon. The first Director, George Byron Gordon, was appointed in 1910.

Many archaeologists who first ventured into the area were products of a time when the Bible was still a strong influence in society, its traditions and stories firmly established in their culture and were aware of the bearing their discoveries had on the Bible (Bernhardsson, 2005: 30; Mitchell, 1988: 12). Trigger stated that “Petrie, Woolley and Garstang claimed to have made finds in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine that supported historical accounts in the Hebrew Bible” (2006: 3-4; see also Gurney, no date).

However, the discoveries from explorations, the decipherment of hieroglyphs and cuneiform, and the developments in the biological and geological sciences meant that by the end of the 19th century, assumptions previously held were starting to be severely challenged. This interrelationship between archaeology and the Bible became so close that Moorey stated: “many of those coming into Near Eastern archaeology since the middle of the 18th century have come to it, and continue to come to it, through a deep religious involvement with the Bible” (Moorey, 1991: xvi).

However, not all archaeology was inspired by biblical connection. Stout stated that in Britain, “many inter-war scientific archaeologists were […] imbued with a pronounced scepticism about matters religious” (2008: 116). He added that many of the noted archaeologists of the period, for example, Daniel, Cason, Hemp, Wheeler and Childe were all discreetly agnostic or atheist (2008: 116). Those who opposed the biblical approach to the new science of Archaeology felt that the two studies should be separated and that archaeology was becoming the poor relation to biblical research, while those who favoured the approach of biblical scholars argued that, historically, archaeology had always been the work of biblical scholars and that the two studies should complement each other. The debate continued throughout the following decades, and to some extent to the present time. In these early years of excavation,
however, the major influence concerning which excavation began was largely a question of which missions could attract funding, and the biblical associations of certain sites were a magnet for fundraising.

Near Eastern Archaeology after World War One

The end of World War One and the establishment of British military control in Mesopotamia made Britain pre-eminent in the region, a situation that was to make them instrumental in archaeological matters for twenty years (Bernhardsson, 2005: 55-56). Prior to the British Mandate, the Ottoman authorities had attempted to develop several antiquity laws to prevent exploitation of the area from 1874 onwards with varying degrees of success (Shaw, 2003: 108). The Ottoman law of antiquities tried to restrict activities and keep possession of the discoveries and their system of granting permits had made archaeology difficult for westerners for almost a century (Hallote, 2011: 157; Gibson, 1999: 137). Ottoman laws forbade foreign ownership of land resulting in long and complex application processes for excavating (Hallote, 2011: 160). The British administration established their own system of granting archaeological permits which simplified the application process and thus benefitted all nationalities.

When the British took control, there was concern to restore and conserve important monuments and organise archaeological matters (Bernhardsson, 2005: 94; Gibson, 1999: 133). They also addressed the issue of storage and removal of artefacts which had been “problematic under Turkish rule” (Hallote, 2011: 157). Gibson said that concern and pressure in England, particularly from the PEF, for the safety of the antiquities of Palestine resulted in the establishment of the British School for Archaeology (1999: 135). This was initially under the directorship of John Garstang, an experienced field archaeologist from Liverpool University, who put together an Antiquities Ordnance for Palestine which was fairer to all parties (Gibson, 1999: 116). As a consequence, “archaeology in the Holy Land at the time of the British Mandate became a much more liberal and specialised profession” (Gibson, 1999: 135).

The BM was asked early in the discussions concerning the political and administrative future of Iraq to contribute to the debate on future policy, and this included archaeological policy. Kenyon encouraged the establishment of a Department of Antiquities of Iraq to prevent a situation arising where Britain might be seen as “merely plundering the country” (Kenyon, cited in Bernhardsson, 1999: 207). He suggested that
half the proceeds of any excavation be divided between the host country and the excavators (Bernhardsson, 1999: 207). In 1920, Kenyon therefore established the British Joint Archaeological Committee to act as a neutral scientific body, and the 1922 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty required the King to enact an antiquities law within 12 months of the treaty coming into force (Bernhardsson, 1999: 209).

In October 1922, King Faisal thus appointed Gertrude Bell, who had been Oriental secretary to Sir Percy Cox from 1917, as Honorary Director of Antiquities and of the New National Collection. Her remit was to formulate special archaeological guidelines for the new legislation. Things were not straightforward however, as the new proposals were met with some resistance from Iraqi nationalists. Sati’ al-Husri, a forceful personality in Iraqi politics and long-standing colleague of King Faisal, was appointed Director-General of Education. He had what Lloyd referred to as “a thinly disguised distaste for the activities of foreign archaeologists” (1986: 195). Sati argued that all antiquities should come to the state; Bell argued that if this happened, “no archaeologist would come to Iraq again” (Bernhardsson, 1999: 212-218). Bell’s will prevailed and the Antiquities Act received royal confirmation in June 1924. New rules were established resulting in the equal division between the excavating parties and the new national collection.

The new law forbade any excavation without a permit, stressed that the applicant for the permit had to be a scientific institution or person, and that the Director-General of Antiquities might keep an inspector on the site on the expedition’s account. This denoted that the Iraqi government, through a controller, supervised the progress of the excavations. However it was Clause 22 that had the greatest impact. It required that when the excavations were finished, “an adequate scientific publication of the results of the excavations is to be submitted before the lapse of 2 years, unless the D-G prolongs the term”. These reports were also to state in whose hands the finds were found after the excavations implying a division, “as the D-G selects the finds which are considered necessary in order that the Iraqi Museum can be scientifically adequate” (Pallis, 1956: 278-81). However it also stated that the Museum must always reserve those finds considered unique (Pallis, 1956: 278-81). Initially this did not seem important, but when the Royal Cemetery at Ur was excavated feelings became strained (Pallis 1956: 278-81). Mistrust grew on both sides as the finds from the Royal Cemetery were sent back to London for repair and restoration. Main (1935: 98) described how rumours began circulating that the originals were being retained by the BM, and worthless copies sent back to Baghdad.
Although Bell was initially pleased about the passing of the bill, the time it had taken and the opposition it met were indicators that Iraq was changing. Bell started building a new Iraqi national collection which in 1926 was carried into effect as the Iraqi Museum at Baghdad, although it was not until 1963 that a purpose-built museum came into being (Winstone, 1990: 120).

If the general public were unsure about the new status of the countries of the Near East following the war, the archaeological world was in no doubt about what the new mandates meant. The new political situation in the area was now felt to be strongly in western archaeology's favour as the region became more accessible and a scramble for permits began (Bernhardsson, 2005: 113). Several American institutions sought to work with British ones, because of their access to British politicians, and thence to the government of the region (Winstone, 1990: 231). Breasted took the opportunity to approach Rockefeller about the formation of the Chicago Oriental Institute to support excavation in the Near East (Bernhardsson, 2005: 50-52). It was initially seen by the American press as very significant that Britain had mandate over the area. An explicit example of the imperialist attitude to the right of possession is reflected in an American newspaper report:

“The expeditions in the area now will not be called upon to share with the Turks whatever treasure may be uncovered. It may be recalled that the museum of Constantinople is filled with rare relics of antiquity which English and other expeditions have been forced to give up merely because the Turks happened to be in control of the countries where the relics were uncovered” (New York Times, 1922: no page).

Penn and the BM were very quick to apply as a joint force for permission to undertake excavations at Ur. A few months after the Ur excavation began, a second Anglo-American expedition began work at Kish, eight miles east of Babylon where between 1923 and 1933 archaeologists from The Field Museum, Chicago, and Oxford University’s Ashmolean Museum explored several of its 40 mounds. Most of these excavations were sponsored by museums which needed a physical reward for their investment. The archaeologists in Iraq were conflicted between the desires of those sponsors, his own feelings of owning the past and the requirements of Iraqi law concerning antiquities (Bernhardsson, 1999: 250). In total, the number of large
international expeditions in Iraq grew from two to eight between 1922 and 1929 (Bernhardsson 2005: 138-9) with others starting in the next decade.

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**Table 1**: Excavations in Iraq in the 1920’s and 1930’s.

However, the increase in Western archaeological activity led to a growth in anti-western feeling in Iraq. The *Al–Ahali* newspaper in Baghdad began a persistent and aggressive campaign against the archaeological missions in the area, calling Gertrude Bell a “misguided person who collected some scattered objects and founded a place called the Irak Museum”, and arguing that

“archaeological missions, English, French, German and American made their way here while the Turks were in power; and during the Great War, English archaeologists arrived and took away objects to enrich their museums. In fact, all the world’s great museums and savants are deeply interested in our treasures, and you will scarcely find any other land which attracts the
archaeologists to the same degree” (BMME “Mallowan Correspondence and Varia 196.2”, Al-Ahali, Baghdad, 13th May 1933).

**A Change in Legislation**

Although the aftermath of the First World War brought many changes politically to the Near East, attitudes were slower to catch up, and archaeology was one area where the right to excavate and remove objects was still seen by many as unquestionable (Bernhardsson, 2005: 101). This was compounded by an apparent lack of interest among the native populations to what the west regarded as the history they should be interested in, an attitude that westerners took as apathy. The western interest in the history of the countries of the Near East and the explorations it provoked was mostly of the pre-Islamic period, the sites that had associations with the Bible and not with the history of the later Islamic sites seen as irrelevant to the west. The biblical relevance made the sites more important to the west and had more of a sense of being ‘our’ history (Bernhardsson, 2005: 33, 128-9).

However, this opinion took no account of the irrelevance to the poorly educated local population of a history they could not identify with religiously or culturally and ignored earlier efforts that had been made by the more educated elite during the Ottoman Empire to recognise and save antiquities for their own museums. This claim of lack of interest seemed another justification to western excavators that they were removing artefacts from their own biblical history and rightfully taking them ‘home’. For the most part the local population were seen either as a source of cheap and plentiful labour or “unfortunate and irritating occupiers of sacred space who could only hinder or obstruct any major activity” (Bernhardsson, 2005: 33).

Archaeologists approaching the area from the position of Western Imperial traditions found themselves facing a changing world during the 1920’s and 1930’s, their views reflected the prevailing attitudes of society at the time, the ideas of racial and religious superiority. Goode described how the archaeological reports were full of disparaging references to the ‘natives’ despite having little knowledge of them except in their role as employers (2007: 9). The sense of difference in attitude was reflected by Woolley who wrote:

> “It would be absurd to ask for a scientific interest in the work from men so ignorant as the Arabs of southern Iraq; they have no historic background, not even a tradition that goes back for more than two or
three generations, and neither names nor dates can mean much to them" (Woolley, 1928a: 9).

He added that their main incentive was money, although they could be taught to take a disinterested pride in doing their job well, “for them a totally new experience” (Woolley 1928a: 9).

The re-drawing of the political map and the creation of the new nations in the region however was to have repercussions as the local populations began to consolidate their identities. Nationalism was a newly emerging force which led to the recognition of the importance of one’s own heritage. Archaeological finds began to be used to cultivate national dignity and pride, with nationalist archaeology drawing attention to the political and cultural achievements of indigenous ancient civilisations. As a consequence, it gradually became more difficult for excavators to export their finds back to their own countries. Egypt changed its position on division of antiquities in 1924 when the government declared that the tomb of Tutankhamun and its contents were the property of Egypt, and thereafter refused to allow the removal of the discoveries made at Tutankhamun’s tomb (Colla, 2007: 199-210). The Society of Antiquaries was so shocked by the new stance concerning division that they recorded an official “resolution of regret at the new Egyptian Antiquities Law” which was carried unanimously but had no effect on the situation (Evans, 1956: 406).

In the early 1930’s, the situation in Iraq concerning division of the finds became more difficult, growing steadily worse after the death of Gertrude Bell in 1926, with mistrust on both sides. This was partly due to the spectacular finds that were being discovered at the Royal Cemetery of Ur, and partly due to the newly emerging nationalist movement that was spreading through Egypt and the Near East. As more gold items emerged from the excavations and needed to be sent to the BM for repair or restoration, so Iraqi and Egyptian politicians started to keep a closer watch on the divisions and the destination of the objects (Meskell, 2003: 153-155).

Rumour about a new antiquities law that would be put in place in Iraq was rife as the nationalist stirrings became stronger. Langdon (BMME, Langdon letter to Hall, 12th July 1930) asked Hall in 1930 for clarity on behalf of the supporters of the excavations at Kish who were worried that the Iraq government would stop all export of antiquities and demand that all discoveries be handed over to them. The rumours of the difficulties facing the expeditions were also being reported in the press and there was widespread belief that the expedition to Ur was inevitably winding down. Penn were facing their
own financial difficulties by this time as a result of the Great Depression and suggested ending the excavations (Zettler & Horne, 1998: 1; BMCA CE32/28/146, 5th February 1933; BMCA WY1/15/37-15/73, 10th April 1933).

**The Cooke Affair**

The situation of mistrust had been exacerbated by the “Cooke affair”. R.S. Cooke, a former adviser to the Ministry of Awqaf (charitable endowments), was made Honorary Director of Antiquities when Bell died, a position he held until replaced by Sidney Smith of the BM in 1928 (Bernhardsson, 2005: 159). However, in 1930 Cooke was accused of the illegal smuggling of antiquities to which he made no defence, merely pleading the need to raise money. There were suggestions that following Bell’s death, archaeologists were taking advantage of the situation to influence the division and Smith made great efforts to defuse the issue by insisting that many objects remain in Baghdad. He remained in this position until 1931 when he returned to the BM.

Ogden was acquainted with Cooke and told his audiences:

> “This gentleman very kindly gave me a special permit to bring any antiquities I had secured out of Iraq, and by his kindness in securing many for me, I was able to bring back not only what he supplied but what I had also secured at Babylon and Ur” (Ogden lecture notes, no date, OFA).

This latter comment by Ogden illustrates not only the behaviour that was to cause problems for Cooke, namely the mishandling of antiquities, but also how the right to obtain these items was regarded as ‘normal procedure’ by Ogden. Ogden and Cooke were friendly; Cooke and his wife personally conducted Ogden round the sites during his earlier visits to Iraq and drew up his itinerary (Ogden lecture notes, OFA). Cooke acted as Ogden’s agent in purchasing the vehicle that Langdon used at Kish. Langdon acknowledged Ogden’s help in the frontispiece of his book on the expedition (Langdon & Watelin, 1924). “Thanks are also publicly due to a number of benefactors. Mr James Ogden of Harrogate provided me with the motor by which I daily reached this desolate site from Kish”.

It seems unlikely that Ogden was aware of any actual wrong doing by Cooke despite his comment that Cooke had “supplied” him with artefacts. From Ogden’s perspective, Cooke was someone in an official position whom Ogden admired and saw as a representative of the government. Ogden was very impressed by status and thought
archaeologists were beyond reproach. He told Sidney Smith later that he had presented a benefactor with

“a group of beads I brought from Ur myself. He asked me the cost, and I told him that Archaeologists never made profit out of the things they find, but if he cared to send you a cheque for the ‘Gertrude Bell Expedition’ – I was sure you would appreciate that” (BMME, letter Ogden to Smith, 22nd October 1932).

Although this letter has a slightly sanctimonious tone, it was written only a couple of years after the Cooke affair which had probably shocked Ogden, rocking as it did the foundations of normal collecting behaviour until that time. Cooke was expelled from the country in disgrace but the matter did not go away. Al-Ahali raised it again the day after their attack on Gertrude Bell and the western archaeologists.

“Mr Cooke trafficked in antiquities secretly and openly with dealers and thieves, and was very well versed in the act of smuggling. A painful episode in truth and we know not for certain what precious objects the Irak Museum lost during the administration of this person, who for a long period abused his position until at last his deeds were discovered by a native customs official who spotted some valuable stuff all ready to be smuggled out in the name of the aforesaid gentleman” (BMME “Mallowan Correspondence and Varia 196.2”, Al-Ahali, Baghdad, 14th May 1933).

Al-Ahali campaigned that the cause of science and revelation of the hidden history of the past did not mean that an archaeological mission should take possession of antiquities; but rather that the expert should study them, while the originals remain the property of the museums of the country. A day later this hardened to “archaeological missions, which should be allowed only to take pictures and casts of these objects” (BMME “Mallowan Correspondence and Varia 196.2”, Al-Ahali, Baghdad, 15th May 1933). Within a fortnight, the paper announced that

“[t]he Director of Antiquities is to send in future, a commission to act for the department, with every mission which is excavating for antiquities in Irak, for the purpose of guarding the government share and to prevent peculation of it by the expedition” (BMME “Mallowan Correspondence and Varia 196.2”, 27th May 1933).
An Uneasy Situation

Throughout 1934, the situation became increasingly strained. The number of expeditions decreased to three as archaeologists chose not to go back to Iraq (Bernhardsson, 2005: 182). Woolley however wanted to continue working at Ur and in his usual vehement style launched an assault on the Iraqi authorities. He wrote to The Times (Woolley, 1934b: 10) and The Listener (Woolley, 1934d: 1019) criticising the proposed legislation. In the latter he drew attention to some of the difficulties confronting the archaeologist when working outside his own country – “in particular the growing tendency of national governments, such as the Iraqi government, to claim the lion's share (and more than the lion’s share) of the fruits of his work”.

The tone of his articles outraged the Iraqis even more. Replies followed in the Baghdad press, Woolley responded in Antiquity but the new law was passed in May 1936. Woolley and other archaeologists were dismayed and affronted by the new law (Woolley, 1935: 84-88). Campbell-Thompson, who had been excavating at Nineveh until 1932, wrote to Sati, Director of Antiquities in Iraq:

“Speaking as a private person, I find the attitude [of the new law] at present adopted by the Iraq Museum towards British and other excavations, so distasteful, and as a practical excavator, so unreasonable, and if I may be allowed to say as one who served as a Captain in the British Army in Mesopotamia for more than 3 years of active service against the Turks in making Iraq a separate country, so ungrateful, that I must beg to decline the invitation of the Iraq museum to take part in Dr Gordon’s publication” (BMCA CE32/34/19/2, 27th March 1935).

Following his work at Ur, Woolley and other archaeologists turned their attention to Syria which was under a French mandate and where getting permission to excavate was easier. Woolley's Ur excavation findings have remained critical for much of our knowledge about archaeology in that region as political uncertainty there has precluded much further investigation. However today, Woolley, like Howard Carter, is seen as someone representative of a different era of archaeology, characterised by large-scale excavations and heavily dependent on private funding, who made a spectacular discovery but added little to the subject’s intellectual development. There is a tendency in current thought to dismiss much of Woolley’s approach to and interpretation of this work, as ‘Bible driven’, prone to outlandish claims and descriptions that could not be upheld, and consequently of little scientific validity (Leick, 2001: 115; Bernhardsson,
2005: 132; Fagan, 2007: 202). However, as I hope to show over the remaining chapters, this interpretation is inadequate as it does not take into account the deliberate use of the Bible to generate the necessary sponsorship.
Chapter Three

James R. Ogden

Between 1922 and 1934, Leonard Woolley led the ‘Joint Expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia’, to Ur in the newly designated country of Iraq, formerly southern Mesopotamia. Woolley’s excavations revealed 5,000 years of occupation dating from the Ubaid period in the 6th-5th millennia, uncovering the site’s growing ceremonial and political importance in the region. Woolley’s discovery of the Royal Cemetery in particular, revealing the wealth and scale of the royal and elite burials, placed the Ur excavation among the most significant of all archaeological undertakings (Vidale, 2011: 427).

This spectacularly successful expedition was only matched in glamour, rich finds and high public profile by Howard Carter’s concurrent excavation of Tutankhamun’s tomb in Egypt and Schliemann’s discoveries at Troy (Daniel, 1950: 201). The richness of all these discoveries in terms of intrinsic value and the knowledge they imparted were indeed a justification for the description of this period of archaeology as a ‘golden age’. The fruits of the excavations were exhibited in the BM and attracted visitors in numbers unseen since the discoveries made by Layard in the mid nineteenth-century (Wilson, 2002: 209).²

These collections and treasures, still on display in museums and institutions, are attributed to the work of archaeologists over many years, many of whom established their reputations through their discoveries rather than their methodology. However, we should be aware that the objects on display are often there not just because of the efforts of individual archaeologists, but because of the ‘behind the scenes’ efforts of enthusiastic amateurs and benefactors. Their passion for archaeology and collecting led to funding on a scale that enabled many of the expeditions to take place when lack of finance threatened them with closure.

James Ogden was one such enthusiast. Although not a ‘hands on’ archaeologist as such, he nevertheless played an integral, but unsung role in promoting and funding many of the Near Eastern excavations of the 1920’s and 30’s, particularly Ur. His reasons for taking on this role were not purely for academic interest but of a more ____________________

² British Museum attendance figures of 1,181,242 for 1924 surpassed those for the Victoria and Albert Museum for the first time.
personal nature. His strict religious beliefs meant he felt the excavations in the area known as ‘The Holy Land’ would corroborate the Bible and that the public at large needed to be made aware of this. He worked with an almost missionary zeal to inform and educate his audiences of the archaeological discoveries being made.

Ogden’s explanation of his enthusiasm for archaeology was that

“[i]t adds new zest to life, it encourages us to keep our eyes and ears open [...] We are now discovering, for the first time in history, facts about the life, habits, literature, art and commerce of the ancient peoples who are mentioned in the sixty-six books of the Bible. The nearer we can come to the actual facts, the solid unimpeachable realities of Israel’s history, the better we shall understand the Divine training of that chosen race to be the bearers of revelation to mankind” (Ogden, 1934: no page).

Ogden’s motives here are clear, and he wanted to share this passion. He wanted every town and city to have a museum so that people could see for themselves “all the wonderful work that is going on. It is only due to the men who are using their time and skill in unearthing the mighty past that their work should be acknowledged” (Ogden’s lecture notes, no page, OFA).

Ogden was a man of many facets – craftsman, businessman, archaeologist, collector, fundraiser, motivator, communicator, Sunday School President and devout Bible reader – and these various aspects of the man combined into the complex and layered relationship that he had with the archaeological community and the BM in the 1920’s and 30’s. He was passionate about knowledge, and his wide-ranging interests and skills came together in his love of archaeology and the Bible. He devoted years of his life to amassing every scrap of information he could gather on archaeology in the Near East and travelled extensively there. He saw it as his duty to share this information with others. He was described as having “a fertile and versatile mind and a constant eagerness to contribute to the mental and moral well-being of the country” (Harrogate Herald, 1936: no page).

Ogden was born in Leeds in 1866, then moved to Harrogate in North Yorkshire. After leaving school he apprenticed himself to a Harrogate jeweller and did so well that he opened his first jewellery shop, “Ogden’s Little Diamond Shop”, in 1893 (Neesam, 1993: 4). Ogden did not have the same educational background as the museum and
archaeological circles in which he later moved. However, his substantial reading reference list in the family archive, including titles by Sayce (1886), Jannaway (1921), Baikie (1927) and Marston (1933, 1934), showed that he was well read and aware of the developments in science and intellectual thought taking place during this time of change. As a deeply religious man, his opinions would have been strongly influenced by the debates about the new criticisms of the Bible.

While growing up during the 1880’s, Ogden formed strong connections with the Methodist church, and was to remain a staunch Methodist all his life. For over 50 years he was involved with Sunday-School work, becoming President of the National Sunday-School Union in 1928 (Yorkshire Evening Post, 1928: no page).

He also mastered his craft as a jeweller and goldsmith, and, equally importantly, developed his talent for dealing with people. Harrogate was prospering as a spa town, and attracted some very wealthy visitors – royalty, aristocracy and the newly rich manufacturers were among those drawn to Harrogate and Ogden, with his acute business acumen, took advantage of this situation. He and his staff lavished special attention on their illustrious clients, and visits to “Ogden’s” became a natural part of the Harrogate season. Business boomed, another shop opened in Harrogate, then branches in Bath, Llandrindod Wells and Scarborough. In 1910, Ogden opened larger premises in James St. Harrogate and it is this shop that exists today. At this time, “Ogden himself made a diamond and pearl collet for Edward VII to give to his daughter, Princess Maude, who later became the Queen of Norway” (Neesam, 1993: 12).

Ogden was very aware of trends in public interest and had an ability to ally this interest to the advantage of his business. He was known for his innovative and regular use of press advertising (Neesam, 1993: 4). Even the onset of the First World War did not dim Ogden’s business acumen – he placed carefully worded advertisements in all the local papers stressing the long-term benefit of investing in gold and jewellery in difficult times. In the inter-war years, items made in his businesses were inspired by the fashions of the day, reflecting the jazz age with cocktail shakers, cigar cutters, etc. and sometimes incorporating the other passion of the time, Egyptian designs. As his customers grew more informed and discriminating, the Egyptian inspired items were made from gold and lapis lazuli for authenticity (Neesam, 1993: 14). This combination of an eye for detail paired with an awareness of where public interest lay would prove invaluable in his publicity campaigns for Woolley and Ur.
During the First World War, the “Ogden” shops outside Harrogate closed permanently. After the War, Ogden decided to open a new branch in Duke St. London and focus his attention on that and the Harrogate shop (Neesam, 1993: 13). Duke Street is in Piccadilly, the heart of affluent and fashionable London, a few hundred yards from the offices of the PEF, the EEF, the BM and the Society of Antiquaries. Ogden would have made many contacts through his membership of these various societies and the exhibitions at the BM. He was also an avid collector and attended auctions frequented by other collectors and archaeologists.

Ogden was a product of his time and collected avidly. Collecting had been made popular by the travellers and collectors of the 18th and 19th centuries, but was taken up zealously in the late 19th century/early 20th century, and by some individuals was taken up to a manic extent (Thomson, 2002: 48). Some collections grew to the level of major industries, which, on the death of the collector were then gifted to museums that were usually reluctant to accept them as they could not afford their maintenance or the large death duties associated with them (Thomson, 2002: 48).

The BM itself started as the gift of such a dedicated collector, Sir Hans Sloane, in 1759 (Thomson, 2002: 48). Henry Wellcome was another such individual whose life became dominated by collecting, inspired by the collections in the BM of “soldier-turned archaeologist General Pitt Rivers” (James, 1994: 272). The motives for this level of collecting were mixed. For some collectors the motive was for possession or ownership with no desire to share knowledge. For others, the motive was for preservation and study, to share knowledge and seek explanations. For some it was simply for the thrill of the hunt and the ‘power’ of ownership (Thomson, 2002: 29).

Ogden was a combination of all these motives – he certainly achieved status and renown for his collection in his home environment, but his ability and desire to share his knowledge and inform and entertain while doing so meant that his reputation became more widespread. Ogden began lecturing to the public to share the experience of his travels and collections while still working as a jeweller and goldsmith. However it was only in the early 1920’s that he began to lecture on an almost full time basis, leaving his sons to take over the day to day running of the family business (Neesam, 1993: 13).

Overy (2009: 33) described how the growth of archaeological research, particularly in the Near East, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, reflected a popular fascination with past civilisations that continued unabated through the inter-war years.
There was an eagerly enthusiastic and receptive audience in Britain and America, for news about the excavations in the early decades of the 20th century. The previously ‘exotic’ and foreign sites of excavations were now becoming more accessible as the growing forms of communication improved literacy, education and travel. The excavations made front-page news, attracting much public interest and scrutiny. Visits to the excavations became an integral part of the grand tours for those totally ignorant of biblical archaeology and those in search of its roots. This was a great source of private contributions. For those who could not afford to travel to the sites to see the ‘amazing discoveries’ first-hand, there was a burgeoning of illustrated popular magazines to satisfy them (Silberman, 1982: 97).

There is little doubt that Ogden forged his closest relationships with archaeologists working in the areas of biblical interest and made early visits to the sites to see their work for himself. His obituary (Harrogate Herald, 1940: 2) stated that “he visited Egypt eight times, Palestine ten and Syria twice in addition to tours in Assyria and Babylonia.” Unfortunately, Ogden’s notes (OFA) do not diarise his trips although he did record the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1907/8</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922/3</td>
<td>Egypt (Tutankhamun’s tomb) and Iraq (Ur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924/5</td>
<td>Egypt and Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925/6</td>
<td>Ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926/7</td>
<td>Ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927/8</td>
<td>Syria and Ur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.** Ogden’s trips to the Near East and Africa.

He was eager to help the archaeologists continue their work of uncovering these sites and spreading ‘the word’, confirmed as he saw it, by the excavations on sites mentioned in the Bible. He regarded it as his duty to inform and educate the public on the work of the archaeologists which he did in lecture tours around the country. The relationships with the archaeologists became reciprocal as they, in their constant search for funding, realised the potential of Ogden as a fundraiser. His public lecture tours to share his knowledge led in turn to his fundraising efforts, firstly for the benefit
of charities, and later, as he became more aware of the plight of the archaeologists in the Near East, for the assistance of the excavations.

**Ogden and the British Museum**

Unfortunately there is no record of Ogden's first meetings with the archaeologists of the period, or with the various keepers at the BM. Based on surviving records, Ogden began communicating with the BM in about 1910 when he first approached them about obtaining artefacts as aids for his lectures ([BMME, letter Ogden to Esdaile, 8th February 1930](#)). He had the utmost admiration for the BM and those who worked there and regarded it almost as his duty to bring it to the attention of as many people as possible. He wrote to Hall, the BM's Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Department,

“I find that in the North, the BM is not as highly valued as it ought to be and I want to bring before people, as vividly as I can, the great educational value of our National Treasure House. I feel that your work, in connection with the great discoveries in archaeology, ought to be brought before the people” ([BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 6th November 1924](#)).

Although founded in 1753, the BM only opened its doors to the public on a daily basis in 1879. This reflected a growing awareness of the interest of the general public in cultural activities as shown by the vast numbers who visited the Great Exhibition in 1851 and the BM itself to see the fruits of Layard’s work in the Near East ([Wilson, 2002: 209](#)). In the early 20th century, the BM began to undergo dramatic changes to evolve into the institution it is today and became a source of national pride. Its development had always been naturally influenced by the social climate of the time and was therefore affected by the pervading cultural and political landscapes, the fashion of the day, imperialism and colonialism. Many of the collections were acquired during periods of unequal power balance in countries subject to British rule and in some cases objects were simply taken without consultation ([Bernhardsson, 2005: 10-11, 23](#)).

Like any other institution, the BM was also shaped by the individuals working there. In 1909, Frederic Kenyon was appointed Director and Principal Librarian, a position he

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3 [BMME, letter Ogden to Esdaile, 8th February 1930](#). Some 20 years ago, Sir Frederic Kenyon kindly presented me with a piece of papyrus – of the C2nd BC and I have used this with great pleasure in my lectures on “The British Museum and The Bible”. Please can I ask for a piece of papyrus for the next lectures at Bradford and Wakefield Literary Societies, something that the museum has no use for.”
held for just over 20 years and throughout the early, difficult years of the Ur excavation. He came from a family with close connections to the BM, being the grandson of Edward Hawkins, Keeper of Antiquities for many years during the 19th century (Miller, 1973: 321). Kenyon worked in the Museum from a relatively young age. He was the Assistant Keeper in the Department of Manuscripts before becoming Director and Principal Librarian. He brought to his new position his considerable reputation as a classical scholar and a deeply respected student of the Bible. Kenyon was also president of the British Academy and therefore in a strong position to put pressure on the government to use its power as the occupying force in Mesopotamia in the 1920’s to bolster the British national collections (Bernhardsson, 2005: 72).

Kenyon was a reserved and taciturn man, very distant in his dealings with people (Davis, 2008: 14-19). Initially during the Ur excavation problems he referred to Ogden as “that man in the North” when discussing him with Woolley (BMCA WY1/6/19, letter Kenyon to Woolley, undated). However, Ogden eventually formed a good relationship with Kenyon and then with Kenyon’s successors in their turn, as well as with the Keepers of the various departments. These relationships were an intricate blend of common interest, largesse on Ogden’s part as well as his expertise as a goldsmith, and the BM’s dependency on private donors.

The relationship between Ogden and the BM appears to have been a reciprocal arrangement that worked well for both sides. Ogden requested, and received, photos of the latest findings in ‘Babylonia’ or Egypt, or a “small piece of Papyrus” (BMME, letter Ogden to Esdaile, 8th February 1930) for his lectures, and, in return, he used these for his lectures and articles to promote the excavations and raise large amounts of funding to help them continue. Ogden also saw it as his duty to introduce other wealthy benefactors to the Museum whenever he could, or to point the way to some other source of potential funding. He told Hall:

“I am trying to get Sir Edward Allen Brotherton (the millionaire)⁴, who is close to Harrogate, interested in the magnificent work of the BM. He thinks nothing of giving £5-10,000 to anything that appeals. He’s just given £100,000 to Leeds Infirmary and it would be splendid for the BM if we could get his interest” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 6th December 1928).

⁴ A wealthy Industrialist from Wakefield, knighted for public benefactions, after whom the Brotherton Library at Leeds University is named (Donnelly, 2006).
Funding continued to be an immense problem in the era immediately after the First World War, and the relationship between benefactors, collectors, the public and the BM became more complex. It was still seen as normal practice to reward the principal contributors with objects from the excavations, in many cases this being one of the main reasons for the contribution in the first place. The relationship between Ogden and the BM reflects the practices of that era – he was a collector who was assisted in his collecting by the Museum, in return for helping to fund the excavations. In keeping with his educational aspirations, Ogden did not want the articles just for his private collection, but to use them in spreading his knowledge through lectures and articles.

**Ogden and the British Museum Research Laboratory**

Ogden was also a craftsman with expertise and contacts in the field of metallurgy, and this proved of enormous value to the BM as the excavations of the 1920’s began to produce results. Until the First World War, the BM, in common with most museums at home and abroad, had no research department to undertake the large and growing task of repair and restoration work and treatment, most such work being carried out by departmental technicians. As these technicians were insufficiently skilled to undertake the necessary restoration work Kenyon approached the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) for help. The establishment of a laboratory at the museum was approved in 1920, and given a meagre Treasury grant. Dr Alexander Scott, former consultant to the DSIR, was appointed Director, but had to run the new department on a very small budget relying on the help of volunteers especially in the early years (Wilson, 2002: 213-214). It was only in the 1930’s that the Laboratory came into its own as it became deeply involved in the packing and conservation of the Museum’s collections prior to the Second World War. In 1945, the Treasury increased the grant to the BM allowing for the establishment of five scientific assistants in the laboratory and eleven craftsmen in other departments (Wilson, 2002: 215, 256)

Ogden’s first-hand information and access to the items in the museum meant he was in a position to assist and advise with his expertise in metals and gold work (Millerman, 2004a, 2004b, 2008: 9). He also involved other experts to assist in the identification of the metals and the methods used by the early goldsmiths (Smith, 1930: 20-23, 1935; Stewart, 1933: 3, 11) making the excavation reports multi-disciplinary (Millerman, 2008: 10-12). Many of the items that came from the Ur excavations were damaged and in need of repair, a task that the Iraqis were ill equipped to deal with. Ogden was able to
arrange for analysis and restoration, frequently taking on the expense himself (Millerman, 2008: 9). Ogden also assisted in making reproductions (electrotypes) for the museum of items they would not be able to keep after the divisions of the excavated finds (Millerman, 2008: 9-10), again bearing much of the cost himself.

**Largesse**

Apart from the practical relationship, however, a more personal one emerged over the years as Ogden formed close friendships with various members of staff from the museum. Many of them went with their families to stay in Harrogate at Ogden’s invitation, where they could avail themselves of his car and driver to see the sights of Yorkshire (BMME, letter Ogden to Smith, 21st September 1933). His largesse also extended to gifts to departments and staff members, as well as their families, often in return for favours, snippets of information and objects but sometimes just as gestures of generosity and a recognition of the BM’s financial restraints. He had particularly good relationships with Hall and Smith (BM, Keepers EAA) and frequently sent them gifts.

Ogden’s generosity permeated all his dealings at the time with the archaeological community and the BM and became part of his personal relationships with those involved. Virtually every letter of his, and there are several hundred in the different archives, contains a reference to Ogden covering other people’s expenses or making some form of donation. It is difficult to ascertain whether Ogden was ‘buying favour’ or was simply an extremely generous man and it seems churlish to question the motives for his magnanimity.

He was in complete admiration of the archaeological world and the BM and would have enjoyed the reflected status that direct contact with them would have brought him. Indeed he was not averse to proudly describing his dealings with them in his articles and lectures. These lectures were for the purpose of raising money for the excavation fund, but Ogden was also paying any additional expenses incurred by the BM. During the Ur campaign, he also paid many of Woolley’s expenses for the publicity drive, such as advertising leaflets or the making of lantern slides (Figure 3).
He told Kenyon:

“I have read with intense interest and delight the reports of the new discoveries by Woolley and am commencing lecturing here in the north again next week. Is it possible to have lantern slides of the latest finds – I shall be glad to pay all the costs […] let the photographer have the negatives and have two sets made, one for the BM and one for me. I will pay for both. In my series of lectures I have no doubt whatever that I shall secure a further £200 for you” (BMME, letter Ogden to Kenyon, 11th January 1926).
He was so determined that the BM should understand his offer, he repeated it two days later. “I am sending this to you to remind you to have another set made for your museum collection – the whole of the bill to be sent to me” (BMME 13th January 1926).

The generosity was not limited to museum staff and endeared him to many, particularly the Woolleys. Ogden bestowed frequent gifts on both of them throughout the Ur excavations, such as little luxury items like “the most lovely manon glaces” (BMME, letter Woolley to Ogden, 4th December 1930) or replicas of some of the items they had uncovered. Their appreciation of his friendship appears genuine at first; Woolley wrote to him after receiving his gift of a pair of candlesticks:

“I don’t know why you should shower such gifts on us and I only hope that it gives as much pleasure to your generous self to bestow them as it does to us to receive them [...] I called round at Duke St. a little while ago to discover if and when you’d be coming to London but could get no certain news; please let me know when there will be a chance of seeing you again” (OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, 25th May 1930).

Ogden visited them both when they were resident at Bath, and Woolley stayed with Ogden when he was in the North of England on his lecture tours; Ogden wrote to him “Mrs Ogden and myself are looking forward with great pleasure to your visit a week on Monday next. Will you drop me a note saying what time you hope to arrive, then my car shall meet you and bring you along (OFA, letter Ogden to Woolley, 26th July 1927)?

It seems that Katharine Woolley particularly appreciated Ogden’s kindness. It would be fair to comment that Katharine’s life at Ur must have been somewhat lonely. She has been subject to criticism in the past for being a snob and rather manipulative in her way of dealing with people, unless they were ‘worth knowing’, particularly financially (Mallowan, 2001: 36-37; Winstone, 1990: 159). Her letters to Ogden however, portray a slightly softer side, someone who missed the flowers of England when continually surrounded by the desert, and having her own possessions around her (OFA, Katharine Woolley wrote several letters to Ogden from Ur). “We spend all our lives digging up things that don’t belong to us and it makes me appreciate so much the things that are one’s own” (OFA, Katharine Woolley letter to Ogden, 2nd February 1930).
Ogden extended the courtesy he felt towards the Woolleys to their excavation foreman as well. Hamoudi, the nickname of Mohammed ibn Sheik Ibrahim, had worked with Woolley since his time at Carchemish before the War and was joined on the Ur excavation by his sons Yahia, Ibrahim and Alawi. Yahia acted as photographer and nearly all the field photographs that Woolley used in his 1934 report were taken by him (Woolley, 1934a: 8). Hamoudi obviously took very good care of Ogden during his stay at Ur in 1926 as Ogden gave him an engraved cigarette case and an album of photographs from his trip (OFA, Ogden letter to Woolley, 26th July 1927; OFA, Woolley letter to Ogden, 29th July 1927; OFA, Ogden letter to Woolley, 3rd August 1927).

Ogden’s generosity did not go unrewarded. In addition to up-to-date information, he also received un-specified objects. His letters sometimes make intriguing but unexplained references to “[t]he box of goods arrived quite safely from the BM and I am very delighted with the contents” (OFA, letter Ogden to Woolley, 3rd August 1927).

Despite this apparent friendship between the Woolleys and Ogden during all the years of the Ur excavation, there does not seem to be any recorded communication between them afterwards apart from a congratulatory telegram to Ogden in 1935 when he received the Freedom of the City in Harrogate. Mallowan commented that “both the Woolleys were snobs and were unashamed to bend any potential helpers to their aid and likewise cast them off when they were no longer useful, a short-sighted policy which made enemies” (Mallowan, 2001: 37).

Ogden’s ‘usefulness’ in the fundraising matters however, was almost taken for granted by Woolley, and it is possible that, as Mallowan commented, once Ogden had served this purpose, the friendship ceased. It is also possible that Ogden only kept records of correspondence as it related to the subjects he was lecturing on, and that he felt that personal correspondence was not suitable for the archive. However, as many of the letters from Woolley that he did keep, referred to quite private matters, concerning Katharine’s health for example, it seems likely that communication between them faded away when the Woolleys had no further need of his input.

Woolley was not the only one sending gifts in return for services rendered either. After Ogden’s advice concerning the repair of the donkey rein ring from Ur, Hall sent him “pieces from the mosaic pillar” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 29th August 1930; Millerman, 2008: 5 - 6). Ogden replied:
“Thank you most sincerely for your kindness in sending me the pieces from the Mosaic pillar – I shall use these by showing them to people who I hope to interest in all the great work that you are doing for the nation” (BMME, Ogden letter to Hall, 1st September 1930).

There are no accounts to quantify the extent of Ogden’s generosity. His correspondences with the BM simply refer to him covering the costs of making slides, assaying the metalwork (Millerman, 2008; BMME, letter Plenderleith to Smith, 18th May 1932) and making replicas. In the latter case, he instructed that the replicas should be made to a higher standard than that requested by the BM, and the extra cost charged to him (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 1st February, 1929; BMCA SC: 4530, 9th February, 1929). He also made personal “significant donations” to the funds which are noted but not detailed in the BM accounts. The BMCA SC minutes frequently refer to contributions as coming “through” Ogden, or “collected by” him (BMCA WY1/24/79; BMCA SC: 4249, 9th January 1926; BMCA SC: 4338, 12th February 1927).

Whether Ogden was taken advantage of, or whether he simply got satisfaction from bestowing his largesse on the people he admired, the situation was a reflection of how the network of relationships worked at the time to the ultimate benefit of all concerned. Some patrons of archaeology could be very demanding and difficult as will be examined in Chapter 5. Ogden however appears to have been able to maintain warm and friendly relations with almost everyone he dealt with. As an astute businessman, Ogden was adept at building strong relationships with his many and varied clients. Needless to say, attracted by his role as ‘court jeweller’, many of his customers were wealthy and famous people and he saw it as part of his duty to inform them of the health benefits and inspiring beauty of his homeland of Yorkshire and persuaded many of them to visit. He was also a man of discretion and modesty who frequently requested anonymity in his actions. It is perhaps this trait that has caused him to fade from recognition outside his home town. Ogden continued lecturing until he died in April 1940. Ogden’s own collection of items from the excavation sites he visited was bequeathed to Harrogate Council and Leeds University in 1940 (Harrogate Herald, 1940: 2).
Chapter Four

Leonard Woolley

The life and work of Woolley, the second protagonist in this study, is explored in more detail in this chapter. Following a brief biography and summary of his excavations, the chapter will then investigate the criticisms that have been raised by his contemporaries and later writers.

Charles Leonard Woolley was born in London on 17th April 1880, the son of a vicar. In his early years he was taught at home by his father, an education centred mainly on the Bible and the Classics. Subsequently, he attended a school for the sons of the clergy (Winstone, 1990: 7). Theology seemed to be the obvious calling for his future career when he went to Oxford University. However, Woolley “failed to shine” at his religious studies despite two attempts at his finals and contemplated becoming a teacher (Winstone, 1990: 15-16). His tutor however suggested that Woolley become an archaeologist, a career he began at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in 1905.

Despite the general growing interest in archaeology in the early 20th century, Woolley initially only became an archaeologist at the recommendation of his college warden at Oxford, rather than through any burning ambition. He commented that he “was not quite sure what an archaeologist was” but he became one and never regretted it (Woolley, 1954: 9). There is no evidence that he was influenced by earlier archaeologists or by a missionary zeal to excavate the ‘Holy Lands’. Woolley himself said that his education had been a classical one and he had only taken any interest in archaeology where it had a bearing on his studies, such as Schliemann’s romantic account of his discoveries at Troy. He admitted that he was only “vaguely aware that Petrie was, year after year, making history in Egypt and that Arthur Evans was unearthing the Palace of Minos in Crete” (Woolley, 1953a: 11). However Woolley needed to make a living and after a few momentary doubts in his first position as an assistant at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, he committed himself to this chosen path, albeit one chosen by someone else. Having “never studied archaeological methods even from books (there were none at that time dealing with the subject)” (Winstone, 1990: 18), he took as his example “that great pioneer, Pitt Rivers” favouring the more methodological approach rather than a frantic hunt for exciting finds (Woolley, 1953a: 14-15).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880 (17th April)</td>
<td>Born, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1904</td>
<td>Oxford University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-8</td>
<td>Assistant to David Hogarth at Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Met T.E. Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Excavation of Roman site at Corbridge, Northumberland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908-10</td>
<td>Assistant on University of Pennsylvania’s excavation in Nubia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Succeeded Hogarth at Carchemish, Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-16</td>
<td>First World War, Royal Field Artillery (Special Intelligence) Cairo, then Port Said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-18</td>
<td>Prisoner of War, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-20</td>
<td>Carchemish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td><em>Dead Towns and Living Men</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Military Intelligence, Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>EES excavation at Amarna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-1934</td>
<td>Directorship of the Joint Expedition to Ur, Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td><em>Al’ Ubaid</em> published, the first of ten volumes on the <em>Ur Excavations</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td><em>The Sumerians</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td><em>Ur of the Chaldees</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Excavations at Ur and the Hebrew Record</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td><em>Digging up the Past</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-38</td>
<td>Excavated at Atchana, Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Awarded a Knighthood for services to archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Archaeological Adviser India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Second World War, Military Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Archaeological Adviser to the Directorate of Civil Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943 (November)</td>
<td>Katharine Woolley died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td><em>Ur: The first phases</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-49</td>
<td>Excavated at Atchana, Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td><em>A Forgotten Kingdom</em> published, <em>Spadework</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td><em>Excavations at Ur: A Record of 12 Years Work</em> published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 (20th February)</td>
<td>Leonard Woolley died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td><em>As I Seem to Remember</em> published posthumously.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.* A brief biography of Woolley (based on Winstone, 1990).
His time at the Ashmolean led to his first experience of excavating, when he spent the summer of 1907 at Corbridge, the ancient Roman site of Corstopitum. He left the Ashmolean in 1908, preferring to take an active role in archaeology and was offered a place in the University Museum of Pennsylvania’s excavation in Nubia which introduced him to field archaeology. Here he worked with Randall Maclver, a former student of Flinders Petrie (Winstone, 1990: 16-24). The archaeological community at this time was a relatively small, international fraternity (Goode, 2007: 7). Many of those working in the Near East in the first decades of the 20th century knew each other, or had worked on the same sites and trained at the same time. Many British archaeologists were from the same Oxford or Cambridge Universities and public school backgrounds. Lord Carnarvon had been interested in securing Woolley’s services on his concession in Egypt as early as 1911. At the same time however, David Hogarth wanted Woolley to work at Carchemish, on the Turkey/Syria border. As Mesopotamia and Syria held a greater appeal to Woolley than Egypt (Winstone, 1990: 24), he eventually decided to accept Hogarth’s offer, and in 1912, went to work at Carchemish with Hogarth’s assistant, T.E. Lawrence. Hogarth had accepted the position of Keeper at the Ashmolean, leaving the site to Campbell-Thompson and Lawrence, and offering his own position to Woolley. As Woolley began writing his first reports at Nubia and Carchemish, he developed an ability to convey complex archaeological detail in an easy, intelligible language which would see him become one of the most accessible popularisers of archaeology (Winstone, 1990: 31).

In the summer of 1914 the First World War began but in many respects the archaeological community remained involved in the region. Military Intelligence established a local office at the Savoy Hotel in Cairo. Hogarth was in charge of gathering information, Lawrence was making maps and writing geographical reports, and Woolley, with his flair for writing, was, for a short period, in charge of propaganda for the press, or as Lawrence put it “writing windy concealers of truth for the press” (Winstone, 1990: 63). This team was soon joined by Gertrude Bell after Hogarth recommended her to the Director of Naval Intelligence as a spy. When she arrived she was met by Woolley who was moving from the Cairo office to the Port Said intelligence office. In 1916 Woolley was captured and became a POW in Turkey.

Britain did not allow the war to interfere completely with their archaeological interest in the area; in fact there were certain opportunities. In 1917, the War Office agreed to suggestions by Kenyon that one or more archaeologists should be attached to British armies in Mesopotamia and Palestine to safeguard the monuments and such
antiquities in those countries as might be brought to light in the course of military operations and to conduct excavations if opportunities arose. The Assyriologist Campbell-Thompson was detailed for this and during the course of these duties was able to conduct some excavations at Tel-el-Mukayyar (Ur) and Shahrein (Kenyon, 1934: 45). In 1918, Hall was sent by the BM to continue these excavations, an expedition that only lasted for one season as lack of funding and the Trustees’ nervousness about the unstable political situation brought matters to a halt (BMCA SC, 9th October 1920: 3771). It became politically impossible for Woolley to resume work at Carchemish. Therefore in 1922 he was appointed director of the new expedition to Ur, 120 miles north of Basra in former Mesopotamia (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Map of Ancient Iraq sites. Courtesy of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
**Woolley and Ur**

The Ur Excavation ran from 1922 until 1934. The excavations produced significant archaeological discoveries that have kept the site at the forefront of our knowledge about the region. Woolley brought to life a new understanding of the Sumerian civilisation and built a comprehensive picture of the area from its prehistoric beginnings. Ur was a city of importance during the Early Dynastic period, c. 3000-2350 BC, but much architectural evidence was destroyed by the buildings of the later Ur 111 period at the end of the third millennium. The most spectacular discovery was of the Royal Cemetery of the Early Dynastic period containing 2,500 burials, mostly of common people and lacking much in the way of grave goods (Bienkowski & Millard, 2000: 309-12). However 16 of the tombs were found with rich grave goods and it was this discovery that was to excite the public in dozens of countries (Fagan, 2007: 302).

The excitement mounted during the excavation as reports linking the site of Ur with the biblical stories of Abraham and Jacob appeared frequently in the press accompanied by tales of human sacrifice and multiple burials. The excitement culminated in 1929 when press reports indicated that Woolley had found evidence of the biblical flood.

Woolley’s enthusiasm and dedication helped the Ur expedition to continue till 1934 but the threat of a new Antiquities Act of Iraq forced it to close. Woolley and the BM had relied heavily on the ability of his friends and wealthy benefactors, such as Albert Reckitt (Cheadle, 2006: 94373), Robert Mond (Greenaway, 2015: 51124) and Oscar Raphael (British Museum, 2015; Gray, 1945), but this was a circumstance that would not be repeated in such a way, and the Second World War was about to change the political landscape again. The changes in legislation which ended the removal of antiquities from their country of origin meant that private funders no longer had the incentive of adding to their collections to tempt them to contribute. Replicas in the form of casts, rubbings, electrotypes or photographs were an acceptable substitute for the original items for the museums and the public, but not necessarily for those benefactors who had agendas other than purely an interest in biblical archaeology, namely to add to their collections.

Following his work at Ur, Woolley and other archaeologists turned their attention to Syria which was under French mandate and where it was easier to get permission to excavate. Funding issues however remained problematic for Woolley. Initially he was commissioned by the BM to excavate at Atchana in North Syria. Unfortunately, the Trustees felt that the speculative nature of the expedition did not warrant such a large
financial commitment from them and withdrew their funding. The excavation continued to be carried out in the name of the BM, but the funding actually came from Neil Malcolm, an old friend and ex-army colleague of Woolley’s from his military service in Cairo (Winstone, 1990: 203).

Woolley spent a brief time as archaeological adviser to India in 1938 at the request of the Government of India. His remit was to produce an overview of archaeology and its management there. He made wide-reaching recommendations for the reorganisation of the Archaeological Survey of India. Within months, the Second World War began and Woolley returned to military service (Winstone, 1990: 214, 221). It was on his advice that General Eisenhower ordered the prohibition of the looting and damaging of buildings containing art treasures (Bienkowski & Millard, 2000: 322).

Woolley continued writing his official reports for Ur during his final years, although many of the ten volumes of Ur reports only appeared posthumously. He also continued writing his ‘popular’ books until his death in 1960.

**Woolley’s Legacy**

Apart from a few criticisms during the Ur campaigns, the excavation was mostly deemed a huge success by the public and academia alike with the press at times almost verging on hysteria in its excitement, particularly in America. Woolley’s involvement with the wider public through his books on Ur, his newspaper articles and his series of radio broadcasts meant that he was popularly regarded as a hero of his age. In August 1928, he was described in the Illustrated London News (ILN) as “the famous archaeologist” (cited in McCall, 2001: 51). He was rewarded with a knighthood in 1935 for his overall contribution to archaeology, specifically his work at Ur with which he became synonymous. McCall described that “recognition had been slow in coming, but now the man and the place were linked: he was indeed Woolley of Ur” (2001: 51).

Criticism of Woolley however began to a slight extent during the Ur excavation itself. It was not based on the choice of site, his methodology, or that he may have been ‘Bible-led’. The site was not chosen by him but by the two participating museums and his methodology placed him at the forefront of archaeology at the time. He was not criticised as being ‘Bible-led’ as the Bible was still playing a major role in people’s lives. Using the Bible as a point of reference would not have been particularly unusual at that time. Max Mallowan, who joined Woolley as his assistant at Ur for the 4th season in 1925, wrote in his autobiography
"In this age when the Bible is a neglected book of literature it is hard to conceive how important the revelation of the scriptures was to the public mind and indeed the excavation of Ur was partly induced by this consideration" (2001: 55).

Looking at the writings of other contemporary archaeologists, many used the same biblical language as Woolley. Hogarth, for example, used such a reference in his report on the Carchemish excavation for the BM, begun under his supervision but passed on to Woolley shortly before the First World War. Hogarth discussed the reasons for associating the modern site of Djerabis with Carchemish as “it being the one that was referred to in the Old Testament” stating that “were it not for the Old Testament we should have no knowledge of the place from external sources” (1914: 13, 17).

Interestingly, when Woolley (1952) wrote the second report on the work at Carchemish, he made no biblical references at all.

The early criticism of Woolley’s work at Ur was instead entirely based on some of the interpretations of his findings that he presented to the public, that it was sometimes more fanciful than facts permitted or out of line with chronologies of the time. These early criticisms are few and difficult to find, mainly appearing in letters to newspapers, or correspondence between fellow archaeologists. The experts as well as the public held strong views over some of Woolley’s claims and the matters were hotly debated in the press. Following Woolley’s claims to have found evidence of the biblical flood in 1929, W.E. Barnes, a Cambridge Professor of Divinity, pleaded caution and a suspension of judgement until clearer evidence was found (OFA, W.E. Barnes, unaccredited newspaper). Nash, an Oxford Lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament, felt that the evidence, such as it existed, was being manipulated by both the archaeologists and the newspapers, and opined that even professional scholars

“[w]ere dependent on newspaper reports which are apt to seize too eagerly on points that can be worked up, with the aid of scare headlines, into good copy […] There is nothing to support the medieval theory that the origin of man is to be sought in the Euphrates country about 4000BC. The attempt to connect this part of the discovery with any such theory is simply a newspaper stunt” (Nash, 1929: no page).
Campbell-Thompson, long-time associate of Woolley, reviewed Woolley's book *Abraham* (1936), written shortly after the Ur excavation ended, for the *Antiquaries Journal*:

“Sir Leonard Woolley is the most competent digger in the world and of unsurpassed reputation as a practical archaeologist and if he had been content to describe Ur and the ancient life of its inhabitants, there could have been none to criticise adversely; but Abraham and Hebrew origins demand specialisation on lines other than excavation, and to attempt to solve the problem which they afford without due preparation is perilous […] there can surely be no two opinions about the impropriety of ill-equipped theorising, and since, as Sir Leonard himself says, ‘at Ur no concrete memorial was brought to light’, the criticism is reinforced” (Campbell-Thompson, 1936: 476-480).

The critique that diminished Woolley’s reputation and his interpretation of his work in the mid-20th century began with the advent of *New Archaeology*, and the view that archaeology needed to become more scientific (Trigger, 2006: 401). Braidwood, describing the development wrote that “[i]t was important to behave and talk like a scientist […] it was declared [by the ‘new’ archaeologists] that ‘nothing written before 1960 is worth reading’” (cited in Daniel, 1981: 191). Biblical archaeology, and any archaeologist rightly or wrongly associated with it, was particularly to fall foul of the new way of thinking. Although the ensuing theoretical debates opened up and innovated archaeological thought, the views about earlier archaeology and its practice became more entrenched. The new ways of thinking led to terminology and presentation that was more professional, but much less accessible to non-specialists and a public that may have been more interested in the spectacular and romantic aspects of archaeology (Shanks, 1992: 22). The era of Woolley, and his unique approach to the public of telling them stories that breathed life into archaeology, was seen as belonging to another time. The effect was that he was dismissed as Bible-led and unscientific, an easy target for criticism.

The assumption that many archaeologists of the period were excavating to prove the veracity of the Bible has been at the basis of much of the criticism levelled at Woolley; that his strong religious beliefs meant that his judgement was coloured by his faith. However, an examination of Woolley’s career reveals that, during his pre-Ur years, he did not resort to biblical association particularly, nor did he do so after Ur. The Ur campaign however is largely remembered for the constant associations with the “house
of Abraham” or the “City of the Flood” (Romer, 2000: 128). Therefore it is too simplistic to dismiss Woolley as merely a biblical archaeologist and it becomes necessary to examine why Woolley behaved as he did at Ur.

Many modern writers credit Woolley briefly with leading the excavation at Ur and the information gathered from it, but only do so in passing before discussing the excavation more generally and, additionally, temper this with criticisms of Woolley’s interpretations of his findings. Woolley is remembered as someone who made dramatic claims about his results without having scientific evidence to support them, who referenced the Bible in order to gain public support for this work and who made extensive use of the media to disseminate his work (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 8-11). He is in effect dismissed as a biblical headline seeker. Bernhardsson’s opinion was that Woolley went to Ur specifically looking for those findings, saying “instead of preaching about the Bible, Woolley chose instead to uncover some of its stories and figures, and was determined to prove the historicity of the Bible” (2005: 132). Fagan (2007: 302) described how Woolley relied little on consulting with his staff in forming his opinions and tended to overstate his findings to dramatize the story for the wider audience.

The critical interpretation of Woolley's presentation methods is repeated in historical accounts of the excavations at Ur, or the history of archaeology, or any biographical accounts of early archaeologists. It is held up as an example of how ‘misguided’ archaeological presentation could be in the late 19th and early 20th century and how far archaeological presentation has progressed today, to a more objective, scientific study. This view has changed surprisingly little over the last few decades. In 1972, when discussing the bodies in the ‘death pit’ at the Royal Cemetery, Wellard dismissed Woolley as being “somewhat out of his depth here or perhaps falling back on the age-old justification of murder in the name of religion” (1972: 94). Crawford (1991: 120), writing on the same subject 20 years later, suggested that “Woolley’s explanation seems to remain valid […] but his insistence on the willing submission of the other human inhabitants may be a little romanticised”. A decade later, Leick (2001: 115) stated “Woolley’s inability to conceive of such customs owes as much to Victorian sensibilities about death as to his lack of ethnographic knowledge”. Matthews also approached his review of Woolley’s work from this position stating

“Woolley’s emphasis on the biblical connections of his work at Ur […] strongly situate his work within the intellectual framework directly descended from that of the mid-19th century” (Matthews, 2006: 15).
Most recently, Fagan (2007: 302) dismissed Woolley’s reports on the royal cemetery as “Woolley at his worst” adding that his staff often only learned of Woolley’s interpretations in the newspapers.

Throughout, there seems to have been no questioning as to whether the premise of this criticism is accurate. On what evidence was the criticism of Woolley based and when did the critique of Woolley as ‘Bible-led’ begin, and why? To gain a better understanding of Woolley’s underlying motifs, it is first important to appreciate the influence Mallowan had on later writers by presenting a perceptively authoritative narrative of Woolley’s archaeological work.

**The Mallowan Effect**

Much of the written criticism of Woolley by later authors usually references comments made by Mallowan, particularly his memoirs (2001), written in 1977. Mallowan was young and inexperienced when he began work as Woolley’s assistant at Ur in 1925, his first position as an archaeologist after leaving university and one he held from 1925-1930. He married the writer Agatha Christie in 1930 after meeting her when she visited Ur.

Mallowan worked for Woolley for six years and therefore had first-hand experience of Woolley’s methods and opinions. Mallowan’s excavating career continued successfully after his work at Ur, always specialising in ancient Near Eastern history. He achieved prominent positions in Western Asiatic Archaeology, at the BSAI, University of London and Oxford University. Appointed the new Chair of Western Asiatic Archaeology in 1947, his responsibility was to teach post-graduate students (McCall, 2001: 155-156). That year he also became Director of the BSAI. His influence in the discipline through the 1940’s and 50’s was therefore far-reaching and shaped the attitudes of a new generation of archaeologists.

Mallowan retired from the field in 1959, feeling that archaeology was changing and that professionally trained, more scientific young men were now emerging (McCall, 2001: 174). He published *Mallowan’s Memoirs* in 1977 and it is this account of his relationship with Woolley, written almost thirty-five years after the events at Ur that is so often quoted. Mallowan wrote that excavating at Ur had a powerful attraction for Woolley because of its close association with the Old Testament.
“There was still a wide Bible-reading public, and Woolley himself had been trained as a theologian and at one time destined to enter the Church. He thought that by going to Ur he would bring to life the Old Testament, a task in which he brilliantly succeeded. [...] It was always Woolley’s hope to discover some reference to Abraham, and although that name never appeared in the cuneiform record he succeeded in reconstructing the background of that Old Testament prophet’s original home before he migrated from Sumer (later named Babylon) to Palestine” (Mallowan, 2001: 34).

Mallowan wrote that also prominent in Woolley’s mind before setting to work at Ur was Genesis 10:10,

“which described how Cush became the father of Nimrod, and referred to the land of Shinar’ – that is to say Sumer, and this line of thinking made Woolley feel that the true object of his commission was to reconstruct the vanished picture of Sumerian civilisation, This was his greatest achievement and will evermore stand as a memorial to his name, for his discoveries demonstrated that Sumerian Ur was indeed one of the cradles of civilisation, no less important than Egypt” (Mallowan, 2001: 34-35).

Mallowan stated that Woolley was “the son of a parson and had been brought up on the scriptures; he had a remarkable memory for both the Old and New Testaments” (2001: 55). Woolley’s religious upbringing is well documented. Woolley himself wrote of his upbringing in a very religious family, but, as previously stated, said that his decision not to follow a theological career was based on his failure to shine in his theology studies at university (Winstone, 1990: 15, 16).

The remark that his references to the Bible were instinctive may, on the surface, appear to be a logical inference, but does not take into account any wider circumstances that may have explained Woolley’s behaviour and of which Mallowan must have been aware. Mallowan’s opinion that Woolley was biblically influenced however passed into accepted fact. The comments were not questioned or challenged and became seen as ‘primary source’ material to be repeated unquestioningly whenever a quote about Woolley was needed. We cannot know what passed between the two men in conversation but there seems to be no written evidence of any discussions between Woolley and Mallowan concerning religious aspects to the
excavation. The written evidence of Woolley discussing religious connections to his work with colleagues is limited to a single reference to Ogden during the twelve year campaign, about beadwork being from the “time of Abraham” (OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, 15th August 1925)\(^5\) and with the two museums to a single reference to the possible discovery of a tablet with an Abrahamic inscription (BMCA CE 32/28/11/1, 31st January 1929). In contrast to this is the fact that Woolley had to reprimand Mallowan for discussing this possible discovery with a friend when the details were uncertain and the inscription had not been verified by the British Museum (Mallowan, 2001: 56). It needs acknowledging therefore that Mallowan’s comments are at best only a personal opinion presented very much after the event.

As these opinions are so often repeated and used as ‘source evidence’ for much criticism levelled against Woolley, it is necessary to understand the motives Mallowan may have had for writing such remarks. One suggestion would be that he may have felt a need to distance himself from Woolley later in a bid to consolidate his own career. This interpretation is given some credence by McCall who, in her biography of Mallowan, described how marriage to Agatha Christie increased Mallowan’s standing in the world (2001: 83). She was fifteen years his senior so that he automatically entered a world of people older than himself. “Just 7 years after joining the Ur excavation as very much the junior assistant, to be corrected at every turn by Woolley, the Mallowans became social companions to the Woolleys” (McCall, 2001: 83). He left Ur shortly after his marriage to Christie in 1930, but remained friendly with Woolley until his death.

The longevity of Mallowan’s view can be traced from the publication of his book to scholars writing in the 21st century. Moorey (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 8; Moorey, 1999: 79) repeated the Mallowan view stating “[h]is [Woolley’s] popular books were full of Biblical allusions and he was ever ready to bring the Old Testament to bear on his archaeological discoveries.” It should be emphasised that Moorey is here referring to Woolley's popular books, not his official reports. He added “[f]or analogies and comparisons he turned instinctively to the Bible, as did many of the generation of readers for whom he was writing” (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 8, 1999: 79). He referred to Mallowan as “being in a better position than anyone else to comment on Woolley”(Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 9). In stark contrast to this view however is a later

\(^5\) OFA, August 1925, Woolley sent Ogden an assortment from Ur, supposedly just beads and bits and pieces, saying “[h]ere are a lot. They are mixed; all come from Ur, most date between 2400 and 2000 BC, roughly, the time of Abraham: but there are some later ones mixed in with them, though I don’t suppose that will greatly matter!”
comment by Winckworth, epigraphist at Ur between 1930 and 1931. He later told his students that “Woolley did not for a moment believe that his famous ‘flood level’ had anything to do with Noah’s Flood but that it was good for publicity” (Winstone, 1990: 182,3).

Mallowan however repeated his view in the entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography 1951-1960 stating that Woolley

“uncritically associated Ur, and even particular levels, with Ur ‘of the Chaldees’, home of Abraham in the Old Testament, without questioning whether the biblical traditions had a historical basis” (Mallowan, 1971: 1082-4).

The entry on Woolley in the Dictionary of the Ancient Near East (Bienkowski & Millard, 2000: 322) repeats the Mallowan quotes from the ODNB. Bernhardsson (2005: 132) wrote “[Instead of preaching about the Bible, Woolley chose instead to uncover some of its stories and figures, and was determined to prove the historicity of the Bible].” Bernhardsson went on to repeat Moorey’s comment that Woolley instinctively turned to the Bible, which in turn repeated Mallowan’s remarks. It is interesting to note that Bernhardsson criticised this very type of repetition in his own PhD, saying “very few histories of archaeology contain source research. Rather, the writers rely on various secondary accounts. The effect is that the same theories, stories and interpretations have been recycled over and over again” (1999: 20-21).

Likewise, Matthews (2006: 15) continued to repeat the Mallowan viewpoint. Goode wrote “he [Woolley] thought that by going to Ur he would bring to life the Old Testament” (2007: 190). Interestingly, on my enquiring of the author where he found this reference which he stated was in a letter from Kenyon to Gordon (Directors of the BM and Penn respectively), he admitted it was a mistake in the transcript and was in fact based on Mallowan’s memoirs.6 It is not the error in referencing that is notable here; it is that the assumption of Woolley’s motivation is so entrenched in current thinking, that the mistake was not obvious and did not need checking. This is unfortunately a clear example of views being expounded which are based on mistaken and assumed evidence and then passed on as accepted fact.

6 Author’s e-mail conversation with Professor Goode, 8th February 2008.
Let us return to Mallowan himself and reconsider his work at Ur in order to understand his original attitude towards Woolley and biblical associations of his work. In 1930, Mallowan wrote a report on the work at Ur and the discovery claimed by Woolley as evidence of the ‘Biblical Flood’ (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7) (Mallowan, 1930: 95-130). He described the discovery as “the great flood of Genesis” and credited the expedition as being “under the brilliant direction of Mr C. Leonard Woolley” (Mallowan 1930: 101). Mallowan also described the discovery of the lost site of Ur in 1854 by Taylor saying that

“[e]xperts at once realised the significance of the find, but it was many years before readers of the Bible were startled into realising that Ur of the Chaldees, mentioned in the Book of Genesis as the home of Abraham, was in very truth to be indicated precisely on the map” (Mallowan, 1930: 104-5).

**The Mallowan Position on the Flood**

There is no evidence to clarify whether Mallowan implicitly believed Woolley’s identification at the time, or whether he may have been instructed by Woolley to write such an article or it may just have been his part in the team effort to promote the same ‘spin’ to the public. He wrote:

“The meaning of the stratum became instantly obvious. Our clean bank of clay was the deposit of a great flood that had wiped out the primitive civilisations beneath it. The casual observer might argue that such a find was only to be expected in a country whose two great rivers flooded annually, and that our clay bank merely indicated an ancient local flood. True, it was an ancient and a local flood in a sense but there is every reason to believe that it was something very much more than this: that it was the great Biblical Flood related in the Book of Genesis, a flood that afterward came to be regarded not as a local but as a world flood” (Mallowan, 1930: 118-120).

This paragraph was followed by two pages of “salient features” to persuade “those skeptics [sic] who will wish to disbelieve” (Mallowan, 1930: 118-120). There is no written record of Mallowan’s opinions at the time of Woolley’s interpretation of the archaeological finds, only his later thoughts. Without acknowledging his own earlier writing on the subject, Mallowan later re-considered “Noah’s Flood” a few years after Woolley’s death. He debunked the claim of Woolley because it was “of a far too early period, i.e. the flood of the Old Testament may have occurred in about 2900BC, not
4000BC as at Ur" (2001: 47). He stated, “[t]here was some amusement in watching, as I did at the time, this dispute between the masters, each claiming the authentic Flood as his own” (1964:75) and denounced Woolley’s contribution to archaeology summarily as “Woolley missing the true mark” (2001: 47). It is difficult to see this action as anything but Mallowan’s opportunity to correct the record, claim that the article represented Woolley’s input, that he had merely written what he had been told to write by Woolley, and had not personally agreed with him. Mallowan had the opportunity later in his career to disassociate himself from his earlier writing on the flood discovery but did not take it. As he became more experienced and had time to re-consider the findings, he clearly had revised his opinions but did not refer to his earlier role in the interpretation of the excavation.

By the time he wrote his autobiography in 1977, Mallowan was referring to the flood as “a discovery after Woolley’s heart; a plausible authentication of the Old Testament record, for the excitement of the Bible-reading public, and Woolley, a brilliant journalist, made the best of it” (Mallowan, 2001: 46). He added that “Woolley, not for the first time, made a brilliant identification which missed the true mark” (Mallowan, 2001: 47). This comment, although disparaging of Woolley, appears rather to be an attempt by Mallowan to cover up his own earlier participation in the identification and publication of the ‘flood’ theory, to which he did not refer again.

In 1960, shortly after Woolley’s death, Mallowan wrote a memorandum in Iraq (1960: 1-17). He wrote proudly of the work they had done excavating the Royal Cemetery, revealing “the wealth and splendour of archaic Sumer” which had inspired the Poet Laureate of the time to immortalise Ur after speaking to Woolley (citing excerpt from Robert Bridges’ “The Testament of Beauty”, 1929, Mallowan, 1960: 9 and 10).

“Who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
To dig out Abram’s birthplace in the lorn graveyard
Of Asian monarchies; - and low hummocks of dust
Betray where legendary cities lie entombed,
Chaldean Kish and Ur”.

There is no dismissal by Mallowan here of the biblical associations of Ur. At first glance therefore, Mallowan’s later critique of Woolley being Bible-led could equally apply to his own writings. However, having been the junior assistant, it is equally possible that his
references to the Bible could simply be considered as very much the novice student following the famous master whom he wanted to impress.

At first, the evidence against Mallowan seems slim, based merely on a couple of remarks in his memoir. However, as a direct consequence of Mallowan’s memoirs, his views of Woolley’s character and motives have been repeated through the decades until Woolley’s name has become synonymous, not only with archaeological discovery, but with inaccuracies based on personal belief and prejudice. However, this view of Woolley is simplistic and narrow, and assumes that Woolley was simply promoting a personal agenda rather than consciously ‘spinning’ a very particular agenda in response to desperate circumstances. Mallowan discounted the wider circumstances of the excavation, namely the urgent need to raise its profile in order to generate the funding it lacked.

Looking at the Wider Picture

The discounting of the wider circumstances of the excavation is illustrated by Moorey’s 1982 revised and updated account of Woolley’s “Ur of the Chaldees” (Woolley & Moorey, 1982). Woolley’s first popular account of the excavation, originally written in 1929 and covering the first seven years of the excavation, was so popular with the general public that it was re-printed eight times before release as a paperback in 1938. The book’s continuing popularity meant Woolley needed to rewrite it in 1954 adding the details of the final years of the excavation. The second edition of Woolley’s book is in itself an edited version of his original, and he removed many of the biblical references, reflecting the gradually changing attitudes of society. The 1929 edition had eleven references to Abraham whereas the 1954 edition had only three (Table 4).

Of these remaining references, the first was used to give a general ‘date’ to the traditional story of the Mesopotamian flood, which Woolley described as written on tablets “before the time of Abraham” (1955: 34). The second reference is again a ‘dating’ tool. Discussing the statues dubbed “The Rams in the Thicket” (see Chapter 7), Woolley said the statues were made “fifteen hundred years before Abraham was born” (1955: 75). The final reference concerned the description of Taylor’s original work at the Ziggurat of Ur in the mid-19th century, when the site was identified as “Ur of the Chaldees, the biblical home of Abraham” (1955: 128).
Table 4. Woolley 1929 and 1954 comparison of Abraham usage.

Demand for the book remained undiminished; therefore in 1982 Moorey was invited to produce a revised edition. In his preface (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 7-11), Moorey explained that he had made some “substantial changes” to three areas of Woolley’s original report, namely the biblical allusions, the colourful and vivid descriptions that went beyond the bounds of archaeological evidence, and, finally, Woolley’s adherence to his own chronologies and opinions despite being out of step with academic consensus at the time. Moorey explained the need to remove all of Woolley’s “biblical and ‘extravagant’ claims” because they were unjustified and inaccurate, without examining the reasons for them or questioning who the intended audience were. He saw the need to re-present the information in a particular way, to meet the needs of the modern audience, and to educate that audience more appropriately in today’s academic climate (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 10). This would seem to be a valid justification of his actions. However, it must then be acknowledged that this ‘presentation’ of the data in a particular way to suit a particular audience at a particular time is exactly what Woolley did, tailored his data to suit his audience at a particular time, for very specific reasons.
The political, economical, archaeological and social context of Woolley’s work

Throughout this thesis I will demonstrate that Woolley’s biblical associations and exuberant claims were not born out of a strong religious background or a misunderstanding of the archaeological evidence, as intimated by his critics, but rather a clear awareness of the great expenses incurred by excavations and an understanding of how to mobilise funding for his goals. Three aspects, in particular, are important for our discussion: a) Woolley’s desire to make himself understood by referencing familiar religious tropes, b) Woolley’s desire to target his writings successfully at the general public, and c) Woolley’s desire to ‘outdo’ the archaeology of Egypt. I will look at these issues in turn below.

Using Biblical Allusions

It is regarded now as ‘unscientific’ to include the biblical allusions in accounts of the work at Ur. However, in the 1920’s, Iraq was a new country with a new name, unfamiliar to the western population at large. The Cairo conference in 1921 saw the re-drawing of boundaries in the area, and the formation of Iraq out of the country and tribal lands that largely made up Mesopotamia. By referring to the area not as Iraq but as ‘the birthplace of Abraham’, Woolley – and others - were able to make the more direct connection between the past that people recognised from their biblical and classical points of reference, and the present in which he was excavating. By using the more traditional descriptions of the area, a resonance was instantly struck in the public perception.

Such references are still used today to fix the location of Iraq in the public perception of the area, by associating it with traditional references. As Pollock (1994: 269) stated “[b]iblical references are commonly used to identify sites and to produce in the reader an implicit identification with the material under discussion”. This method seems to be the same as that employed by those writing about Iraq in the early 20th century. Hudson wrote that

“[i]n Layard’s day, and for long afterwards, English people of all classes were in a good position to receive news of discoveries in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Egypt. They had a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and the people and places mentioned in it were familiar to them as a result of generations of church-going, sermon-listening and Bible reading. The Bible lands were real in a way that the territory and cultures of classical Greece and Rome were not. With places like
Nineveh, Jerusalem and Babylon, and people like Nebuchadnezzar, they were among friends” (Hudson, 1981: 73-74).

By referring back to these traditional associations, the area becomes reinforced in the public mind as ‘their own’, as part of their heritage. These allusions are still widely used in present day media reports of the area. Scarcely a newspaper report during the recent Iraq war mentioned the site of Ur without adding “the traditional birthplace of Abraham” (Pollock, 2005: 88). An article in the Washington Times reported that

“[t]roops that invaded from the south crossed territory called the cradle of civilization and traditionally considered the site of the Garden of Eden. The troops passed by Abraham’s birthplace of Ur and the heart of ancient Sumer” (Witham, 2003: no page)

A recent example of a similar practice concerns preliminary excavation at Maikado, northern Ethiopia. Further excavation on this site depends on the archaeologist raising funds. The report was therefore presented in the press under the headline “Queen of Sheba’s secrets revealed”, beginning “[a] British excavation has struck archaeological gold with a discovery that may solve the mystery of where the Queen of Sheba of Biblical legend derived her fabled treasures” (The Observer, 2012: 23). The following report briefly outlined work so far, with no further reference to the Biblical association. However this was accompanied by the bulk of the article expounding in greater detail the biblical stories concerning the subject. An appeal for funds to excavate an area called Maikado was unlikely to resonate with many, whereas a mention of the Queen of Sheba’s gold was far more likely to gain the required attention.

**Writing for the General Public**

The areas of Woolley’s interpretation and presentation criticised by Moorey (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 8-11), are a significant pointer to the views held in society generally in inter-war Britain, very much still a Bible reading country.

Woolley wrote many accounts of the discoveries at Ur during the excavations, giving full rein to his flair for writing in a colourful and accessible style. It is important when looking at Woolley’s interpretations of Ur, to make the distinction between the promotion campaign intended for the ‘wider public’, to involve them in the excavation and generate funding, as separate from Woolley’s ‘official’ reports to the participating museums and his academic audiences. McManamon (1991: 123) pointed out that “the
‘wider public’ is a very large category and includes just about everybody”. This inevitably includes archaeologists. It is reasonable to say that later archaeologists have been heavily influenced by Woolley’s public statements, which have become intertwined with his academic output. His reports for public consumption, including his written guides to the Exhibitions at the BM, his books and his radio broadcasts, were completely different from the correspondence and reports between him and the two museums which at all times remained strictly focussed.

It needs emphasising here that archaeology for the public audience had until this point been relatively normal practise, there being a dearth of academic outlets at this time. Layard had successfully published his account in an accessible manner, Nineveh and Its Remains, to great public acclaim in the mid-19th century (Bernhardsson, 1999: 87). But for most archaeological reports, the societies and museums were the normal arena for report and debate. The ‘public’, albeit up till this point the educated and interested elite section of it, were the audience that the archaeologist had more ready access to, his contemporary culture. The academic audience was still only developing during Woolley’s time at Ur. Archaeological reports had not been so scrutinised before by fellow archaeologists, largely because there were very few of them. Much of Woolley’s ‘public’ output therefore was probably never considered by him as material that would be examined in such detail by the academic world.

Much of the criticism directed at Woolley, during his excavation and by later academics, therefore suggests a failure to recognise how he approached his separate audiences. Lloyd was a lone voice commenting that there

“were the two sides of Woolley’s work: an appeal to the public by means of interpretation and presentation of his results (with undoubted educational advantages in addition to their practical purpose of raising funds) and behind this, the patient and meticulous work of a research scholar” (1963: 51).

To examine the opinion that Woolley made exaggerated and colourful claims that could not be substantiated, it becomes necessary to ask the question, ‘Who is knowledge for? Who should be educated by the information and how is this to be done?’ While there is no direct evidence that Woolley had a mission to educate the public, the discipline of archaeology cannot avoid its responsibility to present its discoveries and findings in a manner that can be appreciated by laypeople. This was recognised by Wheeler who stated that “it is the duty of the archaeologist, as of the scientist, to reach
and impress the public, and to mould his words in the common clay of its forthright understanding” (1954: 196); adding further that “if historians neglect to educate the public, if they fail to interest it intelligently in the past, then all their historical learning is valueless except in so far as it educates themselves” (Wheeler, 1954: 191). Daniel also addressed this question asking, “[w]hat do the public want to know about the past – does archaeology address this? Is it the history of man or the history of tools?” (1986: 364).

Wheeler (1954: 194) described Woolley as adept at the art of taking a scholarly approach to a wide public. He recognised the need for a wider understanding of the place of archaeology in contemporary life, with its social responsibilities and opportunities to educate, inform and engage, recognising the public as partners who frequently, directly or indirectly, are “paying for a good deal of the archaeology concerned” (1954: 191-192; Fagan, 2005: 259; Lipe, 2005: 24-26).

However, writing for any audience is not an easy task. Presentation presupposes the existence of an audience with the desire to be informed and educated as well as with their own expectations of what they may want to hear. These desires may represent a need for information in its own right, or a need for affirmation of biblical belief or western supremacy in a rapidly changing world. Colonial attitudes that the West had a greater connection to the past in the countries being explored and excavated than did the local inhabitants was part of the mind-set between the wars and to some extent still exists today (Bernhardsson, 2005: 33). Audiences at home and in the country being excavated, both had reasons to have the discoveries interpreted in the way that most appealed to their core values (Diaz-Andreu, 2001: 434-437).

The identification, interpretation and presentation may also reflect the opinion of the presenter for particular reasons (Taylor, 1981: 1, MacKenzie, 1994: 3). The reasons may be political, with governments who are providing the funding setting the agenda for study (Kohl et al., 2007: 2). Imperialist state governments and newly emerged nation states both have needs to claim ownership of the past to justify their authority (Hassan, 1998: 201, 213). An example is the opening of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922 that occurred only a few months before Egypt was to receive partial independence from Britain. While Carter expected the British government to support his claims of authority over the discoveries, the Egyptian government changed its stance on division and demanded total control of the discoveries (Meskell, 2003: 152-3; Hassan, 1998: 204; Colla, 2007: 175-180). The audiences of the time were subject to these changing
political circumstances. The audiences in the West were hearing of glorious discoveries which they saw as part of their heritage and which could be expected to be displayed in museums and exhibitions. But the host countries were making their own claims on the past, denying the right to removal of objects by the archaeologists. Western audiences found themselves presented with copies of the items to which they no longer had direct access, a direct affront to their view of their position and status in the world.

Reasons for interpretation may also be academic, personal or economic, the latter being the particular case for Woolley’s interpretation of his discoveries at Ur. That Woolley was very aware of his reason for writing generalist literature and who his target audience was, is apparent from the transcript of his BBC talk, broadcast shortly before his 1929 book was published. Woolley said to his audience:

“This autumn, in answer to many requests, I shall be bringing out a book called ‘Ur of the Chaldees’ in which I describe in a form easily understandable, the actual progress and results of our excavations during the past seven years: year after year those excavations have aroused people’s interest and drawn crowds to the annual exhibition at the British Museum, but the information put at people’s disposal has been piecemeal, just as this talk tonight can deal only with some of the results of one winter. And many will be glad to have the things summarised in simple terms and given a narrative of explanation” (BBC talk, 1929, OFA).

He added, when describing the discovery of the flood deposit at Ur,

“[t]he great importance of it for us is that it confirms the earliest traditions of the Sumerians themselves […] To most people it will be perhaps more interesting because of its Biblical association” (BBC talk, 1929, OFA).

It seems clear from these remarks that Woolley had a specific audience in mind for his book – the interested, Bible-reading layman who had difficulty understanding the official reports, rather than fellow archaeologists and academics.

7 Woolley sent Ogden a copy of his BBC talk in 1929, saying “[h]ere is the text of my BBC talk: it was dictated to a shorthand typist and hasn’t been corrected, so there are a few spelling mistakes; otherwise it is alright. I hope it will be of use”. Undated, OFA.
Outdoing Egypt

A third reason for Woolley’s desire to write engaging accounts of his excavations was his realisation that he was competing for the public’s interest with astonishing finds from Egypt. While excavations in Egypt brought to light unrivalled treasures, Ur appeared to outdo Egypt in chronological terms. Woolley’s first suggested chronological scheme was that the First Dynasty of Ur started about 3100 BC and the Royal Cemetery, preceding this dated to between 3500 and 3200 BC (Woolley, 1929a: 16, 1955:16). In 1929, shortly after Woolley’s first book was published, an international conference of excavators took place in Baghdad. They set a revised relative chronology of the area which changed the First Dynasty of Ur date to 2,900 BC (Gates, 2007: 68). Woolley (1955: 16) acknowledged this in his later book but preferred to set it aside based on “observed facts” but which he did not elaborate upon. In Moorey’s revision, “the date of the Early Dynastic period extends from 3000 BC to about 2330 BC, with the Royal Tombs at Ur, usually attributed to Early Dynastic 111a, between about 2650-2550 BC” (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 15-16).

The chronological framework that Woolley utilised had the effect, intended or unintended, of giving Mesopotamia precedence over Egypt in cultural developments. Despite new evidence coming in from other excavations, Woolley stubbornly maintained his ‘own chronologies’ until much later in his career. Given the specific leaning of the chronology, it is worthwhile investigating whether Woolley fully believed them, or whether they were a framework he had constructed for another purpose. To investigate this question, it is important to look again at the historic context of the Ur excavation.

Woolley set out for Iraq on 26th September 1922, and on arrival in October, began the work of establishing a base and beginning the initial excavations. At almost exactly the same moment in November 1922 that Woolley was setting up his new base at Ur, Howard Carter, being sponsored by Carnarvon to excavate in the Valley of the Kings for one last season, sent a cable to Carnarvon – “have made a wonderful discovery in the Valley of the Kings” (Colla, 2007: 172-173). The consequences of the discovery of such spectacular finds in Egypt were to cause problems for the Ur excavation throughout its duration, and archaeology generally as archaeologists tried to regain public attention and financial support for their own projects.

Overshadowed as they were by the discoveries at Tutankhamun’s tomb in Egypt, the excavations of First Dynasty Ur were presented by Woolley as being more spectacular
because it was from a period at least two thousand years earlier. Woolley had no doubt that "the developed state of Sumer does go back to a very early period indeed and that it antedated by several centuries at least, the civilisation of the first dynasty of Egypt" (Woolley, 1928c: 635-642). Tutankhamun, in contrast, was of the – much later – 18th Dynasty, ruling during the mid-fourteenth century BC, approximately 1341 BC – 1323 BC. Woolley originally set the date for Ur between 3,500 and 3,200 BC, which corresponds roughly with the Early Dynastic Period in Egypt.

Initially however, the archaeological world felt overshadowed by the attention to Tutankhamun as headlines constantly proclaimed the glories of Tutankhamun. Every archaeological discovery began to be measured against that yardstick. The Manchester Guardian (6th March 1923: no page, OFA), for example, reported during the first season of the Ur excavation that the tombs of Ur dated back as far as about 3000 BC and whilst they may not possess such artistic value as the tomb of Tutankhamun they should prove of much greater historical value.

In America, there was also a fight back against "the oodles of publicity that the world is lavishing on Tutankhamun" (New York City Sun, 1923: no page). This particular article in 1923 referred to Tutankhamun’s tomb as an archaeological treasure house, the contents of which could not compare in antiquity or rarity with relics found in the pyramids or elsewhere. A statement from Penn in the same article said that “the excavators in Mesopotamia have unearthed on the site of the city of Ur – ‘Ur of the Chaldees’, where Abraham lived – a temple so old that it makes Tutankhamun look like a mushroom”. Shortly afterwards, Gordon wrote another article headlined “Tut’s Buried Gold Beaten in Ur Find” on the findings at Ur (Gordon, 1923: no page).

It was not only Woolley and the two museums who felt overshadowed by the focus of the press on Tutankhamun. Wace, Director of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, wrote about the excavations at Mycenae for the ILN on 31st March 1923 entitled “Mycenae in Tutankhamun’s Time” (Bacon, 1976: 185). A slight reference to finding two Egyptian scarabs of the Eighteenth Dynasty in one of the excavated tombs was the only link with the headline. Another headline in October 1925 was “A discovery as wonderful as that of Tutankhamun’s tomb” (Bacon, 1976: 216). It referred to an

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8 The article was reported widely, appearing as “Chaldeans Older Than Tut”, 24th February 1923, New York City Sun; “Ur of the Chaldees, Old When Egypt Was Young”, 1st March 1923, Philadelphia Public Ledger; “Scientists deride value of Tut tomb”, 12th March 1923, Indiana Tribune.
article by Arthur Keith, writing about the excavation by Absolon of a prehistoric culture from 20,000 years ago in the old province of Moravia. Despite being in a different geographic area and from a vastly older period, Keith still found it necessary to tie the discoveries to Tutankhamun to give it added interest.

Woolley was very aware of the competition of Egypt and Tutankhamun, and used all his talent for popularisation to broadcast his interpretation of the historical and chronological significance of ancient Sumer. Woolley tended to use Egypt as the benchmark for comparisons with Ur. In his 1954 book on the excavations at Ur, he compared the development of civilisation at Ur with Egypt saying that

“In all these things Sumer was ahead of Egypt, which at the beginning of the Early Dynastic period in Sumer, was only just emerging from a state of barbarism, and when Egypt does make a real start under Menes, the first king of the Nile Valley, the new age is marked by the introduction of models and ideas which derive from the older civilisation flourishing in the valley of the Lower Euphrates” (Woolley, 1955: 90).9

Woolley (1955: 175) compared favourably the excavated houses of Ur against “even the well-preserved houses of Tell al Amarna in Egypt” as they did not yield the tablets “which at Ur give the personal touch that really brings the past to life”. The Early Dynastic periods in Sumer and Egypt were in fact of roughly the same era; the earliest known form of writing developed in Uruk approximately 3300 BC whereas hieroglyphic script developed in Egypt under King Narmer (Menes) about 3100 BC.

The 1954 edition of Woolley’s book was issued sometime after the Ur excavation had finished, yet Woolley stuck to his own opinions even though the original need to arrive at them had long past. Mallowan referred to Egypt as Woolley’s “bugbear”, saying that “[i]t distracted him from the truth” (2001: 49). Mallowan posited that having reached an apparently satisfactory working hypothesis, Woolley was reluctant to admit error and revise his conclusions (Mallowan, 1960: 13-14). It is possible however, that having had to work so hard to construct a framework that supported his promotion of Ur, for very specific and compelling reasons, Woolley’s thinking became virtually trapped by it, and

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9 It should be noted that the comparison quoted here was completely removed from Moorey’s version of the book (Woolley & Moorey, 1982), falling as it does under the vagaries of Woolley’s own chronologies.
he was unable to back down. The interpretation of the excavation had excited and involved the public and filtered into the psyche of the era. Once commonly accepted, it led to a situation where Woolley was explaining that which he himself had created. Woolley was determined to keep Ur at the forefront of attention to ensure it remained financially viable. However the method used by him to do this, namely the construct he built, led to the construct becoming more famous and memorable than the original message.

Several years into the excavation, in 1927, it was still being stated that “the discoveries of Professor Woolley at Ur would historically prove to be more valuable than the excavations of Tutankhamun’s tomb” (Yorkshire Post, 1927: no page). Although Tutankhamun and Egyptology generally have remained at the forefront of more popular archaeology, Woolley was probably correct in his opinion that the knowledge gained from Ur was of greater importance than from the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb. In retrospect, Tutankhamun’s tomb yielded much excitement and glamour but was more of a historical cul-de-sac in terms of knowledge that could be gained from the ancient civilisations.

Conclusions
There has been little written about the history of archaeology generally that has addressed more than the ‘who, what, where and how’ issues, rather than the ‘why and because’ issues. Trigger (1985: 218-236) commented that the writing of the history of archaeology tended towards romanticised and colourful accounts of adventurous archaeologists and their spectacular discoveries, such as in Daniel (1975) and Fagan (2007), or to chronicles of events written from the archaeological perspective without consideration of the wider debate surrounding the subject – the ‘how and why’ an excavation was interpreted and presented. Bernhardsson stated that

“[t]he history of archaeology has been overlooked by historians. Therefore it has been written primarily by archaeologists and for archaeologists, and does not therefore have ‘historical scope’” (1999: 18).

There are notable exceptions to this comment concerning the history of archaeology. Silberman (1982, 1989) and Kuklick (1996) wrote thorough examinations of the history of archaeological exploration in the Near East, the reasons for it and the consequences of it. Hudson (1981) is another exception to the lack of a social historical perspective on archaeological writing, examining specifically the relationship between archaeology and
the public both in Britain and the Near East. Hudson (1981: 88) made no mention of Woolley's religious background when describing Woolley's career, commenting instead that Woolley had only become an archaeologist to make a living. So unusual was Hudson's approach to researching the social aspects of archaeology that Trigger commented that

“[d]espite its lack of scholarly depth, one can only applaud his attempt to relate the practice of archaeology to the social conditions of the time, to see how money, the educational and political system and the class structure have determined both the selection and ambitions of archaeologists and the way in which they have set about their work” (1985: 230).

The view that the wider circumstances surrounding an excavation need to be explored, places archaeology into its context as history, but the writing of history tends to become narrative and subject to interpretation. To fully understand any interpretation, it is essential to understand who is doing the interpreting, what are the driving forces on that interpretation and what facts are being used (Trigger, 1985: 232). This inevitably means that the interpretation is subjective, a version of the past claimed by the interpreter (Hodder, 1991a: 16). To reconstruct the past objectively, it is essential to return to its most basic level (Munslow, 2006: 2). It is necessary to look at the evidence and question whether previous interpretations are reliable. In many histories of archaeology, there has been little research of any primary source material that may have answered this question, most histories simply containing new interpretations of existing material.

Some accounts have become so distorted over time through continual re-use, that there has been a ‘Chinese whisper’ effect on the details as they lost their original context and shape. In certain instances, anecdotal material has been recycled into accepted information that is completely inaccurate. This is seen for example in Winstone (1990: 188), concerning the repairs to the helmet of Meskalamdug, and in Moorey's (1994: 226) discussion of the “goldsmith’s hammer” from Ur. The story of the helmet probably started life as an entertaining anecdote, but diffused into fact over time – however in both cases the names are not correct and the details are wrong. Moorey (1994: 226) and Winstone (1990: 188) both get the writing of James Ogden confused with the writing of Jack Ogden (1982, 1992; James Ogden's great grand-son and noted metallurgist), a distance in time of about 70 years (Millerman, 2008: 6, 8). Therefore
‘facts’ that have diffused down into accepted knowledge cannot always be relied on to give an accurate picture of events as they occurred.

The reception of Woolley’s work can be shown to have suffered from all of these issues: lack of understanding of his underlying motivations, lack of appreciation of his targeted writing for different audience groups and the ‘Chinese-whisper’ effect.

The literature on Woolley and Ur falls into the categories of biographical and descriptive, or analytical and critical. Winstone’s 1990 *Woolley of Ur* is a biography of Woolley’s life and career including Ur and remains definitive as a valuable resource. Winstone investigated some of the reasons for Woolley’s interpretations of the discoveries, particularly the need to attract religious supporters to the excavation, but did not expand on the reasons why this was such a desperate need, or how Woolley dealt with it. Winstone also tends to rely on Mallowan for many of the comments on Woolley’s biblical and colourful descriptions. This view has become so entrenched that even the most recent works, e.g. Matthews (2006: 15) and Goode (2007: 190) continue to repeat the Mallowan viewpoint which has been shown above to be born from a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose behind Woolley’s writings.

Lloyd (1936, 1955, 1963) and Fagan (2007) gave largely descriptive chronological accounts of archaeology in the region, but did not examine the circumstances of the excavations. There is a passing reference to funding problems but this was not investigated to explain Woolley’s behaviour at Ur. Dyson (1977) examined the events and correspondence between the two museums leading up to the Ur excavation, but did not analyse the significant effect that the partnership’s problems had on the expedition.

There has been a plethora of writing about Iraq and its history since the end of the recent Iraqi war. Bernhardsson (2005) however repeats the Mallowan opinion that Woolley was Bible-led, stating “[a]lthough most archaeologists working in Iraqi archaeology at this time were not motivated by their religious beliefs […] Woolley was clearly the exception to that general rule” (1999: 234).

Much has been written re-examining the discoveries at Ur. In the light of political problems in the area, these examinations are largely based on Woolley’s reports rather than fresh excavation reports. There are articles debating the discoveries by Woolley of multiple-burials in the Royal Cemetery, ranging from largely agreeing with Woolley’s
acceptance that they were in fact multiple burials, e.g. Pollock (1991, 2007) and Dickson (2006) through to doubt, e.g. Sürerenhagen (2002). Many of the reports concerned specifically with the Royal Cemetery metalwork discoveries are based on Woolley’s written reports and have not made use of the primary source material between Woolley, the BM and Ogden to see how their conclusions were arrived at (Millerman, 2008: 1-12).

More importantly, there has not been an examination of the Ur excavation that challenges the accepted views or asks why Woolley, an experienced archaeologist, presented the Ur campaign as he did. As I will argue throughout the thesis, based on my research into the Woolley and Ogden archives, the presentation of Ur was in fact a carefully thought out strategy, marketed in a surprisingly modern way. It was also apparent from the written conversations between Woolley and Ogden that ‘the public’, the source of their funding, were their targeted audience, not the two participating museums or fellow archaeologists. Woolley’s correspondence with his two museum directors, as distinct from his public audience, is all the more remarkable for an almost complete lack of the biblical references that permeate his ‘public’ output. It is therefore important to look afresh at the contemporary discussions, the methods used and the conclusions reached.

The processes of how knowledge was initially created are in themselves worth studying as they reflect the behavioural mores of the time and explain much about the dynamics of the different relationships between those involved. These were formative years in the development of archaeology as a discipline. This was a period not so much of providing all the answers, but of seeking ways to find answers to questions that had not been posed before; a matter more of process than conclusion.

The interpretation that Woolley was ‘Bible-led’, belonged to ‘another time’ and drew fanciful conclusions, became accepted as fact, and has been repeated without question. It is necessary to examine whether this criticism of Woolley is valid, based on evidence that his methodology was entirely influenced by biblical overtones and that he made unsubstantiated claims, or whether the criticism is based on anecdote and hearsay that have been recycled over the decades into established ‘fact’. An examination of the circumstances surrounding the excavation however suggests that the situation was more complex than this, that Woolley’s behaviour was not as described, but rather a reaction to the difficulties he faced. The criticisms of Woolley are largely made with the benefit of hindsight, and from the standpoint of today’s values
and standards in archaeological research and have relied heavily on repeated assumptions.
Chapter Five

Funding Archaeology in the Near East

Funding Archaeology in the Near East

Nowadays, the majority of archaeological projects apply for funding through a competition for public funds, often administered through governmental or semi-governmental agencies, like the AHRC, BAJR, the Council for British Archaeology, the Heritage Lottery Fund and specifically for the Near East, the BISI and the PEF. There is also an increase in developer-funded archaeology in addition to archaeologists employed by local authorities and other public bodies. Some universities and large public museums, like the BM, continue to provide financial support to select projects. However, private sponsors, such as the Mediterranean Trust, etc. remain major contributors, providing small or medium-sized amounts of money to support small projects or help with specialists aspects of larger projects.

On the whole, private sponsors do not overtly have influence on project design, execution or publication. However, the availability of private funding itself, its remit or region of interest may have indirect impact on a project. The recent project in Leicester that uncovered the remains of Richard III was funded by a combination of public and private funding, from the University of Leicester, the local authority and the Museum Service. It was also partly funded by the Richard III Society (Morris & Buckley, 2014: 64). Although the aim of the excavation was not stated to be the discovery that was eventually made, the vested interest of one of the main sponsors would have had a strong impact on the excavation. There was also substantial public interest in the excavation which may also have been an influence on the work being done.

Until very recently, however, funding for archaeological excavations and projects came predominantly from private sources. Initially, aristocratic connoisseurs, who were the country’s principal collectors, were sponsoring excavations (Wilson, 2002: 217). In the late 19th century and early 20th century, however, they were being replaced by commercially powerful middle classes, like Ogden, who had made their fortunes in trade and industry. Some sponsors, like Henry Wellcome, initially even excavated themselves at their own expense. Wellcome contributed significantly to archaeological excavations “because he was convinced that if he dug long and deep enough, he would achieve fame comparable to Schliemann and Evans” (James, 1994: 316). But this practice became rarer as archaeology became more professional, and eventually
died out. Wilson (2002: 217) described how wealthy private sponsorship continued to be relied upon to fill the shortfall in funding however, and provided nearly all the funding in the sites that did not receive backing from museums and institutions such as the Louvre, the British Museum, the National Art Collection Fund, the Chicago School of Oriental Research and the University Museum of Pennsylvania:

“[P]rivate benefactors such as J.P. Morgan and Sir Percival David, a noted art collector and patron, were cherished by the Director of the BM and the individual departments, but institutional donors, who were not so numerous then as now, picked up most of the shortfall. Chief among them [in Britain] was the National Art Collection Fund and the Pilgrim Trust” (Wilson, 2002: 217).

The National Art Collection Fund was founded as an independent charity in 1903, to raise funds to acquire artwork for the nation in the face of inadequate government funding. The Pilgrim Trust was founded in 1930 by the wealthy American philanthropist Edward Stephen Harkness. Inspired by his admiration and affection for Great Britain, Harkness endowed the Trust with just over £2 million pounds “as a thank-offering to Britain for its part in the First World War” (Wilson, 2002: 217).

In Britain, industrialists and large companies donated to many of the high profile excavations, usually those with biblical associations. The industrialists Sir Albert L. Reckitt (Cheadle, 2006) and Sir Robert Mond (Greenaway, 2004), the collector Oscar Raphael and Henry Wellcome were regular contributors to Near East missions, as were large companies such as the Anglo Persian Oil Company and the John Lewis Partnership. Probably the most significant benefactor to the BM during the 1920’s and 30’s was Joseph Duveen, a noted art dealer and patron of the arts who was knighted in 1919, made a baronet in 1927 and a peer in 1933. Duveen’s art benefactions were on an extremely generous scale with him donating galleries to the National Gallery as well as the BM to house the Elgin Marbles (Miller, 1973: 332; Burnett & Reeve, 2001: 70). However his power and wealth made him very difficult to deal with as he frequently demanded that things were done his way (Wilson, 2002: 239, 241-2).

By the early decades of the 20th century the number of excavations in the Near East had increased substantially. Costs were rising because of improving standards generally in archaeology, as well as changing economic conditions in the Near East (Moorey, 1991: 48). While private funding arrangements were often more flexible, they provided their own set of challenges: sponsors often had very particular agendas
concerning the truth of, for example, biblical history and they expected ‘their’ archaeologists to fit excavation data to biblical places and events. They also expected to receive a share of the finds. Having access to a private sponsor was therefore a double-edged sword for archaeologists working in the Near East. As Moorey (1991: 3) pointed out, “the biblical relevance of their discoveries brought financial support and academic interest otherwise unlikely to be available”, however, this came with certain obligations that might have interfered with the ‘neutral’ acquisition of archaeological knowledge.

**Setting the Agenda**

Some of the individual contributors to the excavations had very particular agendas, and contributed accordingly. Sir Charles Marston, industrialist and biblical fundamentalist, devoted a lifetime to the study of the Bible. From the early 1920’s he became particularly interested in biblical archaeology, specifically certain excavations in Palestine contributing considerable amounts to Jerusalem excavation funds (von Harten & Marston, 1979: 128-9). He lectured in his native Birmingham and in the 1930’s wrote two books on biblical archaeology particularly relating to the finds at Kish and Ur. Marston was very concerned about getting ‘results’ that would confirm his belief in the truth of the Old Testament. His agenda to prove the Bible with the spade was made very clear:

> “It is evident that the background supplied by recent excavations for the period of Abraham corroborates the sacred text. And further, that the Old Testament chronology is as correct as is the Biblical geography. In the stories themselves, confirmations occur even in detail, which are evidence that the narrative was written down at a very early date, when the memory of the events was still quite fresh” (Marston, 1933: 141).

He regarded the contributions that were coming in from Ur to be essential for the “elucidation of the Book of Genesis, and indeed for all the earlier books of the Bible” (Marston, 1933: 141). Marston contributed to the funding of Ur, Kish and Arpachiyah. He also largely funded the excavations at Jericho, conducted between 1930 and 1936 by John Garstang. Garstang was the first Director of Antiquities to the Palestine Government when the department was created by Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner of the newly mandated region. The Jericho excavations were largely financed by Marston and Lord Melchett, additional support coming from the Louvre, Liverpool University and the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society (Cobbing, 2007:}
Marston was a difficult man to deal with, making stipulations about the areas to be excavated and how the finds should be divided. Masterman, secretary of the PEF from 1920-1936, complained to Hall at the British Museum about Marston’s demands concerning the excavation he was sponsoring at Ophel, Jerusalem:

“I send a Sir Charles Marston letter – he is difficult – hope you will deal with him frankly when he turns the heat up. He should be made to understand, “results” can’t be used this way” (BMME, letter Masterman to Hall, 27th April 1926).

Marston had written to the PEF with his suggestion that:

“I think we ought to have a weekly report, of which a copy should be sent to me, of the work done and of the money that is expended each week. Of the PEF’s share of the finds, I think I am entitled to claim a fair share” (BMME, letter Masterman to Hall, 27th April 1926, Marston’s letter attached, no date).

Masterman complained again to Hall about the interference from Marston.

“If you would like to write a crushing reply against his constant changeableness, I shall be glad to withdraw my letter. He is a troublesome person and seems to assume that he is the only person concerned in the excavation” (BMME, 27th April 1926, letter Masterman to Hall).

When chairing a PEF meeting in January 1927 that was called to discuss sites for excavation and their funding, Marston said he would contribute £1000 once the question of the site and directorship had been decided to his satisfaction. However, he stipulated that the site chosen should be one which might be considered likely to throw light on biblical history; also that he would like some specimens of the antiquities discovered (BMME, Minutes PEF meeting, 19th January 1927). Marston even appears to have stipulated particular areas for excavation at Jericho. Garstang, who excavated at Jericho under the sponsorship of Marston, wrote “[t]his season, in response to Sir Charles Marston’s desire, we have made a final search in the vicinity of the ancient palace” (Garstang, 1936: Appendix 3). Marston referred to this slightly differently in his book:
“On Professor Garstang’s return to England, it was decided that further and fuller excavations at Jericho would be likely to furnish the key […]; so the following winter, Professor Garstang and his staff returned to resume work there” (Marston, 1934: 147).

Garstang claimed after the excavation that he had found evidence of the violent destruction of a Late Bronze Age city which he attributed to an earthquake that had aided the conquest by Joshua and the Israelites. Cobbing, however, commented that Garstang made “a profound error of judgement in linking his uncertain conclusions with a Biblical event” (Cobbing, 2007: 63-64). The reason for this lapse of judgement she felt was largely to do with the significant level of sponsorship from Marston, that “Garstang succumbed to pressure from his sponsor to forge a link between archaeology and the Bible that he himself did not entirely believe in” (Cobbing, 2007: 73-75).

Marston was not the only patron with very specific expectations of the excavations. Reckitt, a regular contributor to the Ur mission, expressed a wish for

“a tangible memento from the objects found. I should also like, if at all possible, that some part of the excavation shall be devoted to the earliest periods […] cannot the Ur digging be carried deeper rather than be extended on the same horizon?” (BMCA CE32/26/47).

Despite the fact that patrons with such firm agendas often caused problems for archaeologists, the importance of the financial contribution of patrons like Marston and Reckitt, at this time, cannot be over-estimated. Garstang, while Director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, told Ogden

“[y]ou are proving yourself a real friend and benefactor. I have communicated the circumstances of your gift, and of the sums you have also collected for us, to the Council of the School in London, and without any doubt they will be extremely grateful to you, as we are here. I shall duly send you an account of the work being done” (OFA, letter dated 23rd April 1925).

There appears to be no indication here that Ogden made any stipulations about the work, though no doubt he expected to receive ‘mementos’ and did receive up-to-date reports of the work that he could use in his lectures. Not all patrons interfered overtly
but their agenda of biblical veracity was well known. Many, such as Oscar Raphael hoped simply to add to their personal collections by contributing to the expenses of the expeditions. Robert Mond, the benefactor and field-worker, also assisted in the foundation of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and was a major financial supporter of it (Gibson, 1999: 124; Greenaway, 2004). Some sponsors, like Reckitt, also played a part by writing to the press to keep public interest alive; others, including Marston, gave lectures and broadcasts to promote the excavations (von Harten & Marston, 1979: 147). Ogden, unusually, was a combination of all of these and worked with a crusading zeal throughout the inter-war period to support and promote the work of the archaeologists and the BM.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the limited funding available forced excavators to please whoever their sponsors were, be they wealthy patrons, governments allocating public funds, or in the case of Ur, the public themselves. They needed to attract the attention of the public so that they would contribute to the funding and attend the exhibitions at the museums who had sponsored them. Excavators began to make claims about their discoveries which became increasingly exaggerated, with conclusions based upon the flimsiest of evidence (Moorey, 1991: 55). The press ran sensational stories; there was a constant stream of books and articles, lectures and magazines concerning the ‘great discoveries’ and the Bible’s great comeback (Feiler, 2002: 32-33). There were “ensuing debates, both archaeological and scientific, academic and popular, concerning the different claims” (Moorey, 1991: 80), Even Queen Victoria gave a large donation to the PEF symbolising the approval and interest of British Society in what was seen as a national endeavour – the exploration of the past (Silberman, 1982: 87). The public were enthralled.

This frenzied mixture of archaeology, religion, the media and the funding lasted for several decades, from Layard being advised by a friend “if you can attach a religious importance to the discoveries, you would come the complete dodge over this world of fools and dreamers” (Kuklick, 1996: 43) to Woolley’s claim to have found ‘the flood’. It is this heady combination that Woolley and Ogden took advantage of so successfully in their promotion campaign. Public support remained vital for funding. Funding and publicity became inextricably entwined in the attempts to keep excavation continuous, and a mission could fail or succeed depending on the ability of the archaeologist to excite the public imagination.
Funding for individual archaeologists could be a very haphazard situation, with archaeologists constantly worrying how their own excavation could continue. Campbell-Thompson commented that

“[i]f the excavations which have just started at Nineveh are to be continued, funds are necessary and it is the hope that, if the needs and expectations of future campaigns for digging the earth of Kouyunjik are clearly put before Englishmen, someone may be found who will help forward the work financially. A season’s exploration at Kouyunjik costs approximately £1000 all told [...]”
(Campbell-Thompson, 1929: preface).10

Sponsors, too, were aware of the lack of available funding. Ogden, for example, drew attention to the shortage in his talks, saying that

“[e]xcavators of our own nation are playing an honourable and distinguished part – yet Great Britain is scarcely filling the place which she ought to fill, having regard to her position as a pioneer in the past. That this is so, is in no sense due to lack of skilled explorers, but simply to lack of funds to enable men to carry out work which they are longing to do” (Ogden’s lectures notes, OFA; Baikie, 1927: 11).

Archaeologists attempted to resolve their funding problems in different ways. Some were funded by one wealthy sponsor who needed an archaeologist to bring their cultural aspirations to fruition (Kuklick, 1996: 120), while others had to manage with minimal funding from institutions supplemented heavily by private contributions. An example of the former situation was the American millionaire collector Theodore Davis (Colla, 2007: 201; Reeves, 1990: 36-37) who funded Howard Carter for the first decade of the 20th century, and donated many of the finds to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Kuklick, 1996: 120). Carter left his services in 1905 and was forced to earn his living as a freelance artist for two years before obtaining employment with another wealthy patron, the Earl of Carnarvon (Fagan, 2003: 92).

Garstang too, when excavating in Egypt before the First World War, was reliant on the philanthropy of self-made men such as the collectors and philanthropists Sir Robert

10 The equivalent value on 9th June 2014 is £55,364.30.
Mond, (Greenaway, 2004) and Sir John Brunner (Dick, 2004), the founders of Imperial Chemical Industries. Garstang treated each of his excavations like a limited company, with

“his backers being ‘shareholders’ who contributed a given amount to each project. The profits of the excavation, in the form of objects recovered and not retained by the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, were distributed as a dividend” (Bahn, 1996: 151).

Petrie however, after severing his connections with the EEF in 1884, worked largely as a freelance excavator and financed his excavations by selling artefacts to overseas museums (Drower, 2012; Fagan, 2003: 81). After the change in the law in Egypt in 1924, the export of most finds was prevented and Petrie, with his major source of funding for his excavations removed, was forced to leave Egypt after 40 years of working there and concentrate his attentions on Palestine (Fagan, 2003: 81). He continued to work there until his death in 1942.

In July 1925 a debate among archaeologists about the desperate lack of funding for archaeology took place in the letters columns of *The Times*. This was a usual forum for archaeological debate at the time, the paper being the favoured site for archaeological reports. This particular debate concerned the poor state of archaeological funding particularly compared with that for the National Art Collection. Garstang, of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, deplored the lack of trained men coming into archaeology (Garstang, 1925: 12). The British School of Athens bemoaned the lack of public support (*The Times*, 1925b: 15) and Ernest Mackay, who led the excavations at Kish with Stephen Langdon and Louis Charles Watelin, blamed this shortage on the lack of permanent posts and little prospect of adequate remuneration and security of tenure. Mackay said

“I suggest chairs or lectureships in archaeology be created with the express proviso that their occupants be allowed by arrangement to conduct excavations for the various societies engaged in archaeological research in the field. The archaeologist might then be relieved of the constant fear that his employment might cease owing to the failure of funds. The University in return for loaning his services might receive some portion of the objects found” (Mackay, 1925: 10).
The debate was taken up by industrialist and benefactor, Sir Albert L. Reckitt, who felt that the lack of support by individuals was not altogether the fault of the general public, but rather “our archaeologists carry out their work so quietly and unostentatiously that it is sometimes very difficult to learn what is going on, or where subscriptions should be sent” (Reckitt, 1925: 8). He added:

“[i]t seems particularly desirable for the public to support the excavators at Ur now, as the present facilities may not always exist as years go on. There seems room for a new society to assist the finances of British archaeological exploration rather in the same way as the National Art Collections Fund assists our national art collections” (Reckitt, 1925: 8).

Gordon Childe cited countries such as Germany, Scandinavia, Poland, Denmark and Czechoslovakia who took an intelligent pride and interest in their national antiquities and had enacted laws for their preservation. “All the larger museums”, he said, “supported 2 or 3 antiquaries, leaving leisure to conduct excavations and give instruction to the children in elementary schools, thus enlisting the younger generation to assist in the preservation and collection of the remains of our forerunners” (Childe, 1925: 10).

Woolley quickly followed up the debate and wrote to The Times:

“Mr Reckitt’s letter to you in which he blames the failure of English archaeologists properly to advertise their needs encourages one to hope that a public which has not yet been approached may after all be ready to help the cause of excavation. If it is to fulfil its part in the Joint Expedition to Ur of the Chaldees wherein it is associated with the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, the BM must have outside assistance, for its own resources are quite inadequate to the task. An appeal for funds has been issued by the Director, but it is difficult to bring such an appeal to the notice of all who might be interested” (Woolley, 1925b: 10).

This appeal from Woolley marked the turning point in the Ur excavation when financial problems caused Woolley to begin his fund-raising campaign.
**Funding an Income**

As the large excavations began in the early 20th century, there was a continuing crisis for the archaeologists and their supporters to keep the work funded as in many cases, this funding also provided their income. Archaeology was still not a profession in the modern sense of the word, with very few full time jobs outside the BM or bigger provincial museums. Crawford (1955: 75) stated that deciding to adopt an archaeological career in the early 1900’s without private means was taking a very great risk, with Stout stating that few archaeologists were paid for their work:

> “Many had private incomes; of the few who found gainful employment, many worked for relatively low wages in jobs that were often insecure and/or part time, or in full time jobs whose archaeological component was often slight” (Stout, 2008: 18).

Woolley was an example of the latter type of archaeologist who neither had any personal means to support himself, nor secondary employment to supplement personal income. Hudson commented that “Woolley had no fortune and no burning sense of mission. He was short of money all his life and he blundered into archaeology because he needed to find some way to make a living” (1981: 88).

Woolley had left his position at the Ashmolean in 1908 in favour of a career in field archaeology. His income therefore was exclusively linked to funding for his archaeological projects or the promotional events associated with them. When the costs for the first 12 months of the Ur project were being estimated, they were set initially at £4014 plus £600 for Woolley’s salary, a total of £4614 allowing for a six-month season (BMCA CE32/26/11, memo between Gordon and Woolley). As a consequence, his letters to the BM are littered with pleas for reimbursements of expenses. In the first season of the Ur expedition, he wrote to Kenyon that

> “£101.6.8 was made to H.M’s High Commission in Iraq for guards over the Expedition House and site during my absence this summer. I have to date advanced out of my own pocket the sum of £215.2.4 and I beg that this be refunded to me” (BMCA, CE32/26/10, 9th May 1923, Woolley letter to Kenyon).

Many archaeologists supplemented their income by lecture tours and writing. The need to attract the public to these lectures, and to buy their books, was vitally important financially to the archaeologists, not only to promote the expeditions, but also to
supplement their incomes. An ‘academic’ archaeologist delivering facts with no context may be more scientific by today’s standards, but would hardly have inspired audiences or turned books into bestsellers during a time of financial hardship. Archaeologists needed to understand their audiences’ appetites and preferences if they were to stand out among the competition. They also had to contend with competition to be first to place their findings in the public domain. Colla discussed how within months of Carter’s discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb, “no less than four other sensational book-length narratives of the event – some of them quite critical of Carter – appeared in the press. He therefore published his popular account, The Tomb of Tut.Ankh.Amen’ (2007: 179-180), a version of the discovery that did not square “with the scientism of Carter’s discovery” (2007: 179).

**Funding Ur**

The Ur excavation, though successful, was beset by financial problems throughout most of its 12 year tenure. Lack of funding frequently threatened it with closure, reduced the length of the excavation season or restricted Woolley’s activities in other ways. This was a continuing problem facing archaeology then as now, of how projects were to be financed when one excavation season could cost thousands of pounds and sources of that amount of money were limited. The reasons behind the choice of Ur for excavation and the problems faced by the two participating museums will now be examined in detail.

**The Proposed Joint Expedition to Ur**

The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia was launched by a group of philanthropists in 1887, with a proposal to send a team to explore Babylon. The first Director was George Byron Gordon, an anthropologist not favourable to Near Eastern archaeology (Kuklick, 1996: 117). At the end of the 19th century, Penn carried out a small excavation at Ur and also began work at Nippur. In 1916, Michigan born Assyriologist Stephen Langdon was appointed as curator at Penn with responsibility for translating the Nippur tablets, although he had worked intermittently for Penn since 1911.

Langdon was a religious man and an ordained Deacon of the Church of England (New York Times, 1937: 21), Kuklick said that Langdon approached the tablet texts “with fixed ideas of the relation of the Bible – the Creation, Adam and Eve and the Flood – to Sumerian literature. He read into the latter what he thought might corroborate the
former” (1996: 169). However, as shown below, Langdon was not entirely happy with
the way his work was represented in the press, and it is possible that the descriptions
of his work as being Bible-driven may be as subject to reappraisal as Woolley’s (Penn,
letter Langdon to Gordon 26th June 1910).

Penn and the Babylonian Exploration Fund sponsored excavations at Nippur for
several years resulting in a large number of clay tablets being sent to America. It was
these tablets that Langdon was appointed to translate. Articles began to appear in the
American press confirming the significance of the tablets. Langdon was unhappy about
the stories and implored Gordon to:

“[p]ut your official publications under strict control and see to it that nothing is
therein published but material which will benefit science. Of course you cannot
control the desire to pose before the public but your university must be held
responsible for giving facilities in its official publications for bombastic and
wholly useless utterances” (Penn, letter Langdon to Gordon, 26th June 1910,).

He further urged Gordon “and the men who work for you and are paid by you, publish
your material and not talk endlessly about the ‘greatest finds in history’ etc.” He added
finally “[y]ou may sacrifice rapidity in publication by checking the egotism of your staff,
but a University cannot sacrifice its dignity for all the tablets in the Ancient” (Penn, letter
Langdon to Gordon, 26th June 1910).

Presumably Gordon was writing the stories for the press, showing a flair for publicity
and an understanding of what interested the public similar to Woolley’s. The stories
continued unabated. The New York City Sun announced in August 1913 “[i]f, as it is
supposed, the tablet is of about the time of Abraham, it gives an idea of how the Jews
got the first idea of the Creation and The Flood” (no page).

Langdon’s opinion about the possible significance of Ur grew. By 1916 he was
convinced that

“Ur of the Chaldees, the ancient city in Lower Mesopotamia, where the patriarch
Abraham was born, will yield to archaeologists the world’s first library of clay
tablets […] the museum who is first in the field with an expedition when the war
ends can secure this collection” (Langdon, 1916: no page).
Langdon was appointed Professor of Assyriology at Oxford University in July 1919 but continued to keep Gordon informed on the archaeological situation in Mesopotamia. He urged Gordon to consider an excavation at Ur as soon as the war ended; he noted that the BM had sent Hall, Keeper of the EAA, in September 1918 and therefore it was essential to stake out a claim at once: “[n]aturally Ur is the site but the BM wants it. The French want Sippar. You would do well to claim Warka too. The Germans began there before the war” (Penn, letter Langdon to Gordon, 4th February 1919).

Before Hall had even returned to England, Gordon approached Kenyon at the BM with the proposal of a joint expedition to Mesopotamia (Penn, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 2nd June 1919). Gordon and Kenyon began their initial discussions about the two institutions working together at the beginning of 1920 but little could be achieved while the political future of the area was not settled. The early 1920’s were still a period when, although the object of the excavation was purported in principle to be the furtherance of knowledge, the reality of the situation was that museums were still collecting objects for display and, to a certain extent, the funding that was available for excavation was determined by this. Thus at the beginning of 1922, when Gordon suggested a joint archaeological survey of Iraq, this was rejected by Kenyon because the available funds at the BM, the “Purchase Grant” from which the Trustees could finance an expedition, were

“funds for the acquisition of objects for the museum; and though we could embark on a speculation, such as the excavation of a site, without a certainty of adequate return, we could not use our money simply for a survey” (Penn, letter Kenyon to Gordon, 4th March 1922).

Penn were eager to continue work they had begun in the area, particularly at Nippur, prior to the war, but considered themselves ill-equipped to deal with the changed political circumstances in the country. Gordon stated that they did not have a trained and experienced excavator who could take charge of such work and who had experience of living among and working with the local people. He was also nervous of the political instability in the area (Dyson, 1977: 9; Penn, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 8th May 1922,). Gordon was aware that the BM were unlikely to get much in the way of government financing for archaeological work during this period of post war slump and suggested to Kenyon that “by means of a joint expedition, each institution might supply the thing most needed by the other. Working with the BM would be to us equivalent to
a measure of insurance. On our part, we might furnish most of the funds” (Penn, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 5th May 1922).

The basis for the proposal therefore was that the University had the money, while the BM had the prestige and experience. Kenyon regarded the proposal of the main provision of funds being made by Penn as “most liberal” and would greatly ease the situation for the BM who could contribute something, “but could not afford a long campaign on a large scale” (Penn, letter Kenyon to Gordon, 12th June 1922).

T.E. Lawrence was now at the Colonial Office in London and it was he to whom the application for permission to excavate had to be made. Lawrence had previously worked with Woolley at Carchemish, and the pair had been sent by Kenyon on his ‘mapping of Sinai’ task shortly before the outbreak of the First World War. Woolley and Lawrence knew each other very well. Lawrence told Gordon that he was going to be “a little particular about the quality of these excavations because Mesopotamia has suffered so much in the past from unscientific work carried out under the auspices of the most distinguished bodies!” (Dyson, 1977: 8; Penn, letter Lawrence to Gordon, 25th January 1922). This thinly veiled comment was partly aimed directly at Penn’s previous experience at Nippur which although yielding large numbers of clay tablets, could not be described a success in any other terms (Silverberg, 1985: 148-184).

Lawrence eventually allowed them to apply for permits, on the understanding that the permit would only be given to a field expert – “the Reisner or Petrie or Woolley of the business”(Dyson, 1977: 8; Winstone, 1990: 116). Gordon told Kenyon that

“concerning the Director of Excavations, Mr. C. Leonard Woolley is one who would be satisfactory to the museum and in case he should be your choice we would be glad if he were available to take charge of a joint expedition” (Penn, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 6th March 1922).

As it had become politically impossible for Woolley to resume work at Carchemish, he was appointed director of the expedition. Ur, 120 miles north of Basra in former Mesopotamia, was the agreed site. On 25th September 1922, Kenyon informed Woolley officially of his appointment to take charge of the Joint Expedition. The other members of the team were to be F.G. Newton, Sidney Smith and the American representative on the team, P. Hunter (BMCA, WY1/1/121, 25th September 1922). In fact, Hunter never joined the expedition as he suffered a nervous breakdown on reaching London and
was replaced by A.W. Lawrence, brother of T.E. Lawrence. This meant that in the beginning, Penn were not represented on the excavation, an issue that was to cause problems between the two partners.

Penn were initially delighted to be involved in such a prestigious and promising expedition. In a slight spin on the truth, articles appeared in the American press proclaiming

"[t]he choice of the University Museum to join with the noted British institution in this greatest expedition of its kind in history is a signal tribute to the skill and energy of Philadelphia explorers and the vision of the many who made their work possible. It is recognition also, from the birthplace of Assyriology, of Philadelphia’s contribution to the world’s knowledge of ancient Babylonian history, literature, religion, arts and modes of life. Those facts become all the more important when it is stated that the University Museum was chosen by British scientists from among all others. When the invitation was received last summer, the trustees made the necessary appropriation and authorised Dr Gordon to go abroad to complete the agreement. The museums will share equally in all the finds" (New York Times, 1922: no page [repeated in 18th September 1922, Inquirer; 19th September 1922, Evening Ledger]).

Both museums approached the excavation at Ur from the assumption that this particular Ur (there being several sites in Mesopotamia with similar names) was ‘Ur of the Chaldees – birthplace of Abraham’. From the first stirrings on both sides of the Atlantic that a joint expedition to Ur was being mooted, dramatic headlines left no doubt how the excavation was going to be perceived and presented in the press - “Bringing to Light the City where Abraham was born, how Americans will go back to the beginning of Sacred History and teach the world that these men and women really lived” was how the news was reported in the Buffalo New York Express (1921: no page), accompanied by illustrations of Abraham offering his son as sacrifice to God, and with a detailed account of the corresponding biblical chapters.

More modestly, the British press avoided such vivid headlines but constantly stressed that the expedition was taking place in the ancient Chaldean city of Ur, birthplace of the patriarch Abraham, thus reinforcing the biblical reference in the public perception of the excavation.
The political situation in Iraq at this time was still uncertain and there was some doubt how this would affect the excavation. Kenyon told Woolley in June 1923 “\textit{no Antiquities Law has yet been passed for Iraq}” (BMCA CE/26/12, Kenyon memo 7th June 1923), although he thought it probable that the presence of Woolley’s Expedition would lead to the establishment of definite regulations. Kenyon had expected the new Antiquity Law to be passed in the autumn of 1922, but it was only implemented in 1924. The Administration of Iraq had already been in communication with the Joint Archaeological Committee for the expedition (cited in Bernhardsson, 2005: 79)\footnote{The Joint Archaeological Committee was established at the initiation of Kenyon to facilitate the removal of artefacts from Iraq to London in 1918.}

\begin{quote}
“\textit{and is acquainted with its recommendations with regard to the administration of antiquities in mandated and similar territories. It is also acquainted with the Law now in operation in Palestine. It is likely that regulation imposed by the Iraq Government will follow these lines}” (BMCA CE/26/12, Kenyon memo 7th June 1923).
\end{quote}

Two months later, Gordon wrote to Kenyon from his travels in Egypt, “\textit{the new law in Egypt abolishing the right of half the division will likely affect Iraq and make it more difficult for an Expedition in future to take away anything of importance}” (BMCA CE32/26/15, letter from Gordon to Kenyon, 10th August 1923).

The circumstances surrounding the excavation and the right to remove findings were already shifting as the excavation began its first season. As Woolley arrived in Iraq to begin the first season, he met with Gertrude Bell who informed him that the new Antiquity Law was about to be considered by the Iraqi cabinet (Winstone, 1990: 119). This took longer than originally thought, being enacted in 1924, but Bell announced that all finds must now belong to “\textit{the new Kingdom of Iraq}“. She would try to achieve a fair selection for the client museums, but the best artefacts must remain in Iraq (Winstone, 1990: 120; Bernhardsson, 2005: 111-129). The excitable headlines in the American press were soon to give way to complaints about the lack of finds making their way to the two museums as Iraq began to assert its right to half of the division. As these pressures and doubts began to affect the American investors’ willingness to sponsor the excavation to the same extent as before, the relationship between the two
museums became more strained. The effect of this on the funding of Ur is examined next, season by season.
Chapter Six

Financing the Joint Expedition to Ur

When the Joint Expedition to Ur was established in 1922 by the two participating museums, the understanding agreed between them was that Penn would meet most of the financial costs “in return for the advantages to be derived from the prestige of the BM and its influence with local authorities” (BMCA SC: 3962, 14th October 1922).

Woolley’s budget, ‘The Mesopotamia Exploration Fund’ was established at the start of the expedition on an initial estimate of expenses of £3,600 per season. This figure was based on Campbell-Thompson’s expenditure during the immediate post-war period, an earlier, cheaper time and was quickly to prove inadequate. The number of seasons was not specified, but the understanding was that it would be “a continuous campaign over several seasons” (Penn, Woolley letters to Gordon, 11th July 1924 and Kenyon, 24th July, 1924).

The accounts for the Ur excavation are not recorded in detail at the BM, being mainly a collection of letters, bills, receipts and comments in the BM Standing Committee Minutes (BMCA SC). The estimated costs of each season are recorded in the BMCA SC Minutes, although the costs frequently changed during the seasons, as well as comments about Penn’s and the BM’s contributions to the Exploration fund, and approximately how much had come from donations. The donations however were only specifically mentioned if they were large. In some instances they are simply referred to as “numerous” (BMCA SC: 4384) or “greatly increased” (BMCA SC: 4605). Towards the end of the excavation there are remarks concerning how much in credit the BM was without specifying exactly how much had come from donations.

Woolley was meticulous about recording and explaining every item of expense, and pleading his case when he went, invariably, over budget. Every penny spent by Woolley seems to have been covered by an accompanying letter to Kenyon or Gordon, for example telling Kenyon during the first season that

“[t]he putting up of barbed wire around the Expedition House is an expeditory cost as much as a housing matter, and a non-recurring charge. The arrival of Mr Lawrence has added £110 to my anticipated expenses. Average expenses work out at about £100 per week.”
My total expenditure has been c£1970, which leaves a balance of £1030, out of which provision must be made for the necessarily heavy costs of the party’s return to England, and of the packing and freight of objects” (BMCA CE32/26/2, letter Woolley to Kenyon, 2nd January 1923).

First Season 1922-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Penn share</th>
<th>BM share</th>
<th>Donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£3600</td>
<td>£2500</td>
<td>£1100</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: First Season. BMCA SC: 3962, 4141.

The first season began at the end of October and was planned to continue for six months (BMCA CE32/26/11, memo between Gordon and Woolley). However, the financial arrangement immediately caused problems and Woolley was forced to bring the first season’s work to a premature halt on 26th February 1923 due to exhaustion of funds (BMCA SC, 4013, 14th April, 1923) when he exceeded his budget by £469.13.6. This was largely due to unforeseen expenses such as the need to provide “guards over the Expedition House and site” (BMCA, CE32/26/10, letter Woolley to Kenyon, 9th May 1923). Both museums appear to have been willing to increase the budget, but the length of time that it took for the parties to communicate did not allow for speedy decision-making in those days as Gordon’s letter to Woolley indicates:

“We are very sorry about the exhaustion of the funds and the closing of work at such an early date […] if we had had an early indication of how long your funds would last, and how much more you would need to complete the season, we would have been prepared to do our part to increase your credit, and I understand the BM would have been prepared to do the same. It takes from 40-60 days for a letter to reach us from Ur; then an exchange of notes between the two museums would occupy the same time” (BMCA, CE32/26/9/2, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 6th April 1923).

A revised figure was drawn up between the two parties for the forthcoming season which increased the available funds by more than 1/8th.

“6.6.23 Memo of Conferences between Gordon and Woolley
Estimated total cost of field campaign for 12 months is £4014 + Woolley's salary (£600) =£4614, allowing for a 6 month season.

Money to be placed into a Mesopotamian Excavation Account, with Woolley authorised to draw on it” (BMCA, CE32.26/11, 6th June 1923).

The budget had to cover all Woolley’s assistants’ salaries as well as his own and was also intended to cover the out of season costs of dealing with the finds at home, preparing for exhibitions of finds and writing reports.

**Second Season 1923-4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated cost</th>
<th>Penn share</th>
<th>BM share</th>
<th>Donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£4215, inc. arrears £319.13.6d</td>
<td>£2810 + £500</td>
<td>£1405</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(matching Reckitt’s £250 donation x 2 to 1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Second Season. BMCA SC: 4029, 4088, 4100.

Before the end of the second season however, the same situation occurred as the estimate of costs was still based on Campbell-Thompson’s earlier and now out of date figures and Woolley faced early closure of the excavation or a reduction in scale (BMCA SC: 4088, 8th March 1924). Gordon told Kenyon on 29th February 1924 that

“[w]e received your cable of the 19th February which read ‘Woolley’s funds nearly exhausted. Can find £250 extra here. Will you add proportionately?’ On 23rd February we answered AGREED” (BMCA 32/26/31).

As the second season ended, feelings between the two parties became strained as the BM had results from the excavations to show at their summer exhibitions, but so far, Penn did not. Partly this seems to have been due to the BM’s lack of organisation or sense of urgency when it came to the division, with no-one taking responsibility for dealing with it (Winstone, 1990: 133). Despite Gordon agreeing to the extra funds this season, he had difficulty in persuading his investors that Woolley was not being profligate but was basing the costs on more “intimate knowledge” of the region after completing a season. Gordon complained about the lack of balance between the two partners – pointing out that the BM could exhibit their finds, bringing the results of the
work favourably before the public and demonstrating their value whereas Philadelphia
had nothing to show yet (Penn, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 24th July 1924). He
questioned whether it was a “Joint Expedition or a BM Expedition supported by

Although the lack of American representation on the expedition had been understood
since Hunter became ill at the outset, it seems likely that Gordon had become
somewhat embarrassed by the lack of evidence that Penn had to show to their
investors. Both Kenyon and Woolley had written to Gordon after Hunter’s illness asking
for Gordon to find a suitable replacement (Penn, letter Kenyon to Gordon, 26th
September 1922; Penn, letter Woolley to Gordon, 18th November 1922) but there had
been no development. The disagreement between the two partners approached
pettiness as the exchanges became matters of linguistic misunderstandings. Gordon
objected to the use of the word “co-operation” between the two museums feeling that it
suggested lesser status whereas Kenyon thought it implied equality, not subordination
(Penn, letters between Gordon and Kenyon, June – September 1924).

This situation was aggravated by reports appearing in the Philadelphia press of the
effect of the new Antiquities Law in Iraq. A Philadelphia headline announced that

“University of Pennsylvania loses Rare Treasures Dug up at Ur, to Baghdad
museum.
One Ur treasure, claimed by the Baghdad museum is an object of such unique
interest that it is worth the rest of the finds put together. It is a large inlaid
plaque representing a milking scene dating some 6000 years back.
The allotment of the treasures of Ur and Kish was a condition of an agreement
entered into between the American and British archaeologists and the present
government of Mesopotamia” (BMCA CE32/26/36/3 untitled newspaper, 17th
April 1924: no page).

Gordon complained about the effect of the news articles, which

“whatever their source or authority may have been, were commented upon at
length editorially in very unfavourable and discouraging terms […] the result has
been that the supporters of the Joint Expedition to Mesopotamia have been
discouraged” (BMCA CE32/26/40, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 24th July 1924).
Kenyon denied any responsibility in the news stories, blaming irresponsible press correspondents in Baghdad and defending the division made by Gertrude Bell adding, “she compensated by leaving us considerably more than our half share of the other friezes and the copper bulls” (Dyson, 1977: 14; Penn, letter Kenyon to Gordon, 12th August 1924).

As relations became more strained, Gordon even objected to the title of “Pennsylvania University” being used in acknowledgements in the articles and reports written by Woolley and the BM.

“This is nothing to do with Pennsylvania University. This is the University Museum located in Philadelphia. I think you had better write University Museum, Philadelphia. It is easily remembered by comparing it to British Museum, London, also 3 words” (BMCA WY1/1/62, letter Gordon to Woolley, 15th May 1924)

Woolley tried to defuse the situation by re-emphasising the prestige that the BM brought to the expedition, telling Kenyon that

“[i]t is no concern of mine whence the money comes or in what proportion the 2 museums contribute, but you may be interested to know that in our first season, the use of the BM’s name (its good-will so to speak) saved us directly between £800 - 900” (BMCA CE32/26/46, letter Woolley to Kenyon, 29th August 1924).  

However Gordon was not to be moved and told Kenyon

“[h]aving borne the large share of the expenses in the initial stages, we now feel that it would be fair for each museum to bear an equal share and accordingly are prepared to guarantee the sum of £2125, provided you will be prepared to pay into the fund on the same date” (BMCA CE32/26/43, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 4th August 1924).

To resolve the situation, it was agreed firstly that epigraphist Leon Legrain would be sent by Penn to Ur as their representative, a position he held between 1924 and 1926. Secondly, the new financial understanding was that after two years of Penn bearing the larger share of the expenses, both parties would now pay equally into the Mesopotamia Excavation Fund and that Woolley would be able to draw from it as and when the...
expedition required. Woolley’s estimate for the 1924/25 season was now £4,250 - Penn therefore agreed to pay £2,125, the rest to be paid by the BM (Penn, letter Gordon to Kenyon, 4th August 1924; BMCA SC: 4141, 11th October 1924).

**Third Season 1924-5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated costs</th>
<th>Penn share</th>
<th>BM share</th>
<th>Donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£4250</td>
<td>£2125 (1/2 of amount)</td>
<td>£2125; £1250 available Shortfall: £875</td>
<td>£450 “Total to date £1835”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Third Season. BMCA SC: 4141.

The BM was short of funds in the aftermath of the First World War however and apparently agreed to the new arrangement without having the money available for their half of the agreement. Britain was in a slump in the early 1920’s - unemployment was the burning issue of the day and heavy debts incurred during the war remained a burden that was added to by high interest rates.

Government departments were all being urged to make large cuts and competition for funding became fierce (BMCA SC, 11th October 1924: 4141). The BM was facing financial hardship and began to search for new ways to generally raise funds. Their sale of postcards and catalogues began to increase and they even began to consider selling advertising space on the book tickets in the reading rooms although this was dismissed by the Trustees who did “not want to encourage any disfigurement of the forms for the sake of a relatively small return” (BMCA SC, 12th May 1923: 4021).

The BM Trustees agreed that £1,250 could be found for the Ur excavation from the “Purchase Grant” (BMCA SC, 10th January 1925: 4166) but the remainder needed to come from other sources. Woolley made an appeal and gave a series of talks in Iraq which raised £250 (BMCA SC: 4173, 14th February, 1925). Gordon donated another £50 but the excavation closed at the end of February. Kenyon had to consider more financial problems than just those of the Ur excavation however and made regular appeals in the press during the 1920’s for contributions to support the excavations that the BM was involved with, for example, the Mayan expedition in 1927, the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem in 1929, and Ur through most of its duration (Kenyon, 1927: 10). Kenyon wrote that investment in these excavations was needed as
“the harvest, as Ur is showing us, is rich” (Kenyon, 1929: 11). He asked people to influence anyone who would help with the work, adding that “we need quite a considerable sum and any donations will be used to the utmost profit” (Kenyon, cited in Woolley, 1928c: 641-642). Kenyon urged:

“I remind you of this that these excavations which are carried out by the BM and the University of Pennsylvania can only be carried out with assistance from outside. In America I think all the funds come from subscriptions given for that particular purpose. In this country, a large part of the funds have been found by the Trustees of the BM. The rest has been found by contributions from benefactors of the Museum and persons interested in it” (Kenyon, 1929: 11).

### Fourth Season 1925-6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated cost</th>
<th>Penn share</th>
<th>BM share</th>
<th>Donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£5000</td>
<td>£2500</td>
<td>£2500; £1808.15.0 available</td>
<td>£426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Fourth Season. BMCA SC: 4226, 4249, 4283.

However the crisis continued with every season as the funds due from the BM were unavailable and had to be continually raised by appeals for private subscription. In contrast, from 1925 onwards, Penn had the added advantage of receiving a large annual donation of $15,000 per year for the Ur excavation from John D. Rockefeller Jr. (Bernhardsson, 2005: 132). Taking the 1925 $/£ exchange rate into account, this equates to about £3,000 per annum. As each party had by 1925 agreed to contribute £2,500 per year to the fund, this meant that Penn did not have to contribute any of their own money and had some in reserve.

Woolley complained about the indifference of the British to the distant past and the niggardly philistinism of fellow countrymen (Winstone, 1990: 23):

“The Italian government, comparatively poor though it may be, spends yearly upon excavations and upon the upkeep of national monuments an amount of
money which the British public would grudge in a decade”. (Winstone, 1990: 23).

Articles and letters regularly began to appear in all areas of the press in an attempt to raise the share of the funding that the BM was unable to provide, as will be examined in the following chapter.

“When Mr Woolley goes off to Mesopotamia on Friday to continue his excavations at Ur on behalf of the BM and the Museum of Pennsylvania University, he will have to sail without an architect because the expedition cannot afford to pay one. ‘The 2 museums share results and also the expense. I estimate that the annual expense of these excavations is £5000 a year, but the BM cannot afford to give us our half-share, so we have to raise it, and I want about £2000’” (Unaccredited newspaper cutting, 1925, OFA; Woolley, 1925a: 1).

Some of the excavation’s wealthier sponsors responded to the appeal with particular agendas of their own. Reckitt wrote to Kenyon “I’m sorry to hear that Philadelphia are reducing their contribution. In the circumstances, I shall be pleased to repeat my contribution of £250 on the same understanding as last year” (BMCA CE32/26/47, 24th August 1924). This ‘understanding’ referred to his expectation of a “small memento from the excavation, a tangible memento from the objects found” (BMCA CE32/26/47, 24th August 1924).

For Woolley, the need to continue the excavation carried an urgency that he was unable to make public. When he began digging at Ur in the first season, 1922/3, he began by excavating trenches close to the ‘Sacred Area’ of Ur where ancient and more recent cemeteries were situated, but which had been looted by grave robbers. During this excavation, he came upon a walled tomb that had been dug at a deeper level and showed promise of exceptionally rewarding finds. Woolley filled this “gold trench” in again and moved on elsewhere (BMCA CE32/27/86, letter Woolley to Kenyon, 3rd January 1927, referring to the name given to the trench by the workmen in the first season). Apparently, Woolley was willing to forego speedy and sensational discovery because his workmen were not yet experienced enough to do the job satisfactorily (Baumann, 1969: 60-62). Woolley said that
“our diggers were raw and clumsy, and for the clearing of a cemetery skilled labour is essential; we were ourselves new to the country and had not had time to secure proper influence over the men, for whom the temptation of small gold objects was irresistible” (1934a: 5).

It was not until 1927 that Woolley felt that his workmen were experienced enough to excavate the trench again. Before the start of the 1925/6 season, however, Woolley realised that as Penn had reduced their financial contribution from two-thirds to half of the costs and the BM were unable to meet their share, a serious and concerted fundraising campaign would be necessary to enable continuous excavation at Ur until he was in a position to reopen the “gold trench” and realise all that the early period of excavation had promised.

When the revised arrangement was made between the two museums for equal contributions, Kenyon explained to Woolley that the sum the BM had provided in the past was the extreme to which its resources would go, and that the balance required would have to be raised from outside. Woolley realised that as there was no organisation in the BM for raising such funds and no individual who could make it his job to raise them, it was up to him to look after the interests of the Joint Expedition (BMCA CE32/27/89/1, letter Woolley to Kenyon, January 1927).

This was the turning point in the Ur excavation. The funding from Penn was dramatically reduced, the site promised unparalleled discoveries, and there was no help forthcoming from either museum to help Woolley resolve the financial problems. From this point on, Woolley had to determine the best means of continuing with the excavation in the face of imminent closure. Interpretation and representation now became paramount as he began the desperate search for funding.

The Committee for Ur

It was at this point Woolley decided on establishing a support committee to help him in this endeavour. A discreet notice was placed in The Times (Arts and Entertainment category) that funds for the continuation of the excavations were much needed and that a voluntary committee was being formed to raise them (The Times, 1925a: 5). The notice said:

“An exhibition of the principal discoveries made last season on the site of Ur of the Chaldees by the joint expedition of the BM and the Museum of the
University of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Mr C.L. Woolley, is being arranged in the BM, and will be open to the public on Tuesday, July 7. As the objects discovered have to be divided between Baghdad, Philadelphia and London, this will be the only opportunity of seeing them all together. Mr Woolley will lecture on the season’s work in the BM on Sunday, June 28 at 3pm, with lantern slides. Tickets for seats can be obtained at the Museum, price 1s. Funds for the continuation of the excavation are much needed, and a voluntary Committee is being formed to raise them. Contributions may be sent to the Director, BM.”

This was not an unusual method of raising public awareness and appealing for funds. In February 1921, the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club appealed for funds for the Mount Everest expedition which was being organised by a combined committee of the two societies (The Times, 1921: 13). Woolley had learned from his early experiences in archaeology (Winstone, 1990: 18) and his position in the press office during the war (Winstone, 1990: 65) that publicity was the key to successful fundraising and he turned to his acquaintance, the like-minded Ogden, for support. Ogden had visited the site as part of a grand tour that included a very early visit in March 1923 to Tutankhamun’s tomb, and again in 1925, and knew of the problems facing Woolley. It is unknown whether Ogden knew Woolley before these visits, but he would have been well aware of the significance of the site in biblical terms, visiting it at the first opportunity. He was an established figure on the lecture circuit in the north of England by this time and made Woolley aware of the fund-raising potential of the audiences these lectures attracted. With his keen business eye, he, like Woolley, was acutely aware of the role of publicity in increasing public awareness.

There is no evidence that a formal committee was set up between Woolley and Ogden, rather it appears that arrangements were made between the two that put Ogden in charge of overseeing promotional activities in the UK. For many months of the year, Woolley was excavating in Iraq, unable to promote the excavation in person. The BM was responsible for many issues apart from Ur, and certainly could not spare any staff to take on the role of publicising the Ur campaign. Ogden was semi-retired, and affluent enough to travel extensively. His passion for the work that was being carried out and his firm belief in the biblical associations of the site meant that he would have regarded it as a pleasure and a duty to help the work continue.
From this point on, Ogden effectively began acting as promoter and publicity agent to Woolley. Woolley would send copies of all his reports, articles and broadcast notes to Ogden, who then placed them in appropriate newspapers and journals. Ogden also extended his own lecture tours to raise the profile of the excavation and attract subscriptions. In effect, he became the voice piece for Woolley in his absence. The combination of the efforts of Woolley, Ogden and the BM to promote the same agenda ensured that far more publicity was generated than could have been managed by Woolley operating alone. This publicity campaign is examined in detail in Chapter 7.

Ogden was fully aware of the power of advertising in running a successful business and the benefits of timely sponsorship of events. His position as court jeweller meant he was also a man with extensive connections among knowledgeable and wealthy people. This was a position he was able to take advantage of by specifically asking his wealthy contacts for donations, or suggesting they made visits to Ur. Sir Robert and Lady Mond visited Ur in early 1928, accompanied by Oscar Raphael and made donations in 1928/29 to the excavation fund (BMCA WY1/13/82, letter Kenyon to Woolley, 19th January 1928).

Although these efforts by Ogden were to make him increasingly indispensable to the Ur campaign, the direct feedback to him in terms of reports, photographs and artefacts from Woolley and the BM, placed him in a unique position of gaining expertise for his own purposes. His own interests and beliefs in the biblical aspects of the excavation now seemed to be consolidated by the association with Woolley, and the apparent corroboration from the site. The relationship worked well for both parties – the excavation gradually achieved a higher public profile, and Ogden’s reputation as a lecturer and authority on biblical archaeology spread nationwide.

Kenyon wrote to Woolley in August 1925, making an early reference to Ogden: “I am sorry that the financial prospects are so poor. Has your committee got going and what about that man in the north who expected to be able to raise some hundreds?” (BMCA WY1/6/19, 27th August 1925). The Trustees reported two months later that “Mr J.R. Ogden of Harrogate had undertaken an active campaign of collection in the North and hoped to raise at least £300” (BMCA SC, 10th October 1925: 4226). There is a certain disdain in the reference of Kenyon and the Trustees to “the north”, emphasising the divide and the provincial attitude of the south to the north. However it showed a growing recognition that not only was “the North” interested in cultural events but was also an untapped source of financial support.
Woolley came under pressure again from Gordon during the 1925/26 season. Gordon complained that the fund-raising efforts Woolley had made in both Britain and among British residents in Iraq emphasised Woolley’s association with the BM, rather than as representative of the joint partnership. Woolley diplomatically stressed that he was attempting to hold the balance between the two museums to whom he was equally obliged, but needed to bring the BM’s contribution up to half of the season’s estimate in the interest of the Joint Expedition (Penn, letter Woolley to Gordon, 30th September 1925).

Woolley’s estimate for the 1925/26 season had risen to £5,000, of which the BM had only been able to raise £1,808.15.00 towards their half (BMCA SC Minutes, 10th October 1925: 4226). This left a shortfall of approximately £700 which needed to come from outside sources. After Woolley left for Ur for the 1925/26 season, he relied on Kenyon to keep him informed about the success or otherwise of the fundraising and asked, “I hope Mr Ogden is raising money for the dig and that there will not be any difficulties on the financial side” (BMCA WY1/7/31, 30th November 1925).

Kenyon replied that

“Mr Ogden has not reported yet. Nearly a month ago he wrote that he intended to report in the following week, but he has not done so. I fear it means he has been less successful than he hoped. If necessary we must make up any deficit from official funds” (BMCA SC, 10th January 1925: 4166; referring to the BM Trustees agreement in January 1925 that £1,250 could be found from the “Purchase Grant” but not the balance).

He added

“I have today received (in consequence of an appeal at a lecture here) a guinea from Mrs Martley who says that she will look forward with much interest to your promised letter from Ur, reporting the results attributable to her donation” (BMCA WY1/6/16, 17th December 1925).12

12 Extraordinarily, Woolley was writing personally to individual subscribers to update them on the excavations and to keep their subscriptions coming in. It was not until 1928 that Kenyon finally
Woolley remained convinced that Ogden, having given his word, would find the necessary funds, and told Kenyon "I am very sorry that Ogden has not yet come up to scratch, but he has given a guarantee and will I think make it good" (BMCA CE32/27/46/1, 4th January 1926).

Meanwhile, Ogden toured the country delivering lectures on the latest discoveries of the previous seasons, the excavation of the ziggurat and the unearthing of inscribed clay tablets and cones as will be described in Chapter 7. He was confident that he would be able to raise the necessary funds for the excavation and told Gadd, Keeper of EAA, “I am endeavouring to raise £300 for Mr Woolley’s excavations” (BMME 18th January 1926 Ogden letter to Gadd). Woolley’s trust in Ogden was justified and he told Kenyon, “I hope that money has been coming in; I hear indirectly that Ogden has sent in £100 and expects to have £200 more. That is as it should be” (BMCA WY1/ 7/31, 1st February 1926). Despite Ogden’s promises about the amounts he hoped to raise, he did not reached his target of £300 in the 1925/26 season, managing only £200.

**Fifth Season 1926-7**

<table>
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<th>Estimated costs</th>
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<th>Donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>£2500</td>
<td>£821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>£2140 available</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shortfall: £360</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Numerous"

Table 9: Fifth Season. BMCA SC: 4283, 4308, 4338, 4347, 4384, 4399.

The 1926/27 season began with the same financial worries for Woolley. The Discovery journal carried an appeal by Woolley for public contributions in August 1926 prior to Woolley’s departure for Ur in preparation for the season’s work commencing in November, stating that part of the cost of the expedition would have to be met by public contributions and they hoped these would be forthcoming.

Ogden again visited Ur in October of 1926, travelling there with the Woolleys as part of an extended tour that he made of the "Holy Land" sites, including Egypt and Palestine (OFA, Ogden’s notes). Ogden promised Woolley that he would continue his efforts to suggested to Woolley that writing to all the subscribers individually was not an economic use of his time (BMCA WY1/4, 9th January 1928).
raise funds as soon as he got home, but Woolley was increasingly anxious about the situation and expressed doubts to Kenyon about the prospects:

“I hope that some more money has come in. We had at the beginning of the season a visit from Mr Ogden, who was most enthusiastic and promised more effective help; he will be home on December 5th, and I hope you will hear from him soon afterwards. At present I am keeping expenses as low as I can, but am going on as if the total estimate were to be forthcoming. Have the oil people contributed at all?” (BMCA CE 32/27/81/, 29th November 1926).

The reason that Woolley was rather cautious about Ogden’s promises is because of his inability to raise the promised amount in the 1925/26 season. To make matters worse, the Trustees of the BM now informed Kenyon that there would be no increase in the Purchase Grant allowance for the 1926/27 season, remaining at £1,125 (BMCA SC, 9th October 1926: 4308).

Kenyon told Woolley

“I am afraid the financial outlook at present is not bright. The oil companies have given no response to my appeals, and contributions in general are not coming in. […] We needed £192.0.3d to be made up in order to equal the University of Pennsylvania contribution. This we have been able to do by receiving Reckitt’s belated contribution of £250 for 1925-26, which allows us to start the new financial year with a balance of practically £58. (I do not take into account the third £100 which Ogden promised but did not raise. Anything he now collects had better be reckoned for 1926 – 27). To this £58 I have at present only £103 to add in contributions from the general public. I presume we may count on £250 from Reckitt again, and an unknown quantity from Ogden. Suppose we put that at another £250 (£50 more than he produced last year), that only gives us £1911 on our side of the account. I do not see my way to make our contribution up to more than £2000, which means £4000 all told for your year” (BMCA WY1/6/2, 29th December 1926).

As the running expenses for a season were now estimated by Woolley to be £5000, and the BM were unable to contribute the amount they had committed, the 1926/27 season looked unlikely to last its course. This was a particular blow to Woolley because, at Kenyon’s suggestion, he had finally re-opened the “gold trench”. He said to Kenyon
“[a]lmost the last words you spoke to me were a suggestion that I might as well have another try at the “gold trench” as the men called the trench begun in the first season, and I have done so with results with which I hope you will be pleased. We will have a wonderful exhibition this year” (BMCA CE32/27/86, letter Woolley to Kenyon, 3rd January 1927).

After Kenyon’s letter about the expected shortfall for the season, Woolley sent Gordon a desperate telegram (Penn, 13th January 1927, Telegram from Woolley to Gordon) “Found Prehistoric Cemetery Very Rich Gold Etc.” This concerned the trench found five years earlier but not mentioned to Penn until Woolley felt he had no option. He also sent Ogden a telegram stating that “[e]xcavations very rich closing down end January through lack funds. £750 urgently required. Please communicate Kenyon if help possible” (BMCA CE32/27/89/1, 15th January 1927). He then told Kenyon

“[y]our letter of December 29th came as an awful blow, for it meant that I should be obliged to close down the work at the end of this month, and even so should probably overrun my limit of £4000. […] I felt pretty desperate at having to stop in the middle of the work we are doing […] and I accordingly took certain steps of my own […] I wired to Mr Ogden, I hope the wires may have some effect […].”

During the course of writing this letter however, Woolley received a cable from Kenyon describing a legacy which had been recently bequeathed to the BM.

“Your cable reached me this evening – we opened the last of my Xmas champagne to celebrate its arrival! – and I am intensely relieved. I am wondering whether this is Miss Bell’s legacy, which I understood would mean £300 a year for the Museum’s work in Iraq. If only Ogden comes up to scratch, the situation ought to be saved. […] We really need the money to finish up this cemetery. Of course many of the graves repeat themselves, but there are always new things turning up” (BMCA CE32/27/89/1, 15th January 1927).

Gertrude Bell had died a few months earlier in July 1926 and had left £6000 for archaeological exploration in Iraq. In the end, however, it was to be several years before the situation concerning the legacy was resolved and the money became available so Woolley’s doubts continued to mount as he waited to hear whether Ogden had been successful in raising funds. He wrote to Kenyon a fortnight later saying “I
hope that you will have heard from Ogden and that he is playing [sic] up” (CE 32/27/93/1, letter Woolley to Kenyon, 31st January 1927).

Ogden was indeed making every effort. Kenyon had contacted him about the desperate situation and he began a new series of lectures as soon as he got home from his extended tour. He also sent a leaflet with the following appeal to his list of influential and wealthy contacts:

“Thrilling headlines such as the above appeared in the leading English papers only a few days ago, announcing one of the greatest archaeological discoveries ever made, viz., the actual unearthing of the City of Abraham at Ur of the Chaldees.

And now, alas! A few days ago a telegram was received by the BM Authorities stating that owing to shortage of funds, these interesting excavations would have to close down just on the eve of further great discoveries. I am trying to gather £500 to avert this disaster and thus enable the excavators to continue their work to the end of the present season.

Can you help us in any degree? If so, will you post me any sum that you feel constrained to give, or send it to Sir Frederic Kenyon, The BM, London. An official receipt will be sent for all monies received” (Ogden, 1927: no page) (Figure 5).

This form of circulation by leaflet was to prove so effective that Ogden was immediately able to send £110 to the BM in February 1927 (BMCA SC, 12th February 1927: 4338).13

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13 The method was also used by Crawford when he launched his new journal, Antiquity shortly afterwards. Crawford sent out thousands of leaflets via the post, newspapers and other related journals. It was the reason for Antiquity’s successful launch and was, he said, “the only publicity that pays” (1955: 177). Ogden used the method again to raise money for Mallowan at Arpachiyah in 1932.
Figure 5: Ogden Montage of headlines. OFA
Kenyon also appealed to the public that, if he were able to cable Woolley that he had an extra £350 available, several extra weeks’ work could be put in (The Daily Mail, 1927: 6) and he followed this with an offer in the press to anyone who would subscribe to the Ur fund:

“Subscribers of £1.1s. or more to the BM fund being raised to continue the excavations at Ur of the Chaldees (the birthplace of Abraham, in Mesopotamia) are promised in return a small piece of pottery found on the spot. Fragments of such pottery which have been discovered date back to thousands of years before Christ. Lack of funds may mean that the work will have to stop, and it is to prevent this that Mr C. Leonard Woolley, the director of the work, has stated that he is willing to present each subscriber with an interesting memento, as long as there is sufficient pottery or other objects of interest. The sum of £1.1s. pays the wages of a squad of Arab workmen for a week, and subscribers will receive a letter telling what has been found on the ground excavated during the week allocated to them […] For every guinea subscribed in England one is also subscribed from America, so that there is a double benefit.14 Subscriptions should be sent to Sir Frederic Kenyon etc. (Daily Mail, 1927: 8)

Although appealing for a guinea (£1.1s) sounds like a very moderate request today, it needs to be considered in the context of the average wage of the time. In the inter-war years an average worker might take home between £2 and £3 a week in wages. Journalists and writers might make £10 to £15 a week (Overy, 2009: xv). A subscription of a guinea was therefore a substantial consideration.

The placing of these appeals in papers such as The Daily Mail and The Daily Express, rather than The Times or The Telegraph, would not have been a random choice. The approximate inter-war circulation figure for The Mail was 1,525,000 and 2,543,000 for the Express as compared to that of The Times at 210,000 and The Telegraph at 835,000 (Thomas, 1943: inside cover). Although The Times was seen as the natural home of BM announcements and archaeological reports, the more popular press was seen as the most direct route to appeal to public involvement. This method of

14 BMCA SC: 4088, 8th March 1924. This refers to the original agreement that Penn would match any contributions from Britain.
personalising the excavation for individual subscribers with an “interesting memento” proved very effective and was used again by the BM in future appeals, for example when they needed to raise money for the Codex Sinaiticus in 1933 (Miller, 1973: 33). This will be examined in the next chapter.

**Sixth Season 1927-28**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Estimated costs</th>
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<th>BM share</th>
<th>Donations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>£2500; £1680 available</td>
<td>£1623.5.1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shortfall: £820</td>
<td>“Considerable' due to Mr Woolley’s drawing room lectures”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10:** Sixth Season. BMCA SC: 4398, 4399, 4426, 4469.

Ogden’s efforts were also proving to be relatively successful and he informed Hall in August 1927 that he had raised Woolley “a few hundred pounds” for his excavations and was hoping to repeat the same service in the coming season (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 22nd August 1927). Ogden was in fact working extremely hard by this stage and told Hall that he would like 2 or 3 days rest after giving 20 lectures within six weeks.

Woolley appealed directly to the public via the papers:

“In token of my gratitude to readers of The Daily Mail who responded to that newspaper’s appeal for funds for the excavation, I intend to send a souvenir to each subscriber. It may be a pot or a tool or some beads, but in every case, it will be something dating from Nebuchadnezzar, or an even more ancient time” (Woolley, 1927d: 12).

Hundreds of people responded to all these appeals and found themselves during the course of the excavation in receipt of beads, stones, pottery or shells. After March 1929, many were perplexed to find themselves in receipt of small bottles of “sand deposited by the Flood” after Woolley’s claim to have discovered proof of the Biblical Flood (see Chapter 7). This latter gesture by Woolley, with its assumption of biblical authenticity, was not always appreciated. One subscriber wrote to Woolley that
“[t]he present gift is rather of geological than archaeological interest for I am afraid I am unable to regard the assumption implied by your use of the words “the Flood” as scientifically justifiable” (BMCA, CE32/32/3, 15th August 1930).

This offer of souvenirs in return for subscription by Woolley reflected a growing tendency among areas of the press to attract readers during the furious circulation war that was taking place during the 1920's. Various rewards were offered to tempt readers including free copies, prizes and competitions and circulations rose accordingly (Barker, 1947: 359).

The Ur excavation achieved even greater exposure when O.G.S. Crawford, the editor of Antiquity, appealed to its readers through an editorial in September of that year to support “this epoch-making” work in the most practical way (Crawford, 1927: 257-258). “Only in very exceptional cases can we lend support in these pages to an appeal for funds, but we gladly do so on behalf of the excavations at Ur in Mesopotamia”. He emphasised the importance of the excavation in discovering the “origins” of civilised life, explaining that Ur had been a flourishing city 3000 years before Christ, and that Woolley had found evidence of one of the earliest kings, A-anni-padda, who lived “a thousand years, not less – before Abraham, whose home also was in Ur” (Crawford, 1927: 257-258). Reflecting upon his decision to lend support to Ur, Crawford said in his autobiography that he had seen the journalistic potential of the work at Ur and had decided to support the excavation of a site of major importance. He added that he could not have “foreseen the discovery of the Royal Tombs with their rich grave goods” (1955: 187). However, as he and Woolley were fairly well acquainted at that time, one can assume that Crawford probably knew the discoveries were imminent.

Crawford’s appeal was disapproved of by Kenyon, because Crawford’s reward for the involvement of Antiquity was the publication of an exclusive article by Woolley (Crawford, 1955: 187). This article (Woolley, 1928a) was the first account of the discoveries in the Royal Cemetery to be published, apart from newspaper reports. Kenyon at this time was not only Director of the BM, but was also President of the Society of Antiquaries which until this point had been exclusively publishing Woolley’s reports. The Society had been founded in 1717, and was entrenched in antiquarianism. It was run, according to Stout, like an elite London club, cloaked in snobbery (Stout, 2008: 25). Kenyon warned Crawford not to publish, saying that the Society of Antiquaries did not approve of the publication of Woolley’s article in Antiquity. Crawford
accepted the rebuke but gave no undertaking not to repeat the offence, and indeed *Antiquity* continued to publish articles throughout the excavation. Crawford’s opinion was that

“the editorial committee of the Antiquaries Journal could have asked Woolley for an article and published it in their April number. They missed their opportunity and then rebuked me for seizing it. The incident emphasised the difference between a journal which has to maintain its circulation by journalistic enterprise and one which is subsidised by a rich society” (Crawford, 1955: 188).

Kenyon may have been assuaged by the fact that the *Antiquity* appeal was relatively fruitful. Crawford wrote to Woolley “[a] net total of £210 is not bad for a beginning and will certainly calm any emotions at the BM that the issue of the appeal may have stirred” (BMCA, WY1/9/15, letter Crawford to Woolley, 22nd September 1927).

In fact the Trustees reported that a “considerable portion” of the funds raised for the 1927/28 season was traceable to the *Antiquity* appeal (BMCA SC, 8th October 1927: 4399). A separate contribution of £100 was made to the fund by Sir Charles Marston after Crawford appealed directly to him (BMCA, WY1/9/15, 22nd September 1927, letter Crawford to Woolley).

Apart from lecturing and contacting his monied associates, Ogden told Hall “[i]t has been a great pleasure to lecture for 2 years for the digging at Ur and I am very pleased it has been my lot to raise some hundreds of pounds for that remarkable effort” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 26th January 1928). Being conscious of the results of well-placed publicity, he told Hall that the editor of the *Watchmaker, Jeweller, Silversmith and Optician* wanted a photograph from the BM of the Ur gold for an article “which I think would be a wise thing and might ensure further subscriptions” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 15th May 1928).

The rich finds from the Royal Cemetery meant that publicity was assured for the 1927/28 season and Woolley was able to write to Kenyon in November “I am glad that the raising of funds has been so successful; our results ought to make it easy for next year also” (BMCA WY1/4/65, 22nd November 1927).

When Woolley opened the rich tomb of Meskalamdug during the 1927/28 season, he immediately contacted Ogden who replied “I have sent today to Sir Frederic Kenyon
the balance of the money raised by lectures for your Excavation Fund and believe me, it has been a real joy to render you what service I have done” (BMCA WY1/12/37, letter Ogden to Woolley, 23rd January 1928).

**Political Unrest**

Although this was a particularly fruitful time for the Ur expedition, it was operating against the unease of a political situation in Iraq which was becoming more unstable. The RAF base at Ur of the Chaldees was preparing for all eventualities. An armoured train was now running between Shaibah, outside Basra, and Ur of the Chaldees, about 150 miles to the North West. The press reported that 20,000 Arab tribesmen, led by Ibn Saud, were preparing to march on both Iraq and “Koweit” [sic] (*The Daily Mail*, 1928: 11).

A Nairn Transport Company’s convoy was attacked shortly after this. The Nairn cars, carrying the Iraq mail, were travelling some miles behind a local convoy when the car carrying the mail was ambushed and the car and its contents stolen (*The Morning Post*, 1928: no page). From this incident it was apparent that travelling in the region was becoming more dangerous and journeys in Iraq were not to be undertaken lightly. Bedouins belonging to an unidentifiable tribe held up a party of 10 travellers in motor cars going from Damascus to Baghdad, and assaulted and robbed them (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 1928: no page).

Ogden’s own convoy was involved in an attack by “brigands” during this period. He describes the incident in one of his lectures:

> “Our second car had had the misfortune to break its axle and consequently was unable to proceed. We went out to the stranded car and found that Bedouin brigands had been in the night, bound and gagged our driver, looted the baggage and made off with a quantity of passengers’ suitcases and contents”

(OFA, Ogden lecture notes).

Part of the unrest was the result of finding oil in the region and the resulting competition between different factions for access to this resource. The Iraq Petroleum Company had struck its first oil wells in Kirkuk in 1927 and Iraq’s economic ascent began (Wallach, 1996: 376) but the artificially created Iraqi population consisting as it did of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds were not forming a unified group and the various factions were vying for control. King Faisal lacked the support of the Kurds, the Jewish
population, the Shiite tribes and the Baghdad middle class. As he had been installed by the British, the majority of the population regarded him as allied to vested interests and obstacles to beneficial change (Cannadine, citing Elie Kedourie, 2001: 140-141). At the same time there was a growing nationalist movement that was becoming more concerned about the activities of the archaeologists (BMME “Mallowan Correspondence and Varia 196.2", Al-Ahalî, Baghdad, 13th May 1933 and BMME “Mallowan Correspondence and Varia 196.2", Al-Ahalî, Baghdad, 14th May 1933). Mistrust was growing on both sides as the finds from the Royal Cemetery were sent back to London for repair and restoration. Main, whose book was written just a few years after this event, described that rumours began to circulate that the originals were being retained by the BM, and worthless copies sent back to Baghdad (1935: 98). His own footnote comment illustrates the attitude of the British to the host nation:

“The Baghdad Press has in general been unable or unwilling to be convinced that the value of “antikas” lies not in their intrinsic worth as objects d’art, but in the archaeological evidence they afford as they lie in situ. Perhaps this misconception is due to the Arabs’ inability to understand that anybody should be willing to put up money for any object without the certainty of getting it back” (Main, 1935: 99).

**Seventh Season 1928-29**

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<td>£4958.10s</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ogden bearing cost of electrotypes</td>
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Table 11: Seventh Season. BMCA SC: 4495, 4496, 4530, 4578, 4579,4595.

Despite the worsening political situation in Iraq, the press reports of the finds coming from the excavations were so sensational that political considerations for the time being were almost seen as minor issues in comparison. In the 1928/29 season, Woolley claimed to have made a discovery that was to electrify the supporters of the Ur excavation, namely “the Flood pit” (see Chapter 7). So startling was the effect of this on contributions that by the end of the 1928/29 season, subscriptions and other sources such as museum sales of copied artefacts, etc., brought in £3,745.10s – the
excavation, for the first time since its start in 1922, was in credit by £1,746 (BMCA SC, 9th November 1929: 4605).

Kenyon recorded in a memo “There is so much money in the Ur fund that I am inclined to hold up our contribution till it is wanted. There will be heavy calls on our reserve this next year” (CE32/28/89/1, 1st January 1931).

**Eighth Season 1929-30**

<table>
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<td>Paid £500</td>
<td>£2629.58</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Greatly increased”</td>
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*Table 12: Eighth Season. BMCA SC: 4479, 4605, 4701.*

The publicity and appeals had been so successful during the previous two seasons that the contribution by the BM to the excavation from the Purchase Grant was now reduced to £500 for the 1929/30 season. A note in the Standing Committee minutes stated that “[s]ubscriptions to the Ur fund amply covered the rest” (BM SC, 11th October 1930, 4701: 12). Ogden continued with his lectures but also tried more practical methods to enlist support. He had previously made copies of the ‘Gold Monkey’ discovered at Ur and contacted Hall to enquire whether there would be any objection to him making and presenting to Sir Robert Mond, the chemical industrialist, another copy of the small statuette who made several donations to the fund after visiting the site in 1928 (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 29th May 1929).

**Ninth Season 1930-31**

<table>
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<td>£3250</td>
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<td>£2000</td>
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*Table 13: Ninth Season. BMCA SC: 4701.*

Woolley though, continued to remind and cajole the BM to gather funds for him so that there would be no doubts about him being able to continue with the excavation over the coming seasons. Kenyon told Woolley that
“If Duveen is as good as his word we should have ample, if not we shall have to whip up our subscribers. I hope that the announcement of the discovery of the royal tombs of the 3rd Dynasty, which is in the papers today, will bring in something. The papers were buzzing about my ears about it last night, so the news seems to appeal to them. If you only have the luck to find an unplundered tomb, they will be more than satisfied” (BMME, letter Kenyon to Woolley, 30th December 1930).

Duveen, the noted benefactor, was as good as his word and sent a cheque for “one thousand pounds as a gift to the fund” (CE32/28/85/, 26th December 1930). Duveen also made large donations in 1929, 1930 and 1931, and Reckitt continued with his annual donation, each time accompanied with a request for a memento (BMCA CE32/26/47). Woolley wrote to remind Esdaile, Printed Books Secretary at the BM, that

“Reckitt is very touchy about his “souvenirs” and we can’t afford to lose his subscription. Has Duveen given his £1000? I wrote to him just before leaving England to jog his memory and hope that I succeeded” (BMCA, CE32/28/85).

Esdaile replied that Duveen had given £500 “which makes us solvent” (CE32/28/89/1, 1st January 1931). This was followed immediately by a memo stating that Duveen had now paid “Full amount of £1000” (BMCE32/28/89/1, 1st January 1931). The contribution was announced by the Trustees of the BM at a meeting on 10th January 1931 and that the gift from Sir Joseph Duveen was to be devoted to the expenses of the Ur excavations (The Times, 1931: 9).

**Tenth Season 1931-1932**

<table>
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<td>Paid £200</td>
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Table 14: Tenth Season. BMCA SC: 4793.
**Eleventh and Twelfth Seasons 1932-1934**

<table>
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<td>£4000</td>
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<td>1933-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>£3500</td>
<td>£1750</td>
<td>£638.9.7d in credit</td>
<td>Balance from public funds</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Table 15**: Eleventh and Twelfth Seasons. BMCA SC: 4884, 4899, 4910, 5035.

Despite Woolley’s constant worries, he reported to the Trustees in 1932 that he thought the entire British contribution could now be met wholly from private subscription (BMCA SC, 9th July 1932: 4899).

For the last two seasons, the small shortfall between private subscription and the required British contribution was met from the Carchemish Account, the funding that had been set aside for the continuation of work there but which had been politically untenable after the war.

Although the funding was sufficient for the excavation to continue, there were unlikely to be enough excess funds for Woolley to spend time writing his final reports and prepare them for publication. This was a problem that faced many archaeologists who found themselves unable to publish their findings. Then as now, publication of a sufficient quality at a reasonable price was an on-going difficulty:

“Even Woolley’s landmark work at Ur, despite the fame of both excavator and excavations, suffers from this gross malnutrition, so what ought to be the authoritative and permanent source of information scarcely does the excavation justice. Despite the campaign being sponsored and funded by the University of Pennsylvania and the BM – pre-eminent institutions in their respective countries – Volume 2 of the Ur Excavation Reports appeared in 1934 only thanks to a grant from the Carnegie Foundation” (Maisels, 1998: 205).
Good news came for Woolley at the end of 1931 when the Carnegie Corporation announced that they would fund his final report. Jayne, who became Director at Philadelphia after the sudden death of Gordon, wrote to Hill:

“You may not have heard from Woolley the good news of a grant of $10,000 from the Carnegie Corporation towards financing the publication of the work of the Joint Expedition and the virtual assurance that another grant of $15,000 will be made next year” (WY1/19/1-19/14, letter Jayne to Hill, 25th November 1931).

This grant unfortunately became another point of dispute between Penn and the BM in 1934 as the American Monetary Crisis took its toll on the exchange rate. The Carnegie Grant had initially been paid directly to Penn, to be paid in turn to Woolley. None of this money figured in the accounts of the Expedition, but was to be paid to Woolley as the Ur Publication Fund, Woolley being responsible to the University Museum for purposes of audit (BMCA SC: 4921, 12th November 1932). However, as the dollar crashed, Penn had difficulty in finding the full amount required for Woolley. Jayne disputed the original terms of the award, but the amount was eventually paid in 1935. The BM added to it from the Carchemish account to cover Woolley’s salary, which Penn could no longer meet (BMCA SC: 5113, 13th October 1934; BMCA SC: 5161, 9th March 1935).

**The Funding of Ur**

The BM records state that the overall break down of the funding of Ur was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Ur expedition total expenditure 1922-34</td>
<td>£59,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Penn contribution</td>
<td>£31,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The BM contribution total:</td>
<td>£12,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consisting of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• from the Carchemish fund</td>
<td>£1,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• from Treasury grant (Purchase Grant)</td>
<td>£11,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private contributions</td>
<td>£15,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total British contribution</td>
<td>£28,392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 16: Summary of Ur funding between 1922 and 1934 (BMCA, WY1/24/79).*
As illustrated in the above table, both Britain and the US contributed approximately half to the costs of the excavations. The key difference is that American funding was provided by the excavating institution, while over half of the total British contribution to the Ur excavation fund, £15,470, came from private donation (BMCA, WY1/24/79) (See also Appendix 2).

The contribution of Ogden to the overall private donation cannot be quantified, but is likely to have been considerable. Apart from raising funds through his promotional work and lecture tours, he also enlisted and inspired other wealthy people to get involved, visit the sites and make donations. He took on many of the expenses of the BM and Woolley himself, including making copies of slides and paying for advertising and appeals. In his role as an expert metallurgist, he also took financial responsibility for much of the analysis, restoration and repair as well as making replicas (Millerman, 2008). He made personal “significant donations” to the funds which are noted but not detailed in the BM accounts. The BMCA SC minutes did not always itemise donations or name individual donors unless they have made very large donations. Sometimes they referred instead to amounts coming in “through Mr Ogden” (BMCA SC: 4338, 12th February 1927) or “collected by” him (BMCA WY1/24/79).

The success of “the committee” in raising enough funds for the excavation to continue for so long, and become virtually self-sufficient, was due to very specific use of the media and communication with the public. This was achieved through targeted newspaper and journal articles and appeals, radio broadcasts and lecture tours by Woolley and Ogden as will be examined in Chapter 7.
Chapter Seven
The Spinning of Ur

The financial management of the Ur excavation by Woolley and his associates, and the methods they used to achieve it, was highly successful in allowing the excavation of Ur to continue through twelve seasons. This chapter reviews the nature and methods employed by Woolley to report the excavation and place it prominently in the public domain. He made extensive use of the media, written and broadcast, always reaching out to his audience in a lucid and accessible style. He offered mementoes to subscribers, told colourful and personal stories of tombs filled with treasures and he enhanced the biblical connections of Ur in the public perception in a bid to attract wealthy visitors to the site and increase donations.

As outlined in Chapter 6, Woolley became aware of the need to look beyond the confines of the two participating museums for his funding after the initial terms of the financial agreement changed in 1924. The BM were now responsible for finding half of each season’s costs, an arrangement they agreed to without in reality having sufficient funds to do so. Woolley was aware that the need to keep the excavation continuous required outside funding. He spent a large part of each year of the excavation working in Iraq. The months in between each season were spent writing reports and preparing exhibitions for the museums as well as lecturing in Britain and America. It was therefore necessary for him to have the assistance of an associate with the time and expertise to help him manoeuvre the Ur expedition into the public arena, taking full advantage of the media available to them. The fortuitous visit by Ogden to the excavation site during the early financial crises in 1925, allowed Woolley to see the potential for the publicity drive that was to transform the fortunes of the excavation, and a personal arrangement was struck with Ogden to take the lead in this.

Woolley and Ogden were masters of publicity and never missed an opportunity to avail themselves of whatever media was available. Woolley was adept at enthusing others and enlisting the support of those around him to continue the publicity assault on the British public. Their publicity campaign was a successful combination of the drive and energy of the two men, fuelled by their complete belief in what they were doing. In due course, the campaign was contributed to by Woolley’s assistant at Ur, a young Max Mallowan, his wife Katharine Woolley, James Ogden and editors of various journals, all of whom made substantial literary contributions to the publicity effort. They became
adept at using every aspect of the media that was available to them with Woolley providing the script and Ogden more or less acting as his publicity agent and assistant. Ogden would call for articles from Leonard or Katharine Woolley and then place them in specifically targeted journals or newspapers, as well as writing articles himself, based on Woolley’s information (4th December 1930, letter Katharine Woolley to Ogden, OFA).

Ogden was a relatively wealthy man, but he was not of unlimited means in contrast to some of the wealthier financial contributors. However he was able to generate significant public interest in the excavations through his lectures and articles and thereby stimulate public subscriptions to the excavation fund and encourage wealthy benefactors to visit the site. As demonstrated in Chapter 6, Woolley and the BM began to rely increasingly on Ogden as a continuing source of income and publicity for the excavation. In total, over £15,000 was raised in private donations over the lifetime of the excavations.

**The Media in the 1920’s and 1930’s**

The role of the media at this time was growing in significance and influence with the 1920’s seeing a rapid increase in communication. New ways of spreading information and ideas were developing, as broadcasting and moving pictures began to appear alongside newspapers and advertising (Mowat, 1968: 241). The British Broadcasting Company was formed at the end of 1922 with a remit to inform as well as entertain. In 1926, this company became the British Broadcasting Corporation (Daniel, 1950: 243). In 1926, there were 2 million radio sets in Britain, increasing to 8 million by the late 1930’s (Stevenson, 1984: 408). In America, more than 90% of urban households and 70% of rural ones had at least one radio set by 1938 (Gorman & McLean, 2009: 60). Throughout the 1920’s, radio developed as a mass medium. The following two decades were considered to be radio’s golden age when it became an important part of every household for supplying entertainment – and was seen as a trusted source of information (Gorman & McLean, 2009: 49).

The idea of mass media is usually associated with the electronic age, but Mackenzie argued that before the arrival of cinema and wireless, printed and visual materials had become available at prices low enough to place them in almost every home and there was a “craving for visual representations of the world, of events and of the great and famous” (1994: 16-19). Photography had become increasingly important as it brought the world into the home with an impact that the written word did not have. Photography
had started as largely an aristocratic and upper middle-class preserve but with the invention of photographic paper and the cheaper Eastman Kodak camera towards the end of the 19th century, its use was greatly extended (Thomas, 1943: 8).

The newspaper world was dominated by London in terms of national press, followed closely by Paris and Moscow, with a centralised press and large circulations. In the United States, Germany and Italy, the press was decentralised and circulations were smaller (Thomas, 1943: 5). *The Daily Express* was founded in 1915 by Beaverbrook, with a popular style that gradually overtook the more traditional papers although until 1927 its circulation remained lower than *The Daily Mail*. *The Express* reached a vast pre-war audience with circulation figures over 2,500,000, thereby being read by almost 1 in 4 adults. The Sunday equivalents of these popular papers, the *People* and the *News of the World* were, according to contemporary figures, being read by half the British population (Thomas, 1943: 8). *The Telegraph* was read by about 800,000 and *The Times* by a relatively small audience of about 200,000. Sales of the major daily papers rose from 4.5 million in 1910, to 10 million in 1939. The number of local papers sold exceeded that of the nationals and for many readers, especially working class readers, the locals were their prime source of information (Franklin & Murphy, 1991: 60). Ogden, through his business and social connections, earned himself a high profile in the local press. He made great use of two of the most powerful of the regional papers, the prestigious *Manchester Guardian* and the Leeds based *Yorkshire Post* as well as his local Harrogate papers, thereby bringing the news about the excavations to a much wider audience. By emphasising his connection, and by inference therefore, a regional connection, with the archaeologists, the discoveries and the BM, the impact on these audiences was all the stronger.

There was a new and potentially large audience among two groups who were only just beginning to be recognised in readership surveys, namely women and children. The latter were addressed in *The Children’s Newspaper* and *The Sunday School Times*. *The Children’s Newspaper* had been founded in 1919 with the remit of informing children of the latest world news in history and science, reaching a peak audience of 500,000. Evangelical publishing societies flourished on the back of this huge market, publishing penny histories, little books of heroes and children’s stories.

New magazines began to appear and flourish in various areas of knowledge. *Discovery* was a new monthly magazine founded in 1920, aimed at describing in popular but scholarly terms the latest advances in archaeology, history, economics and politics, as
well as the natural sciences. *Popular Mechanics* was an American magazine founded in 1902 to inform on the latest developments in science and technology. *The Listener* began publication in 1929, giving permanency to broadcast talks (Mowat, 1968: 221). In terms of reporting archaeology, *The Illustrated London News* (the World’s first illustrated newspaper) particularly played a pivotal role and had done from its founding in 1842. Daniel mentioned the large part played by the press during this time, and that *The Illustrated London News* and the archaeological correspondents of *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* helped feed the public interest in the archaeological discoveries:

> “From its inception, ‘The Illustrated London News’ dealt sporadically with all sensational archaeological discoveries; from 1900, when Bruce Ingram became editor, he determined to combine technical accuracy and an exposition simple enough for the comprehension of the layman” (Daniel, 1950: 311).

*Antiquity* and the *Archaeological Newsletter* were the national English journals concerned specifically with archaeology. *Antiquity* was founded by O.G.S Crawford in 1927 to raise the status of archaeology and popularise its achievements. Crawford succeeded in attracting a wide audience, receiving 1,270 subscriptions for the first edition (Stout, 2008: 22). In addition, there were also many local journals that reported on archaeological discoveries. In America, the journal *Archaeology* had just been launched. There was also a plethora of religious papers and magazines which would take up any reports concerning the ‘Bible and the Spade’. During the Ur campaign, Woolley also wrote regular reports for the *Antiquaries Journal* which were seen as the official reports (Crawford, 1955: 187-188) and The Royal Society of Arts, and syndicated articles for various newspapers and magazines, including *National Geographic* and *The Sphere*.

Ogden was prolific in resourcing the numerous religious journals in publication at this time. *Joyful News* and *The Christian*, among many others, both carried articles written by Ogden during the excavation. He also contributed to various trade papers, such as *The Goldsmith and Silversmiths Association* and the *Silversmith and Optician*, writing from a metallurgist’s point of view about the sophistication of the ancient craftsmen. This particular audience were to be a great source of revenue as Ogden targeted them, not just for the Ur campaign, but on behalf of the BM wanting to buy particular objects (BMME, letters between Ogden and Hall, 9th February 1928; 14th March 1928; 16th March 1928; 23rd March 1928).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Daily and Sunday Express     | Wealthy donors        | Woolley letters reports
|                              |                       | appeals
|                              |                       | articles
|                              |                       | BM letters
| Daily and Sunday Mail        | Wealthy donors        | Woolley letters
|                              |                       | articles
|                              |                       | reports
|                              |                       | appeals
|                              |                       | BM letters
| Daily Mirror                 | Donors                | Syndicated articles
| The Times and Sunday Times   | Wealthy donors        | Woolley letters reports
|                              |                       | articles
| The Telegraph and Sunday     | Wealthy donors        | Woolley letters reports
| Telegraph                    |                       | articles
| The Manchester Guardian      | Northern audiences    | Syndicated articles
|                              |                       | Ogden articles
| The Yorkshire Post           | Northern audiences    | Syndicated articles
|                              |                       | Ogden articles
| The Harrogate Herald         | Northern audiences    | Syndicated articles
|                              |                       | Ogden articles
| The Harrogate Advertiser     | Northern audiences    | Syndicated articles
|                              |                       | Ogden articles
| The Illustrated London News  | Lay archaeology       | Woolley articles
|                              |                       | Photo spreads
| Journals                     |                       |                                              |
| The Sphere                  | Lay archaeology       | Woolley articles
|                              |                       | Syndicated articles
|                              |                       | Photo spreads
| Antiquity                    | Academic and lay      | Woolley articles
|                              | archaeology           | Editorial appeals
| Discovery                    | Academic and lay      | Articles by colleagues
|                              | science               | on metalwork
| The Listener                 | Radio audiences       | Woolley radio talks
| The Jewish Chronicle         | Wealthy donors        | Syndicated articles

**Table 17**: Newspaper and journal publications used by Woolley and Ogden.

Apart from the written campaign, Woolley also gave regular talks on the radio, starting as early as 1924 and eventually having his own series in 1930. Not only was the publicity useful, but the talks themselves also provided some extra finances for the excavation as well as income for Woolley. These radio talks were then re-printed in *The Listener* and other magazines, and were not just reports on progress at Ur, but talks about archaeology generally. Woolley's style became so popular with listeners.
that the radio talks eventually formed the basis of his book “Digging up the Past”, published in 1930 (1973: author’s note). In his 1930 radio series he covered

- Why dig up the Past?
- The Archaeologist at work
- The Witness of Bricks and Mortar

Woolley also gave talks about his latest discoveries at Ur, including titles such as:

- Treasures of the Grave
- Buried Lives

Information was now available to the public on an unprecedented scale - archaeologists who took best advantage of this means of involving the public were most likely to be successful in securing funding for their excavations. Woolley and Ogden became experienced in drawing on the written press to help bring the excavation discoveries to the readers and raise essential funding. Having realised the power of the press, they made use of all media, from the large nationals, to local newspapers and specialist magazines, each targeting a different audience, thus increasing their reach exponentially.

**Archaeology, Ur and the Media**

In the early years of the expedition, the appeals to the public for the funding of Ur had to compete with the extraordinary excitement that was being generated in Egypt by Carter’s discoveries in the Valley of the Kings. There was a marked increase in the amount of coverage given to archaeology by the press. Wheeler queried the reason for “the unprecedented emergence of the daily press as patrons of British archaeology” in the 1920’s, saying that

“[t]he answer is not I think difficult. Our leading newspaper [The Daily Mail] had already had the enterprise to acquire the exclusive right of publishing Lord Carnarvon’s excavation of Tutankhamun’s tomb, and the resultant reports had captured the popular imagination. Archaeology had, almost overnight, acquired a new market-value, and it is fair to say that, since that time, it has maintained its hold on the public” (Wheeler, 1955: 75-6).

Wheeler, like Woolley, understood the advantages to be gained from using this new media interest to attract public attention and encourage funding. In 1926, he was
preparing to excavate the Roman fortress at Caerleon, adjacent to a large hollow known locally as “King Arthur’s Round Table”. Wheeler announced his project to the press where it was dutifully repeated as the excavation of “King Arthur’s Round Table”. So excited were The Daily Mail by this prospect that they agreed to fund Wheeler “to the tune ultimately of some thousands of pounds” (Wheeler, 1955: 75).

However the reverse side of this new interest in the excitement of archaeology was the overshadowing of many other excavations by those with more glamorous appeal. After the 1922 discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb, all other archaeological reports had to vie for attention with Egypt as the press concentrated much of its attention on coverage of events there. “Tutmania” gripped the public imagination and even inspired the fashions of the day. Bacon described how “‘King Tut’ became a byword and debased Egyptian motifs appeared on every suburban lampshade” (1976: 189). He added that the general public became convinced that this was what archaeology was about. However it should be acknowledged that the more widespread effect of this was the growing interest in archaeology generally. Bacon added that

“[a]rchaeologists were recognised as important people, their objectives were more widely understood and received far greater support and understanding, and financial aid was much more readily available from public and private sources” (Bacon, 1976: 75-6).

The necessity to keep Ur in the headlines was not lost on Woolley or the BM and Penn who realised the importance of satisfying their investors and in attracting visitors to the exhibitions of the discoveries. To create their own distinct and recognisable identity in light of the heavy publicity surrounding the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, Ogden and Woolley began a media campaign in which Woolley started to give rein to his vivid imagination and his flair for writing in a popular, accessible way. He emphasised Ur’s link with Abraham, stressing the impact that the excavation would have on the historicity of the Bible, explaining that the ruins at Ur were the very streets where Abraham and his family had lived, and describing the buildings he uncovered as they would have appeared to Abraham (Woolley, 1928d: 19; Mallowan, 1977: 55). The excavation at Ur became synonymous with “Abraham”, being always referred to as “Ur of the Chaldees – Birthplace of Abraham” or “City of Abraham”. Woolley compared the ziggurats to the Tower of Babel and Jacob’s ladder. There were dramatic revelations of tombs containing golden treasures as well as evidence of multiple burials and human
sacrifice, and finally in 1929, he announced that he had found evidence of the biblical flood.

Woolley largely reserved these descriptions for public consumption, rather than for academic societies. Winstone said that although “Woolley was not using the language of the academic”, at the same time “he was preparing reports for his employers in the matter-of-fact language appropriate to matters which remained conjectural. But Woolley was addressing a wider audience” (1990: 124-125).

The Strategy
The method used by Woolley and Ogden to reach the maximum audience available, involved Woolley making his interpretations, writing his articles, or scripts for the BBC, and then sending copies to Ogden, to make use of as he saw fit:

“Here is the text of my BBC talk: it was dictated to a shorthand typist and hasn’t been corrected, so there are a few spelling mistakes; otherwise it is all right. I hope it will be of use” (OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, undated 1928).

Ogden then wrote his own articles and delivered lectures that were fully up to date and promoted the Woolley line, ensuring that more publicity was being created than would have been managed by Woolley operating alone, particularly while he was away excavating in Iraq. These were complemented by syndicated articles in newspapers and journals, purportedly from “our own correspondent”. Many of the written articles were virtually identical, using the same phraseology, no matter whether it was Woolley, Ogden or anonymous correspondents writing them. The syndicated articles were essentially press releases. The effect of all these purportedly different sources writing with the same opinion of the excavation findings was to give added credibility to them, giving the impression that the overwhelming view of all the writers was in tune with that of Woolley. A consensus was being established about this view of the past, a view that was recognised and accepted by the public as part of their heritage, that they were the rightful inheritors and keepers of the glorious achievements of the past. The view became so entrenched in the public psyche that it was to remain there for many decades, with overtones of it remaining to the present day.

The inference that can be drawn from this repetition of ideas is that Woolley was interpreting the evidence, sharing that view with Ogden who then repeated it in articles and lectures. An example is their interpretation of “Jacob’s dream”. The Bible described
how Jacob had been shown ladders set up to Heaven with angels ascending and
descending. Woolley and Ogden both said this could be explained as Jacob having not
in fact seen ladders, but having seen a stairway on a ziggurat. Woolley (1929a: 89;
1955: 134) used this in his book on Ur describing the excavation of the ziggurat but
made no reference to it in his official reports or letters to either Gordon or Kenyon.
Ogden added to Woolley’s theory in his lectures saying “[t]he original Hebrew reads –
Jacob saw a stairway – This would scarcely be a ladder as we westerners recognisethe word”. The description is repeated in an anonymous article in the Yorkshire Post
(1925: no page) entitled “Oldest buildings in the world – Abraham’s home” which
referred to “Mr Woolley’s suggested connection of the Ziggurat with the dream of
Jacob” - again using the same language.

The article in the Yorkshire Post, though anonymous, has all the hallmarks of an
Ogden article. A letter from Woolley to Ogden in response to the latter’s suggestion of
an article for the Post a month before this says:

“As to the Yorkshire Post, I have never contributed anything to it at all; it may be
that the Associated Press has in the past supplied material to the Post, but
though if that were the case some of the contents would be now in quite a
different form and the Editor can certainly regard the wireless article as original”
(OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, 11th August 1925).

This suggests that the article that eventually appeared was a reworking of a radio talk
by Woolley with additions by Ogden. This sharing of information had probably begun
from the time that they formed their ‘committee’ as evidenced by Woolley’s letter to
Ogden:

“Yesterday I sent you 35 slides dealing with the excavations of former seasons
and a list of subjects which, with the reports you have, will I hope make
everything plain; the rest of the material, including that of which you sent prints,
is in the slide-makers hands and will not take very long. It struck me that if you
should be lecturing soon on Ur you would like to have a fuller knowledge of last
season’s work than that given in the press, so I enclose with this the MS of my
official report which has just come back from the printers; it will not be published
until October, which might be too long a wait for you” (OFA, letter Woolley to
Ogden, 11th August 1925).
Other articles appeared “from our correspondent” in various papers describing ’Abraham’s city”. In these cases it seems likely again that Ogden was the correspondent, or that he was responsible for dispersing the information, as the same language is used in these articles as those that he and Woolley wrote for other papers. An article “from a correspondent” in The Church of England Newspaper (1930: no page) is an almost verbatim reproduction of an article that Ogden wrote for the Harrogate Herald in the same month advertising a forthcoming lecture by Woolley (Ogden, 1930: no page).

Ogden became more and more involved in the publicity as the excavation went on. Woolley left most of the details of the publicity to Ogden, occasionally making stipulations:

“I’m not awfully keen on having my photo published! My wife isn’t at home now so I can’t ask her, but I think that she too would rather not appear, so on the whole I’d prefer that the article should be printed without the photos” (OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, 22nd July 1929).

Ogden also made suggestions to Woolley about suitable periodicals to maximise the publicity. Woolley replied that

“[t]he Jewish Chronicle seems to me an excellent idea; the only difficulty is that I have no second copy of the wireless article [having sent the first copy to Ogden] and so should have to write afresh. But I’ll see what can be done” (OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, 11th August 1925).

**The Royal Cemetery**

The 1926/7 and 1927/8 seasons brought the discoveries that were to rival the public excitement roused by the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in Egypt. Woolley was able to write of wonderful discoveries in the Royal Cemetery, tales of human sacrifice and ritualistic burial sites.

The discovery of the “Royal Cemetery of Ur” by Woolley in 1926-27 became as famous for the lavishness of its burials as Tutankhamun’s tomb in Egypt and remains today one of the most significant of archaeological discoveries. Although Woolley had originally discovered the site of the cemetery within weeks of beginning his work at Ur, he deferred thorough excavation until his workmen were better trained and more
capable of dealing with the human remains and the riches within the burials (Baumann, 1969: 60-62; Woolley, 1934a: 5). In 1926 he felt able to give the area the attention it warranted (Woolley, 1934a: 5). Unlike Egypt the treasures here were not preserved in rock chambers, but as Woolley described, this was “a land formed entirely of river silt” and much was lost (Woolley, 1927c: 8). Many items were gold foil on wooden bases that had completely rotted away. Nonetheless Woolley recovered cups, jewellery, musical instruments, furniture, statues and chariots (Woolley, 1927c: 8).

The Royal Cemetery burials revealed more than lavish finds. Evidence of ritual, multiple burials and possible human sacrifice came to light. In this extensive burial ground, Woolley (1934: 33) initially reported uncovering 1850 graves, but during the last year of excavation uncovered 260 more (Baadsgaard et al., 2011: 28). In all, Woolley (1934: 33) designated 16 as "royal" tombs because of the wealth of their grave goods and evidence of elaborate funerary ritual. One of these burial sites, labelled “The Great Death Pit” by Woolley, contained the skeletons of 74 attendants in neat arrangement (Woolley, 1955: 73). The victims appeared to be loyal soldiers and courtesans who had taken poison to die with their mistress, some were elaborately dressed and laid ceremonially in rows (Baadsgaard et al., 2011: 29). Baadsgaard and colleagues described that due to Woolley’s flare for publicity

“[n]ewspapers around the world printed countless articles and The Illustrated London News, England’s window on the world, reported the results of Woolley’s work in 30 features. The Royal Cemetery [...] received particularly intense press coverage” (2011: 28)

**Tales of Human Sacrifice**

Although biblical references and Woolley’s colourful and vivid descriptions were instrumental in attracting public attention throughout the Ur campaign, the discovery of the ‘death pit’ seems to have been less subject to ‘spin’ than one might expect. The discovery of the multiple burials is referred to now as another example of how Woolley used exaggerated and colourful descriptions to gain the most publicity. Winstone described how “[u]nrecorded barbarities’ at the royal burials of 3000 BC made headline news everywhere” (1990: 151). This apparently referred to two ILN articles from June 1928, six months after the original findings had been reported in the press. In fact, the initial reports of the discoveries in the newspapers in January 1928 (written by Woolley for The Times, and syndicated to other papers), can scarcely be
described as headline seeking, except from the aspect of the rich material finds. The BMCA SC report that in early January,

"[a] cable had been received from Mr Woolley asking that all letters might be held up. No communications therefore would be sent to the Press until an explanation had been received" (BMCA SC: 4434, 11th February, 1928).

It is not clear from this whether they are referring to an explanation from Woolley as to the meaning of the discoveries, or whether Woolley wanted to ‘handle’ the find in a particular way. It is, however, evidence that Woolley was being cautious, and had not rushed to gain headlines.

When initially reporting the unexpected finds of multiple burials in the tombs of the Royal Cemetery, rather than making the most of the topic for publicity, Woolley almost underplayed the discovery. The details of these discoveries were described matter-of-factly in newspaper reports with headlines that made no mention of the topic. Whereas previous headlines had proclaimed “The Oldest Buildings in the World, Abraham’s Home” (Yorkshire Post, 1925: no page) with nothing in the accompanying article to substantiate that claim, the opposite was the case with articles containing details of the multiple burials. The Times headline on 12th January 1928 announcing the first discoveries was “The Royal Tombs of Ur. Discovery of the first importance” (Woolley, 1928e: 11). The first half of Woolley’s lengthy report was concerned strictly with descriptions of the objects found in the tombs. It was only after this that Woolley described the other findings in the tombs, namely the multiple burials, under a sub-heading “Human Sacrifice” (Woolley, 1928e: 11).

There appeared to be unease and a sense of shock in this first report. Woolley commented that

“[t]here is no suggestion here of the faithful servant dying and being buried with his master. The grooms at the asses’ heads were killed in cold blood, they were chattels which the king took with him in case he had need of them hereafter, just as he took his silver and gold vessels, his heavy copper adze, and the set of spears with golden heads and shafts bound with gold and silver bands. And he took his women just as he took his gaming-board and dice” (1928e: 11).
The Mirror and the Daily Express did not mention the bodies at all, both concentrating instead on the discovery of "glittering treasures found in a king's grave" (The Mirror, 1928: 3) and "the treasures of a King's Tomb at Ur" (Daily Express, 1928: 9). Woolley seemed to have conflicting feelings about these discoveries. They exhibited an extraordinary degree of craftsmanship, however he felt that "the moral aspects of the early civilisation which the grave presents are wholly new and unexpected" (Woolley, 1928e: 11). The next report was headlined "A Great Queen's resting place. Wonderful Court Ornaments" (Woolley, 1928f: 15). Again the details of the mass burial are mentioned further into the article but are not headlined. The articles of 23rd February 1928 in both The Guardian and Daily Express mentioned "human sacrifice" in their sub headings but not in their leading headlines. There do not appear to be further mentions of this subject in the press apart from the ILN.

Woolley's annual lecture to the Society of Antiquaries that year continued to show his unease. He referred to the absence in the later Sumerian and Babylonian literature of "[a]ny hint of any such practice as this. It is true that no royal graves of the historical period have been found yet, and it is therefore impossible to state with certainty when, or whether human sacrifice was discarded, but it is difficult to believe that had it survived until late in the second millennium, such complete silence would have been preserved about it in the numerous religious records of the time that are extant. One is driven to conclude either that all memory of the custom had faded before the time when our records were written, or that the writers were ashamed of anything in their past so barbarous, and deliberately refrained from mentioning it" (Woolley, 1928b: 423).

When Woolley wrote an article for the ILN in June of that year, his reluctance to be upfront about the discovery seemed to have passed. The article was dramatically headlined "Wholesale Human Sacrifice at Ur" (Bacon, 1976: 248-51) and was wholly concerned with the multiple burial. This may have been an editorial decision made for a different audience, but also reflects a lessening of Woolley’s original unease about the subject.

This article contained graphic illustrations by Amedeo Forestier, whose reconstruction drawings had become familiar with readers of the ILN before and after the First World War and was a reason for its popularity (Bacon, 1976: 121). Woolley said the drawings were as faithful a reconstruction as possible with there being no direct evidence of how
the deaths had been managed (Bacon, 1976: 248). These illustrations have remained endurably popular and famous; an ‘interpretation’ of events that entered the zeitgeist as readily as Woolley’s own interpretations.

Figure 6: Forestier’s drawing of the scene inside the tomb (with permission from the Trustees of the British Museum).

The following year, Woolley wrote another article for the ILN entitled “Sumerian Art and Human Sacrifice: Archaeological riches of the Ur ‘Death Pit’ containing 74 skeletons, mostly women” (Bacon, 1976: 252). Despite these two ILN headlines which Winstone referred to as “making headlines everywhere”, he commented that Woolley’s notes were calmly academic and balanced, “if tending always to push a little further into unrecorded time than the evidence strictly speaking permitted” (Winstone, 1990: 151).

It is possible that Woolley’s relative reticence over the human sacrifice element of the discoveries can be attributed to Victorian sensibilities as Leick hypothesised (2001: 115). We cannot tell whether it was this unease that led him to downplay the reports, or whether it was at the request of the newspaper’s editor or owner who possibly felt that the subject was unsuitable or undesirable for their readers. This certainly seems to be
the explanation in Ogden’s case. Ogden kept detailed reports of every aspect of the excavation, particularly the metalwork, but few reports of the human sacrifices. Possibly Ogden was also affected by ‘Victorian sensibilities’ and was imposing his own form of censorship on the material he used in his articles and lectures. The discoveries may not have agreed with his biblical perspective of the Holy Lands.

Woolley apparently gave much thought to the circumstances of the deaths, either because he was uneasy about them himself or because he thought the public might be. In Woolley’s official report, his interpretation of events had shifted slightly to the idea that the victims had been given a deadly or soporific drug, then lay down to die, as there seemed to be no evidence of violence:

“If it be true that the members of the king’s court who went down with music into his grave did so more or less voluntarily, that it was a privilege rather than a doom pronounced on them, then it is a fact most important for our view of early Sumerian religion and culture. The material and artistic splendour of the age as represented by the treasures from the cemetery scarcely seems to harmonize with such brutal and wholesale massacres as the death-pits might be thought to attest; if we adopt the interpretation I have given, the general picture is more consistent and more likely to be true” (Woolley, 1934a: 42).

The discovery of the ‘Great Death Pit’ not only shows Woolley’s evolution in his interpretation but provides another compelling example that illustrates his ability to adjust his writing styles for different audiences – from a dry, descriptive academic language to colourful story-telling for public consumption. Describing the silver hair ribbons worn by the attendants in the tomb in his official report Woolley wrote “a complete ribbon was found coiled up apparently in the woman’s pocket looking precisely like the tape bought in a modern shop, wound in a coil with the end passed over it to keep it in place” (1934a: 121).

The same instance was reported to readers of his ‘public’ book as the ribbon being

“in the woman’s pocket, just as she had taken it from her room […] why the owner had not put it on one could not say; perhaps she was late for the ceremony and had not the time to dress properly, but her haste has in any case afforded us the only example of a silver hair-ribbon which we were able to preserve” (Woolley, 1955: 72).
The basic details are the same, but the nuance is completely different. If Woolley had felt misgivings about the discoveries of the bodies, it seems likely that he felt the public might be uneasy as well. Therefore the second description evokes an altogether softer and humanised image, more palatable and interesting to his readers. As Hudson said:

“What appeals to the public about archaeology is […] the treasure hunting element, the pleasure of finding something exciting. They like mystery, suspense and the successful detective, and Sir Leonard Woolley obligingly gave them all these things. Above all, they like archaeology to be about something, to have a good story in it, and, if that story is well told by a person they warm to, they will listen” (Hudson, 1981: 121).

Woolley’s interpretations of the findings at the Royal Cemetery however are cause for much of the more recent criticism of his approach to his work and there are numerous articles re-examining the findings. Woolley’s interpretation is seen as rooted firmly in Victorian attitudes. Wellard dismissed Woolley as “somewhat out of his depth here or perhaps falling back on the age-old justification of murder in the name of religion” (1973: 94). Following CT scans on two of the skeletons from Ur carried out by the Hospital of Pennsylvania for Penn in 2004, Baadsgaard claimed that rather than willingly imbibing some sort of poison, the cause of death for the court attendants was “blunt-force trauma” (Baadsgaard et al., 2011: 38).

However these criticisms of Woolley’s interpretations are being made by archaeologists today doing entirely different types of archaeology to Woolley’s time and having access to new technologies. Woolley was trying to present an overall picture of the entire Ur excavation, rather than specialising on specialised aspects as is the case today. Technical advances, such as CT scans, have enabled the advantage of hindsight to be more precise, but despite these advances, the exact nature of events remains unclear.

The questions posed by Woolley’s discoveries of the “Royal Tombs” continued to be debated by archaeologists for many decades. Despite the criticisms of Woolley concerning his sensibilities or lack of them in his interpretation of the burials, later writers have been less hindered by their own sensibilities and were more willing to emphasise the barbarity of the discoveries. For example, Ceram referred to “a frightful funeral ritual” and “a hair-raising discovery” (1971: 310). Articles debating the Royal Cemetery discoveries continue to abound. Woolley’s original theories are “repeatedly
advanced, challenged and retrieved" (McCaffrey, 2008: 173). However, as Marchesi said "the problem of the identity of the people buried there is still as open and controversial as it was at the time of Woolley" (2004: 165).

Despite the controversy today about Woolley’s interpretations of the Royal Cemetery burials, the surrounding publicity had the desired effect. The amount received from public donation in the seasons 1926/7 and 1927/8 were described by the BMCA SC as “numerous” and “considerable” (see Chapter 6).

**The Biblical Spin**
The claims made by Woolley became more elaborate as the circumstances of the expedition changed. In July 1924, Woolley had broadcast on the theme “The beginnings of history in Babylonia”. There is only one biblical reference in the talk, namely when he described the area as “indeed and truth a region of Biblical cities” (OFA, Ogden’s own transcript of the broadcast). However, on 25th October 1924, following Carter’s description of Tutankhamun’s sarcophagus a few months earlier, Woolley countered with an article in the ILN entitled “A Second Tower Of Babel - The House of the Mountain at Ur”, accompanied by a lifelike reconstruction of a “tower of Babel”, describing the Ziggurat of Babylon, and “the other towers in every great city of ancient Babylon” (Bacon, 1976: 205; Winstone, 1990: 122-123). Such diverse publications as Popular Science Siftings (1924: no page) and The Christian Science Monitor (undated, OFA) carried similar articles, the former headlining “Tower of Babel Find” and focussing on the evidence of “Union made bricks” used in the building of the ziggurat, each decorative bricks bearing a “union label stamp”; the latter repeating the biblical origins of the story. Ogden was able to target these varied interests, telling the BM:

“I am wanting to interest a very rich man, a brick maker, in your work in Mesopotamia and he has expressed a desire to possess a brick with some enamel on it, about 6,000 years old. Is it possible to get one, or ask Mallowan to bring one in the next lot. The gentleman is very rich and I want to hook him onto your valuable work” (BMME, letter Ogden to Smith, 21st January 1933).

The BM were of course very interested and agreed at once that they would “pick out a suitable brick” (BMME, letter Ogden to Smith, 24th January 1933) which in effect turned out to be more than just any brick, but as Ogden wrote “[t]hank you for putting on one side a portion of the brick from the Ziggurat of Nabonidus” (BMME, letter Ogden
to Smith, 26th January 1933). There is no acknowledgement in the records about the amount received in this instance, but the 1932/33 season in which this correspondence took place received over £2,000 in private donations.

Although academically unsound, the biblical claims had the desired result of appealing directly to the ‘spiritual’ consciousness of the Bible-reading public. The wealthier of the devout supporters even made expensive journeys to Ur which began to become something of a tourist attraction and an addition to the increasingly popular Grand Tours. In fact, the influx of visitors became so great that Gertrude Bell reported that

“[b]oth at Kish, and subsequently at Ur, I felt that it was the duty of the Department of Antiquities to protect the excavators from the exactions of unconscionable sight-seers who take up their valuable time and sometimes claim their hospitality for 2 or 3 nights. In neither place can visitors be accommodated for the night without considerable inconvenience. I propose to publish an official notice in the press to the effect that while Professor Langdon and Mr Woolley are happy to show and explain their work to those who take an interest in it, they cannot undertake to put up visitors for the night. 

Accommodation must be obtained at Hillah and Ur Junction Station” (BMCA WY1/ 2/83 1926, undated).

At the same time, Woolley told Kenyon that

“[w]e are expecting today 150 visitors from Basra and the Persian Gulf. It is an awful nuisance having them but it does show keenness on their part. We have arranged an exhibition of objects and there will be lectures and personally conducted tours round the ruins, and we shall all be very glad when they have gone! Now at the end of the season we have had many visitors and steady work has been difficult in consequence, but this is the worst influx” (BMCA WY1/7/26/1, 7th March 1926).

Despite being so time consuming, Woolley made a point of giving tours to visitors himself because he felt that otherwise they “must be sadly disappointed by the ruins, since they take so much explanation to make them really interesting” (Penn, letter Woolley to Jayne, Penn Director, 18th June 1930).
To a large extent, the Woolleys welcomed many of the visitors, particularly the very wealthy ones, with Katharine proving particularly adept at encouraging generous financial donations from them. In fact the visit to the excavations in Iraq became so popular in the early years of the excavation before the political situation became destabilised, that articles began appearing in the press advertising a travel itinerary for those interested in archaeology:

“The desert route between Baghdad and Damascus is growing in popularity and tourists are beginning to realise that Iraq is worth visiting [...] one can stop at Ur of the Chaldees where Mr Woolley is now digging [...] or visit Nippur which is being investigated by the University Museum of Philadelphia. One could continue to Babylon and Birs Nimrud and then out to Kish where Mr Mackay is excavating for Oxford University and Chicago. It is surprising that more people do not come here. Baghdad and Basra both have comfortable hotels and the travelling accommodation in Iraq by rail or river is not merely up to date, but decidedly attractive” (8th November 1923, “Tourist facilities in Iraq”, unaccredited newspaper, OFA).

Winstone (1990: 157) observed that the majority of these visitors were wealthy Christians and Jews “anxious to see at first hand [...] the putative birthplace of the patriarch Abraham about which they had read”. Adding that,

“[i]f events in the Valley of the Kings stirred the hearts and minds of millions of men and women the world over, news from Ur fed the insatiable urge of the faithful for confirmation of the Bible. By 1924 archaeology gripped the imagination of the press with nearly daily headlines of dramatic discoveries in the “city of Abraham” (Winstone, 1990: 122).

In fact, by the end of the 1927 season Ur had become fixed in the public mind as

“Abraham’s city and its story had overtaken even the history and legends of Egypt. Newspapers were full of reports of the wonderful discoveries, particularly the work of the goldsmiths, culminating in the “gold wig” of Meskalamdug. Woolley compared it to Tutankhamun’s gold mask stating that it was after all “some 2000 years earlier” (Winstone, 1990: 150).
Once the Joint Expedition was underway in 1922, the connection was continually reinforced in the press that the excavation was taking place not just in Ur, but in “Ur of the Chaldees”. The Daily Mail (1923: 8) claimed that for nearly 3000 years the name of Ur of the Chaldees had been forgotten except in the first book of the Old Testament. The Daily Mail also described how the search had begun

“for the records that Abraham left behind and to recover the world’s first and oldest library of original works on history, religion, art, law and the science and narratives of men of 5,000 and perhaps 10,000 years ago” (1923: 8).

They expected that when the work of the expedition was done it may “yield a wholly new story of the inception of the religious movement that prepared the world for Christianity, or it may corroborate the story in Genesis” (Daily Mail, 1923: 8).

As the Ur excavation progressed, the BM found it harder to meet their commitment to share the funding of the excavation, thus the need to attract the public's attention became increasingly urgent. The Ur publicity campaign launched by Woolley and Ogden focussed on two of the most powerful and debatable associations of Ur with the Bible, namely the traditional association of Ur as the birthplace of Abraham and from 1929, as the site of the 'Biblical Flood'.

The link of Ur and Abraham had already become an established trope before Woolley’s time. The connection linking Ur with Abraham began in the mid-nineteenth century after Henry Rawlinson had deciphered cuneiform (Bernhardsson, 2005: 37). The British Consul in Mesopotamia at the time was J.E. Taylor who, encouraged by Rawlinson, excavated at the Ziggurat of Tell el-Muqayyar and found cuneiform inscriptions on foundation cylinders (Winstone, 1990: 118). These inscriptions identified the site as Ur and the link was made with the biblical "Ur of the Chaldees", the home of Abraham (Woolley, 1955: 11-12). Partly due to lack of funds and partly due to political unrest and lawlessness in the area, no further excavations were undertaken there until the end of the 19th century when Penn briefly excavated there (Winstone, 1990: 118). No further work was then done until the end of the First World War. Ogden kept newspaper cuttings concerning Ur and Abraham from the period before Woolley went to Ur, when the BM sent Campbell-Thompson and then Hall to the area, so the connection was already established in his and the public mind. The London Daily Chronicle (1921: no page) had carried the headline “Unearthing City where Abraham was born. ‘Finds’ by party from BM” referring to Hall’s report of his expedition there in 1919.
Looking for Abraham

The assumption that the excavated Ur was the city mentioned in the Bible and Abraham’s home was widespread at this time. The accepted interpretation of the biblical text was that the Bible placed the home of Abraham in Lower Mesopotamia, in the region of Ur (Genesis 11.27-31):

“And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans” (Genesis, 11.28).

“And Terah took Abraham his son [...] and they went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan” (Genesis, 11.31).

Biblical references are few, concerning the call by God for Abraham to leave his homeland, Ur of the Chaldeans, with a promise that he would be the progenitor of a great people. Abraham began a journey first to the city of Harran (Genesis, 11.31), then to Canaan and Egypt, and finally back to Canaan (Jeffrey, 1992: 9).

Larue (1969: 32) pointed out however that in the Septuagint version of the Bible this passage reads as “Land of the Chaldees”, not “Ur of the Chaldees”. Zehren stated that modern Ur is on the west side of the river:

“The Bible says expressly that it was ‘that side’ of the river, away from Syria and Canaan. However, the Euphrates appears to have changed its course. In ancient times, excavations show that Ur lay close to the left bank (east) of the Euphrates – ‘that side’. Today the Euphrates flows 10 miles to the east of the ruins of Ur” (Zehren, 1962: 106-7).

Given the lack of precision in the biblical text, it should come as no surprise that there has long been dispute as to the precise location of the biblical Ur, there being two main claimants to the title, nearly 600 miles apart. One is in the far north-west of Mesopotamia, the other in the extreme south-east. The north-western Ur was identified by some as Orfa or Urfa, whereas the other Ur, on the Lower Euphrates, was identified with Warka (Erech), near Mugheir (now Tell el-Muqayyar). Older maps mark both sites with the name “Ur”. Sayce (1886: 46) explained that the name Uru, or Ur, is the Semitic form of the Acadian eri, “city”. Woolley (1936: 60) tried to quell any doubters, stating that “we now know that Urfa was never called Ur; the likeness between the names is purely superficial and accidental. The Ur of Abraham is ‘Ur of the Chaldees’, and at no time in its history could Urfa have been described as a Chaldean city”. Winstone (1990: 162)
argued that Urfa was also too close to Harran – the city to which Abraham journeyed – it would have made the journey of legend “rather ridiculous” involving only a dozen miles or so.

His arguments, and the publicity accompanying Woolley’s excavation, was so ubiquitous, that the Methodist Magazine, among many others, proclaimed

“[n]ow we may rest assured that the excavations at Mugheir have unearthed the original dwelling place of Abraham, Ur of the Chaldees. Ur of the Chaldees has been found, and the ruins of its temple excavated. The place is now called Mugheir. It is on the west side of the Euphrates, on the border of the desert west of Erech, low down on the Persian Gulf, and not the Ur of most Biblical maps, near Haran” (Fawthrop 1930: 484-485).

They also expressed the view that the evidence from the excavations, as interpreted by Woolley, showed that Abraham was not a nomad but an educated, urban man fit to be “the father of the Jewish nation” and concluded with the words of Professor Sayce, who they described as probably the most famous of living archaeologists, “I do not for a moment hesitate to assert that, according to my knowledge, the investigations in Assyria and Egypt thoroughly corroborate the statements of the Old Testament” (Fawthrop, 1930: 484-485).

Zehren (1962: 106-7) argued that 100 tablets and inscriptions from Warka established the old name of the city which lay buried there – Uruk. The Bible called it “Erech”, but he added, “[n]o trace was found of Abraham in Uruk. His native city, Ur, still awaited investigation”. Following this statement in my copy of Zehren’s book, the following piece of graffiti had been scribbled: “No – Abraham came from another Ur in the North. ‘Ur Khasdum’ near Haran. About time this fable was quashed once and for all”. It would appear that feelings still run high on this subject. As recently as 2000-2001, eighty years after Woolley made his claims, the Biblical Archaeology Review featured articles debating whether the Pope’s millennium pilgrimage, taking him to Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Sinai and Ur in Iraq, was visiting the wrong place by going to the southern Ur (Millard, 2001; Shanks, 2000).15 Opinions remain divided as to the authenticity of the southern Ur’s claim to be Abraham’s home.

15 In the event the Pope visited all the sites except for Iraq.
During the 1928/29 season, Woolley found a clay tablet which his epigraphist, Burrows, mistakenly thought referred to Abraham. He told Kenyon that Burrows’ initial examination of it suggested a translation of “Abram”, adding “[a] generally accepted document of Abraham would be an asset indeed” (BMCA WY1/13/71/1, 5th December 1928). Kenyon however had doubts and thought there were many points of uncertainty about it. He advised Woolley that he thought it “best to say nothing (to anybody) about it until it has been brought home for closer study” (BMCA WY1/13/69, letter Kenyon to Woolley, 22nd December 1928). Woolley replied:

“I send what I ought to have sent before, a photograph of the Abraham tablet; this has not gone to Philadelphia. If it is passed as really Abraham, I should like to arrange for its publication in England to synchronise with my 1st lecture in Philadelphia. I think they would appreciate having something new and interesting told to them. If you do not want anything said about it, I shall of course hold my tongue” (BMCA CE 32/28/11/1, 31st January 1929).

That particular claim was not verified and the tablet was not mentioned again. However it points to the contrast between the more recent perception of Woolley as making unsubstantiated claims and his actual behaviour of waiting for verification and permission from the BM before making a find public. It needs to be stressed here that this letter was the only mention of Abraham that I found in any correspondence between Woolley and either Gordon or Kenyon. Apart from the understandable mention that a tablet had been found that possibly bore the inscription “Abram”, Woolley limited his biblical references to his more populist books and publications, such as referring to “A Temple Kitchen of Abraham’s Time” (Woolley, 1928d: 224). The correspondence between himself and the two museums remained strictly focussed on the excavation.

By the time Mallowan wrote his memoirs in 1977, he was able to comment that

“[a]t one time our epigraphist thought (mistakenly) that he had identified the name of Abraham on an inscribed clay tablet. Rashly I wrote home to an old friend and mentioned the discovery: on revealing that I had done so I was severely reprimanded by Woolley and made to send a telegram enjoining the recipient to silence until such time as the news was made public, but indeed it never was!” (Mallowan, 2001: 56).
Although that particular claim about the tablet was not made public, stories about “Abraham’s City in Abraham’s Time” remained at the forefront of the public’s mind (Woolley, 1928d: no page). The press continued to be fed information throughout the course of the excavations about Abraham and the biblical significance of the site. The Yorkshire Post reported that “Mr Woolley’s discoveries, it is expected, will have an important bearing on certain incidents related in the Bible. It is thought they will support the truth of passages in Holy Writ” (1927: no page).

Woolley and Katharine wrote articles about life in Abraham’s city and sent them to Ogden who then supplied them to the most appropriate papers. The New Chronicle (Woolley, K., 1929a: no page) ran the article:

We are able to publish the following special message from Mrs Leonard Woolley, the wife of Mr Leonard Woolley, the famous archaeologist, through the good offices of Mr James R. Ogden.
Here at Ur, according to the Old Testament, Abraham lived before the call came to him, and the monuments of his day are all around us.
[…], here the imagination has an easy task, there is little to think away, you start with what you actually see […] not so very unlike the Ur of Abraham’s time.
We can climb up the stairs of the huge brick tower which dominates the ruins today as it did in the living city 4000 years ago, the tower already four centuries old when Abraham looked up at it […] for us the gardens and green fields of Ur are not even a memory; we only know they existed because they found tablets 4,000 years old which tell of them. From the top of the Ziggurat we now see only sand and the waterless desert; but if the town and its surroundings have changed since Abraham’s day, it is still his city, and the fact that it was his city has kept the memory of Ur alive.
Katharine Woolley Ur November 1929”

Katharine wrote articles for several papers throughout the expedition including such articles as “The Hidden Wonders of Ur” (Woolley, K., 1927) and “The Royal Tomb at Ur” (Woolley, K., 1928), in The Referee and a series of four articles in Britannia entitled “Digging up Bible History” through 1929/30 (Woolley, K., 1929b: no page). She also featured in articles and carefully staged photographs, possibly to appeal to women readers, adding a feminine aspect to the project (Daily Mail, 1929: 23).
The religious journals were quick to accept that the information coming from Ur was convincing evidence and felt that at last they had something to proclaim, under the heading: “The Spade and the Bible. These are exciting days for the Bible student. The spade of the archaeologist daily unearths treasures which confirm his faith and vindicate the Word of Truth” (Joyful News, 1929: no page; OFA; The Christian 1929a: no page). The general view was that “this wonderful confirmation of the Bible account, dug from under the sand at that desolate spot, will be welcomed by all, scholars and simple believers alike” (The British Weekly, 1936: no page).

So complete was the acceptance of the Woolley/Ogden interpretation that a supplier of study sheets for sermons ran adverts in these papers urging Clergy to:

“Tell your congregation about the Wonderful Discoveries at Ur”.

“Why not set apart one of the Sundays in Lent to tell your congregation about the wonderful recent discoveries at Ur of the Chaldees?” (OFA, Flyer from “The Study Bureau” - “Suggestions for Lent, Easter and Whitsun Preaching”).

This advertisement came with full details of information that was available about

“the actual streets and houses as they existed in Abraham’s time; and Mr Woolley’s first-hand account of how he came upon the indisputable scientific traces of the Great Flood, traces left by the water as it rose steadily up the hillside of Ur” (OFA, Flyer from “The Study Bureau” - “Suggestions for Lent, Easter and Whitsun Preaching”).

They gave a list of accompanying articles, complete with illustrations that could be ordered by clergymen. Among the titles were:

- When did Abraham live in Ur?
- The boyhood of Abraham
- A working idea of Ur in the time of Abraham

The references to Abraham clearly had the desired effect on donations. In an intriguing letter to Woolley, Crawford, editor of Antiquity, wrote:

“About Sir Charles Marston - you will have got my wire, I hope, saying that he has presented you with a donation of £100 towards this year’s excavations at Ur. He went further and told me, with his last words, to ask him again if you
were in need of more money. He was rather impressed by the fact - I hope it really is a fact! - that you had to close down early last year through lack of funds, and I rather think that, should there be any danger of this occurring again, he would fork out. In confidence, I may say that the credit for extracting this donation should be placed to Father Abraham; you will understand what I mean when I say that Sir Charles is particularly interested in Biblical sites – ‘the Bible right again’ - he has supported the Palestine Exploration Fund very generously, and is paying for half of the present season’s excavations at Ophel (£1000 in all)” (BMCA WY1/9/15, 22nd September 1927).

The reference to ‘Father Abraham’ is clearly a reference to the ‘Patriarch Abraham’. As Crawford was a regular correspondent of Woolley’s throughout the Ur excavation (see BMCA Ur excavation papers), it suggests that this was a subject they had discussed before. Crawford however was a committed atheist and his flippant reference to Father Abraham may more readily reflect his own views rather than Woolley’s.

The debate continued long after the Ur excavation had ended. In 1967 Thomas wrote that

“[w]hat has principally given Ur its age long interest has been its fame as the birthplace of Abraham; yet it must be owned that no actual proof exists to assure us that the celebrated “Ur of the Chaldees” was the place indelibly marked by Tell el-Mukayyar. This part of the tradition is part of an immense discussion, the complexity of which has only been increased by the discoveries, literary and archaeological, of the last hundred years. […] Nor is it to be expected that future discoveries will shed new light on this issue. Abraham and the patriarchs of Israel were unknown to the Babylonian scribes, and even the tablets of Ugarit have nothing to tell about the father of Abraham and his supposed origin from the south, although they do include the name, not the personality, of Abraham” (Thomas, 1967: 93).

Many of Woolley’s colleagues were not convinced by the claims in the press that Ur was indeed Abraham’s Ur – citing, not unrealistically, the complete lack of evidence. Hall reported on Ur that

“[w]e have nothing from Ur yet that can be brought into any kind of definite relationship with the Abrahamic saga. The Biblical tradition however, seems to
put Abraham at Ur about the time of the kings of Larsa and of Babylon. Beyond
the mention of the Habiru, the ancestors of Hebrews, on tablets (not found at
Ur) we have no contemporary contact with them at Ur in Abrahamic times”
(Hall, 1930: 103).

This again shows the blurring of the lines between ‘official’ and ‘popular’ output. Hall
may have felt the need to comment on the stories that were appearing in the press, but
the stories were not repeated in Woolley’s own official reports, nor were they intended
for the consumption of any but the public. The implication is that Woolley’s
contemporaries, as part of the public, were also getting caught up in the media
campaign, and needed to distance themselves from it. However this was not done in
the press; the silence of the BM on the matter, and the contributions they were ‘feeding’
to the press suggest their tacit approval of a campaign that was beginning to raise
significant sums of money. There is of course no way of knowing what private
conversations took place between Woolley and either Ogden or the two museums, but
there appears to be very little written evidence that Abraham was discussed. As stated
in Chapter 4, the written evidence of Woolley discussing religious connections to his
work with colleagues is limited to a single reference to Ogden during the twelve year
campaign, about beadwork being from the “time of Abraham” (OFA, letter Woolley to
Ogden, 15th August 1925) and with the two museums to a single reference to the
possible discovery of a tablet with an Abrahamic inscription (BMCA CE 32/28/11/1,
31st January 1929). Did Woolley genuinely believe his many claims about Abraham or
was he just promoting the most popular line that would enhance fundraising is open to
debate?

In 1936, Woolley published Abraham: Recent Discoveries and Hebrew Origins. In his
book, Woolley argued that “the Ur of Abraham is ‘Ur of the Chaldees’” based on its
location in regard to Harran (Winstone, 1990:199). He claimed that Abraham was a
composite figure and that several genealogical steps had been telescoped into one, but
that the traditional account, though simplified, could be trusted as accurate. He
described the conversion of Abraham from a religion of polytheism to a faith “in the one
tru God, as an event which was to prove of incalculable importance in the history of
Israel and the world” (The British Weekly, 1936: no page). The book was a best seller
in Europe and America as “Christian and Jew sought confirmation of religious belief”
(Winstone, 1990: 200). However it lacked the depth required for the academic world.
Campbell-Thompson (1936: 476-480), long-time associate and friend of Woolley,
reviewed the book for *The Antiquaries Journal*, criticising Woolley for “ill-equipped theorising”, as discussed in Chapter 4, in Woolley’s legacy.

Despite all Woolley’s references to the ‘time of Abraham’, scholars remain divided over possible dates for that time, with suggestions ranging between 21st to about the 15th centuries BC and unless new evidence is discovered, the date can only ever be hypothetical (Winstone, 1990: 200). Nor as Moorey said (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 9) is there yet any agreed opinion on the existence of Abraham himself, or on his social and ethnic origins. Definitive evidence, if there is any, has yet to be discovered.

**Woolley Finds the Flood**

When it came to biblical connections for Ur, Abraham was not the only hook for publicity. The ‘Biblical Flood’ was another issue that completely captured the public imagination and divided academic opinion for many decades in a debate that had begun with the new science of geology, and was to be re-ignited by Woolley. The extent of the debate is illustrated by the wide range of journals and newspapers covering the claims Ogden collected during this period.

With the formalising of the science of geology came the quest to discover proof of the biblical flood. Britain in the 19th century was still a country where the Anglican faith dominated academic centres and the extinction of early species, instead of showing man’s antiquity, was being interpreted as a result of the biblical flood (Maisels, 1998: 8). As geologists began to question these interpretations of the flood, theological scholars became more outraged that the biblical record was being questioned at all. The gulf began to widen with the “unholy progressionists” who failed to find evidence for the flood or the creation story (Cadbury, 2001: 192-5).

Despite the fact that by Darwin’s time the idea of the flood had become discredited in geological circles, the biblical deluge was still able to capture the public imagination. George Smith’s discoveries in 1872 of a tablet in the BM bearing part of the Babylonian flood story of Gilgamesh added to the excitement (Bernhardsson, 2005: 49).

Moorey described how misinterpretations arise in the early days of any branch of study, with conclusions based on limited information:

“There was a tendency to jump to conclusions when new discoveries were announced, often in the most preliminary way. Ingenious hypotheses based
upon a minimal sample of the evidence all too easily appeared to be persuasive solutions to long debated Biblical issues” (Moorey, 1991: 55).

Such seemed to be the case in March 1929, when newspapers carried headlines stating that Woolley had found the flood (Woolley, 1929c: 13). At the end of the 1928/1929 season, “The Biblical Flood” became a furiously debated issue amongst archaeologists excavating in Iraq, a prime example of what methods the archaeologists were prepared to use to in order to ensure that their funding remained secure. Woolley, after a detailed account of the season’s work at Ur, described the archaeological findings of the flood:

“What we have then is this. First, evidence of an extremely early occupation […] then comes a catastrophe which buries the low lying part of the land, with its relics of human activity, under a huge bank of water laid clay. The disaster which thus buried the old settlement and caused a breach in the continuity of civilisation can on the face of it be nothing other than the Flood of Sumerian history and legend. He would have been an optimist indeed who had hoped to produce material evidence for such an event as the Flood of Sumerian legend, which is also the Flood of the Book of Genesis; but in no other way can I interpret the facts which our excavations here give us” (Woolley, 1929c: 13).

Woolley later described it in more theatrical terms, saying that by the time he had written up his notes, he was quite convinced of what it all meant. However, he wanted to see whether others would come to the same conclusion.

“So I brought up two of my staff and, after pointing out the facts, asked for their explanation. They did not know what to say. My wife came along and looked and was asked the same question, and she turned away remarking casually, ‘Well, of course, it’s the Flood’” (Woolley, 1955: 27; Winstone, 1990: 155).

The timing of Woolley’s the announcement of the flood deposit discovery in March 1929 is noteworthy and may hint at reasons other than the initial burst of enthusiasm and excitement that he felt upon the discovery. For only two months previously, on the 4th January 1929, Stephen Langdon, Director of the Oxford-Field Museum Expedition at Kish had written a letter to The Times in which Langdon recounted the discovery of “a stratum E” in which an alluvial deposit had been found, a foot thick, running right
through Kish as far as the excavations extended. In his letter, Langdon refrained from divulging all the discoveries because, he said, those concerned wished to make quite sure of their stratification and dates (Langdon, 1929a: 9). Langdon subsequently followed this with an article for the ILN entitled “The Biblical Deluge an Ascertained Fact” (Langdon, 1930: 206).

According to Mallowan (1964: 78), Watelin, field director at Kish, puzzled by a series of water-laid deposits that he was finding at Kish, came over to consult Woolley in the course of the 1928/29 season who was finding his own clay deposits at Ur. Woolley told Kenyon that, being aware of the first letter by Langdon, he had made a hasty visit to Kish. Woolley was unhappy with claims made by Langdon which stated that the flood level at Kish dated to not later than 3200 BC, closer in time to Gilgamesh (Moorey, 1991: 80). Woolley felt a comparison between the two sites seemed essential. He said “I was relieved to find that Professor Langdon’s statements represent neither the view of the excavators nor the facts of the dig”. He continued:

“In my report I attack Langdon and I’m not sure that I ought not to answer his letter by writing to the ‘Times’, it was more than misleading and is likely to cause a lot of confusion about dates […] really Kish is much more interesting than he makes it out to be” (BMCE 32/28/11/1, 31st January 1929).

However Woolley’s awareness of Langdon’s letter in January 1929 and of the finds being made at Kish would have placed him under some pressure to match the discovery or outdo it. The competition for public attention and therefore their continued subscriptions to the excavation would have added to this pressure. Fagan observed that Woolley had to compete for public attention with the flood evidence at Kish:

“Woolley had visited Kish before his discovery of flood deposits at Ur, then returned to his excavation, and promptly found his own alluvial deposit. The Kish excavators felt that Woolley had cheated them of credit for the discovery of the flood without mentioning their find in his announcement” (Fagan, 2007: 306).

Woolley wrote a letter to Kenyon on his journey home from Ur providing carefully laid out instructions to maximise the impact of the announcement.
“I send herewith my report and newspaper articles. One article for the “Times” I would ask you to hand over to them in time for publication on the 16th March, the day when I shall be announcing its contents in Philadelphia; this is the “Flood” story” (BMCA CE32/28/22/1, 6th March 1929).

There was further debate as these competing claims for flood deposits were revealed. Despite apparently making the earlier discovery, Langdon must have felt outmanoeuvred by Woolley’s announcement and he held forth in letters to The Times, Telegraph and Daily News:

“My date for that deluge is anywhere between 3400 and 3200 BC [...] it must be observed that, according to the chronology of Genesis, the Great Deluge occurred approximately at the time of the stratification series which I have dated about 3400 BC. When we made these discoveries two months ago we were loath to believe that we had obtained confirmation of the Deluge of Genesis, but there is no doubt about it now” (Langdon, 1929a: 9).

Langdon also reported in The Christian (and repeated on the same date in Joyful News) that

“[…] there are two precipitations of clay, potsherds, and stranded fish lying perfectly horizontally. They could not have been placed there by the hand of man, and their position in the layer cannot be explained by any other hypothesis than that of a flood” (Langdon, 1929b: no page).

The debate continued in the public domain throughout the 1930’s with the archaeologists vying for public attention in lectures, broadcasts and articles. Woolley was able to describe the flood in a lucid and accessible way that “had more impact on the general public than on his colleagues” (Fagan, 2007: 306). Woolley wrote:

“Noah’s Flood was not a universal deluge; it was a vast flood in the valley of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. […] It wiped out the villages and exterminated their inhabitants. […] No wonder that they saw in this disaster the gods’ punishment of a sinful generation” (Woolley, 1953: 54). Katharine Woolley, Mallowan and Ogden also contributed to the debate. Katharine sent an article to Ogden for publication, entitled

“The secrets of the Flood – Mrs Katharine Woolley tells how the excavations at Ur revealed age – long secrets
Through the good offices of Mr James R. Ogden, President of the National Sunday School Union, we have received the following special Christmas message from Mrs Katharine Woolley, the wife of Mr C. L. Woolley, whose remarkable excavations at Ur of the Chaldees have the greatest interest for Bible students.

One of the main items in our programme for this winter is the digging of another pit like that which last year gave us our first detailed knowledge of the people of the Flood. A great square shaft going down some 60 feet does not sound very interesting, yet is really a historical monument [...] you pass through 8 layers of periods during which men lived here [...] then for 11 feet, the pit’s sides show nothing but clean, sandy silt, and you are passing through the deposit which the waters of the Flood left, when they subsided over the remains of the drowned city. At the very bottom of the shaft, you tread where men trod who lived before the Flood came. Katharine Woolley Ur 28th November 1930" (Woolley, K., 1930: no page).

In January 1930 Mallowan wrote a report for the National Geographic magazine, New Light on Ancient Ur, subtitled “Excavations at the Site of the City of Abraham reveal Geographical Evidence of the Biblical Story of the Flood”. Woolley sent the script for one of his own talks to Ogden for him to use in his own talks in which he stated that “last year we proved the Flood’s existence and located the limits of the town of Ur which stood before that disaster overwhelmed the country” (OFA, Undated 1930 BBC script, with additions handwritten by Woolley).

The Observer reported cautiously:

“And now Mr Woolley at Ur (and, we understand, Professor Langdon’s expedition also at Kish) have, in the view of the excavators, discovered archaeological proof of it. Mr Woolley considers, inter alia, that the flood was not powerful enough to penetrate into the walled cities, but only inundated the whole countryside and swept away its population” (The Observer, 1929: 13).

For biblical archaeology, this was all long overdue good news. “In spite of scientific unbelief, evidence is accumulating of the truth of the Deluge. God has blown upon the arm-chair rationalism of theologians by means of the strenuous work of the excavator” (The Advent Witness, 1929: no page).
The Christian (1929a: no page), with a repeat in Joyful News on the same date, carried news about

“The Spade and the Bible.
Mr Woolley believes his excavation can be explained by nothing other than the Flood of Sumerian history and the Book of Genesis. And now Dr Langdon, the Assyriologist and Director of the Oxford expedition to Kish (1928), supplies hitherto unpublished findings which he believes are conclusive evidence that the Genesis story of the Flood is historical”. […]

Indications are that the city of Kish was destroyed not once but twice by inundations similar to that described in Genesis. Scientists estimate that the first flood occurred about 4000B.C. and the later happened about 600 years later. Kish was rebuilt after each flood and relics of the successive habitations are found in the different strata through which the explorers have dug. The remains of the original city were uncovered at a depth of 55 feet, 10 feet below the second” (The Christian, 1929a: no page).

The magazines further reported that the BM annual Ur exhibition in the summer of 1929 included cuneiform tablets and specimens that Woolley felt were archaeological proof of the reality of a great prehistoric flood in southern Babylonia, adding that, in his opinion, it was identical with the famous Flood of Babylonian legend, which undoubtedly must have been the original of the Biblical account of the Deluge (The Christian, 1929a: no page).

The experts as well as the public held strong views and the matter was hotly debated in the press. W.E.Barnes, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, pleaded caution and a suspension of judgement until clearer evidence was found, expressing the view that if the clay was free from any kind of human debris, then it was more probable that this clay was laid on a slowly sinking seaboard from which man had time to escape with all his belongings (OFA, W.E. Barnes, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, unaccredited newspaper). Nash, an Oxford Lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament, felt that the evidence, such as it existed, was being manipulated by both the archaeologists and the papers, and opined that even professional scholars were dependent on the newspaper reports

“which are apt to seize too eagerly on points that can be worked up, with the aid of scare headlines, into good copy […]. There is nothing to support the
medieval theory that the origin of man is to be sought in the Euphrates country about 4000 BC. The attempt to connect this part of the discovery with any such theory is simply a newspaper stunt” (Nash, 1929: no page).

Nash added that excavators were not necessarily expert archaeologists, may be ignorant of cuneiform or hieroglyphs and needed to employ a decipherer. The only definite evidence was of a civilisation occupying these two sites and the remains of which were covered by a layer of alluvial apparently deposited by water.

“And that is absolutely all the evidence which has been described as so sensational! Moreover, the clay deposits are not identical in character. These 2 deposits may well be evidence of floods, but floods are annual occurrences in Babylonia” (Nash, 1929: no page).

Hall, the Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities at the BM, was of the opinion that cuneiform scholars had long been familiar with this view and had always considered that the story, like most traditions, was based upon fact, a real historical deluge of very great extent which remodelled early Babylonian history, bringing the pre-dynastic period of the chalcolithic makers of painted pottery to an end and ushering in the historic age.

For many others however, the announcements were a vindication of their faith. A priest wrote to Woolley that

“[o]f all things, I am thankful for your excavations which prove that the Bible story of the Flood records a historic fact. I can remember the low and vulgar ribaldry with which that story was treated in days gone by” (BMCA CE32/32/40, 14th August 1930).

So great became the excitement that when Woolley spoke to the Society of Antiquaries in June 1929, shortly after his “Flood” claim, the attendance broke all records (Society Register Minutes). After the heavy press coverage of these claims, the public were eager to hear from Woolley himself. Public interest in the Ur discoveries was now so great that for the 1928/1929 season, the BM was able to reduce its contribution to £500, as over £2,500 came from the public (see Chapter 6).

However, as the excavations progressed, the evidence became more obscure. Woolley sank a dozen pits to sea level or near it and only found the clean clay stratum in two of
them. Woolley was never short of an answer however, as Lloyd pointed out “[c]lay deposits which appeared out of context in relation to the Biblical Flood, became “quays for shipping”. And soon in the press, Ur became the ‘Venice of the Ancient East’” (1963: 52-3). Evidence also came in from the American excavations at Tell Farah in 1931 of an alluvial layer some 2 feet thick indicating an inundation earlier than the one at Kish but much later than the one at Ur. The Ur flood was dated to about 3500 to 4000 BC, much too early to be related to the Mesopotamian flood which is dated to about 2900 BC. Kish however, produced evidence of two floods around 3000 to 2900 BC and another flood dating to around 2600 BC. Excavations at a third Mesopotamian site, Shuruppak (Fara), in 1931, also uncovered a flood stratum and Mallowan later described an alluvial level at Nineveh in 1931/1932 after he moved there from Ur. It was six or seven feet thick and he felt that precise determination of the date was impossible but may not be far removed from the Ur level (Mallowan, 2001: 47, 83).

Winstone (1990: 183-4) commented that Woolley was aware of the more cautious approach to the matter held by his fellow archaeologists and academics. Winstone added that Woolley, being a pragmatist, continued to speak, justifiably, of a Sumerian flood level but did not publicly propound its identity with the Genesis version after his return from Ur. Certainly in July-August 1934, writing for The Bible Witness, Woolley was referring to the Flood, not a flood, although he refrained from identifying it further as the Flood of Genesis. He wrote:

“"We now have sufficient knowledge to produce A Complete History of Iraq since the Flood. Our work this last season was to reach the 6000-year old graves in Ur – and we found them. We sank a shaft 60 feet deep before we came to the graves. Some of them were in the sandy clay deposit left by the Flood”
(Woolley, 1934c: no page).

Despite the comment of epigraphist Winckworth (see Chapter 4) that Woolley did not for a moment believe that his famous flood level had anything to do with Noah’s flood, but that it was good for publicity (Winstone, 1990: 183), Woolley does seem to have retained some of his opinions about the flood as late as March 1953. In an article in The Listener he wrote “[w]e have proved that the flood really happened; but that does not mean that all the details of the Flood legend are true – we did not find Noah and we did not find his ark!” (Woolley, 1953: 426).
It is interesting to note that in the same article, Woolley was referring to giving instructions to one of his workmen to keep digging lower after finding virgin soil which he felt was not deep enough and said “[t]hat upset a favourite theory of mine, and I hate having my theories upset on the very best of evidence” (1953a: 53). This comment could be interpreted as saying a great deal about Woolley’s determination to adhere to his own theories. It could equally be said that it showed Woolley was open to new evidence and was able to adjust his views accordingly.

Did any of the controversy answer the debate about the ‘Flood’? Bright (1942: 55-62) thought not, arguing that no two of the inundation levels were dated to the same period and all seemed to be purely local inundations of the type which still occur when the Euphrates river bursts its banks. Sites nearby showed no evidence of flooding at all. At Ur, the levels both before and after the flood level were of the same general civilisation, showing no break in the continuity of culture that would occur if a giant deluge wiped out an entire population.

Figure 7: Ogden’s photograph of Baghdad flooded, October 1926. OFA.

The evidence of considerable deposits of silt excavated at Ur, Erech and Shuruppak shows that there were great floods in Mesopotamia in early times but the character of
those events, whether fluvial or marine, rapid or slow deposition (Mallowan, 1960: 73-74), remains an area for on-going research as scholars today think that the flood levels at Ur, Kish or Shuruppak are simply evidence of “endemic flooding in the flat terrain of southern Mesopotamia” (Fagan, 2007: 306). The legend of a mighty flood in ancient times which destroyed all mankind except two persons was one of the favourite folk tales of Babylonia and exists amongst people in many other parts of the world. The history of Mesopotamian flood tales seems to be a closer explanation of the discoveries than the Bible references. The area has always been and is still prone to severe flooding and indeed Ogden recorded that the area flooded badly in 1926 (see Figure 7).

Lloyd (1963: 50) remained a lone voice in seeing the wider picture. Possibly this is because he was good friends with Woolley and may have discussed the issues involved, although the two men never worked together. Lloyd’s memoirs show that he was able to see beyond Woolley’s theatrical claims, to the work of an accomplished and highly experienced archaeologist:

“And so through the pages of the daily press came the exciting and stimulating story of how, in his deep sounding beneath the Sumerian cemetery at Ur he had found traces of the Biblical Flood and of the race of people living before the flood. And it was only his archaeological colleagues, perhaps a shade less interested in the Biblical interpretation, who were able to understand the technical perfection of the long section which he had cut and recorded along the high cliff-face of his sounding at the south west end of his cemetery excavation, and the chronological sequence which it revealed” (1963: 50).

The Rams in the Thicket
Throughout the campaign, biblical references littered all the popular reports of the excavations. The discovery of two particular statuettes in one of the ‘Royal Tombs’ and their subsequent appellation, show how a biblical link was made to even a non-biblical subject. In a corner of the tomb named by Woolley “The Great Death Pit”, two statues were found lying together, badly crushed and decayed. They each took the form of the whole body of an animal standing on its hind legs, with its front legs attached to a tree branch. Woolley described how “inevitably the subject of the sculpture, a he-goat, ‘a ram of the goats’, chained to the branches of a bush, recalled the Old Testament story and the phrase ‘a ram caught in a thicket’” (Woolley, 1934a: 266). In his 1955 book, he again said “Irresistibly we are reminded of the biblical story of the ‘ram caught in the
thicket’ (Woolley, 1955: 74-75). He pointed out that “the statues were made fifteen hundred years before Abraham was born and the parallel is therefore difficult to explain” (Woolley, 1955: 75). He added the “writer in Genesis may well have taken advantage of a familiar reference to point [sic] the moral of his own story” (Woolley, 1955: 75).

After making this point, Woolley then refers to them simply as “two statues of rams found in the great death-pit” (Woolley, 1955: 84-85) although the frontispiece is a colour photograph of “The ‘ram in a thicket’ from grave PG-1237”. Despite his partial disclaimer that the statues were therefore not in fact representative of the biblical story, the name was evocative and entered the vocabulary of the excavation. Moorey removed the term from his 1982 reworking of the Woolley book, replacing it with the term “Rampant he-goat” (Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 99). Cohen said the name given by Woolley

“[i]s probably incorrect, since the animals depicted […] are he-goats, not rams, and they are eating, not caught. Goats typically eat low trees by putting their legs on the trunk and branches. Moreover, the image of an animal eating from a tree with rosettes has a long history in Mesopotamia” (2005: 132).

Whatever the accuracy of these later descriptions, the biblical name caught the public imagination and remains evocative and accessible for audiences today. It is still the name used by the BM and Penn today and in many captions accompanying their pictures (see the BM Gallery 56, Case 17, and Penn Ur exhibition). Woolley is therefore remembered inaccurately in this instance. Having stated that the statues were reminiscent of the biblical rams, it was the general acceptance of the aptness of the description in the wider audience that caused the name to enter the vocabulary. Modern museum displays reflect the same attitude, that a display of the ‘Ram in the Thicket’ is more likely to attract visitors than a display entitled “Rampant he-goat"
Conclusion

Woolley and Ogden conducted a persistent and focussed media campaign for most of the Ur excavation's duration. Their motivations may have been different; Woolley was determined to fund the excavation for as long as possible in the face of severe financial problems in the BM. He also needed to make a living. Ogden however saw it as his duty to spread the biblical word to his audiences, a message that was being confirmed as he saw it, by the excavations. Despite their different motivations however, the combined actions of the two men placed Ur firmly in the public arena and attracted the contributions necessary for the excavation to continue.

In an age of expansion in the forms of media available, they took full advantage of
every means of involving the public. Broadcasts, newspaper reports, letters to editors, journal articles and books were designed to raise the public profile of the excavation, to appeal directly to their wider audience’s basic interests and needs and attract wealthy visitors to the sites. Subscriptions were sought with the promise of mementoes from the excavation. Woolley had no doubts about his audience, who they were and where their interests lay. He had an on-going debate in 1955 with Professor Diakonoff, a Marxist writer who accused Woolley of “offering an uncritical and quite unhistorical narrative”. Woolley replied that he had not, but “was quite sure that the narrative would present no difficulty to most of his readers” (Winstone, 1990: 272-277).

Woolley was not alone in understanding who his audience were. The editors of the newspapers and journals were also aware of who their readers were and the interest they had in the excavations. During the 12-year course of the Ur excavation, the ILN was to carry no fewer than 30 features on the results of Woolley’s work (Baadsgaard, 2011: 28). The Daily Mail between 1923 and 1932 carried approximately 80 articles and The Times nearer 100, including reports, articles, announcements by the BM and letters to the editors and appeals for funds by Woolley and his sponsors.

All of these methods had the desired intention of raising enough funds for Woolley to continue working at Ur until 1934 when the situation became politically unviable. However, the strategic use of the media was not the only means of getting the message across as both Woolley and Ogden undertook lecture tours around the country and this is discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter Eight

The Lectures

The media campaign of Woolley and Ogden used to promote the Ur excavation was highly successful in reaching a very wide audience and in inspiring the public donations that were so urgently needed to ensure the continuance of the project. However, this was not their only method of spreading the word about the excavations. They both reached out to the public more directly by lecturing extensively around the country, and, in Woolley's case, in America as well. This chapter will therefore investigate the nature of the lecture circuit at the time, the lectures given by Woolley and Ogden and which audiences they were targeting.

The lecture tour by archaeologists in Britain and America was not just a means of imparting information to a wider public, but also provided a necessary supplement to their income outside the excavation season. The more articulate the speakers, the greater the demand from audiences enthralled by the first-hand stories of these larger than life adventurers. Goode described how archaeologists had to be something of a showman to attract attention and financial support for future or continuing expeditions and those likeBreasted, Woolley and Albright did not disappoint. He described how Albright, regarded as the foremost authority on biblical archaeology in Palestine, was so popular that he delivered seventy-two lectures during a ‘break’ from his work in 1926-1927 (2007: 9).

The lecture circuit during the 1920’s and 30’s was not just an educational medium but was also a great form of entertainment in an era without the electronic amusements that we now take for granted. Illustrated lectures were particularly popular, taking full advantage of the latest magic lantern technology (Mackenzie, 1994: 32). The Magic Lantern was invented in the 17th century but by late 19th century its design had achieved a degree of standardisation. Mackenzie described how “church hall presentations became the rage and slides were also shown by famous explorers and missionaries in large halls and theatres” (1994: 32). It is difficult to imagine what enthusiasm and wonder was felt for these lectures at a time when many outlying areas were still not connected to the National Grid. At the same time that Ogden was showing his lantern slides in Harrogate and surrounding towns, neighbouring villages were holding meetings to discuss the pros and cons of receiving electricity (Harrogate Herald, 1933a: no page). Lectures took on almost magical connotations as the
lecturers displayed images from exotic, faraway lands. There would have been few among these audiences who doubted or questioned the word of the lecturer. Lectures were so popular that newspapers listed them in much the same way as television listings now. Subjects covered were extremely varied. Alongside archaeological and theological subjects in one 1930/31 syllabus were such titles as:

- “The Tragedy of Napoleon” (with lantern slides of rare beauty and historical interest)
- “The Wonders of Fish Life” with 100 slides
- “In the Land of the Lion” with Kinematograph films.
- “Some British Birds and their homes”. With slides
- The “Special Lecture” during this particular season was by Ogden on “My Ten visits to Palestine, or how the Land explains the Book” in aid of Lytham Hospital (OFA, Syllabus of Lectures for Lytham Parish 1930/31).

Illustration by lantern slides became the norm; lectures without them specified that the ‘lecture is not illustrated by lantern slides’. Evans (1956: 396) said that by 1928 it was customary at the Society of Antiquaries for papers to be illustrated by lantern slides (provided that a professional fireman was in attendance).

Most archaeologists, and many museum staff, went on the same lecture circuits – as a means of imparting information about the excavations, but also fundraising and supplementing their incomes. There was between them an exchange of information, photographs and slides, Ogden frequently paying any costs invoked by the BM and the archaeologists for use in their lectures. Ogden became very well known around the country for his lectures, at one stage earning £2,000 a year in fees (equivalent to £110,000 today), all of which he donated to charities and archaeological excavations (The Lancashire Daily Post, 1937: no page). In total he delivered over 2000 lectures, amassed 10,000 lantern slides and raised over £50,000 (a tremendous amount of money then, approximately equivalent to £2 – £2.25 million today) (Harrogate Herald, 1940: 2). Some societies had Ogden lectures annually for 17 years; in every case the fees went to his favourite causes.
Photography and aerial photography

Part of the success of the Woolley/Ogden lectures was not only the up to date and first-hand information, but also the use of photographs, including the innovative use of aerial photography. Photography was becoming a powerful instrument of social change and previously hidden events were now available to the public as never before. The new technological advances in photography were making knowledge as accessible as the new advances in transport technology. Photography became a natural field tool for archaeologists despite early cumbersome equipment, recording not only artefacts found but also the process of excavating (Shaw, 2003: 141-142; Daniel, 1950: 295). In addition to being visual recording devices, photographs also represented a form of “visual ownership” (Shaw, 2003: 145) by enhancing the “difference” between the archaeologists and the local workmen, reflecting the imperialist ethos of the time. They showed who was in intellectual and economic control and thereby the “rightful owner”, and who was merely a labourer “who farmed it from his own land” (Shaw, 2003: 141).

Photos showing the progress of work at Ur became a popular addition to the lectures given by Woolley and Ogden, although it seems that they were to some extent stage managed to show people in action rather than in still poses. This may have been in response to a request from Gordon to make the reports from Ur more appealing:

“The American press […] would like photographs that actually show work going on. They like to have some photographs that have life. They would like also some photographs showing actual groups of the natives of Irak. They would also like photographs showing members of the expedition. Still another request is for a good photograph of yourself in the field. Any pictures showing such activities as cleaning and packing, house servants and your living arrangements at Ur would add to the interest of your reports. These requests are in keeping with the traditions of American journalism” (Penn, letter Gordon to Woolley, 16th September 1924).

Many of the ‘action’ photographs from Ur specifically show the involvement of Katharine Woolley. Katharine was a crucial member of the team as an accomplished artist. However, the posed photographs of her, always immaculately dressed and rather like a fashion shoot, seem to be more designed to appeal to the female audience than show a realistic representation of work at Ur.
The use of aerial photography added yet another dimension to the visual representation of excavations. The improvements to aircraft design necessitated by the First World War and the extension of the fighting to the outlying but archaeologically rich territories of the newly mandate areas revealed that air-photography held tremendous possibilities for archaeology. There were tentative trials of air photography, using kites and balloons immediately preceding the First World War. Wellcome used large box kites with special automatically controlled cameras for photographing his excavations in the Sudan, but it took the war for its full potential to be realised (Daniel, 1950: 295-6). Daniel wrote that the war

“trained archaeologists and geographers, among others, in the new techniques of photography and photographic interpretation, and secondly, it provided, incidentally to military requirements, photos of archaeological sites, many hitherto unknown. Detail that was not recognisable on the ground showed up well in photographs, and eventually, air photography was to become a major instrument of archaeological discovery and record” (1950: 295).

Crawford was a pioneer of archaeological aerial photography. He had worked with Wellcome on his excavations in Sudan and realised how useful his box kite photographs would be as a field aid in archaeology (Hauser, 2008: 24-25). However, due to the start of the First World War he was unable to use the process himself. During the war he was an observer with the Royal Flying Corps. In 1920 he was appointed the first Archaeology Officer of the Ordnance Survey, a post he held until his retirement in 1946 (Hauser, 2008: 54; Stout, 2008: 21). Many of the early aerial photographs of the Near East taken by the RAF could not be used by archaeologists because of their military origin. The RAF rule was that all negatives should be destroyed approximately every 6 months. The rule was not always strictly enforced and Crawford carried out a ‘rescue’ mission in 1928 to salvage what aerial photographs he could in Iraq, Transjordan and Egypt. This collection is now in the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (Crawford, 1955: 199). Crawford realised that air photography could revolutionise archaeology, as a ‘reveler’ of vanished earthworks and as illustrator of the scenes of excavation. With the assistance of lantern slides at lectures, these new photographs could convey images that no number of close-up photographs could show.

Woolley also took advantage of this new branch of photography and his account of his excavations at Ur in the Antiquaries Journal in 1923 was prefaced with a photograph
“Aeroplane View of Ur” stating that it was taken by the RAF, published by permission of General Headquarters (Woolley, 1923: plate XXIV).

Woolley and Crawford were acquainted and Crawford stayed with Woolley at Ur when he was on his rescue mission in 1928. It seems likely that the early aerial photos that Woolley used were obtained for him by Crawford, but he also received non-military aerial photographs from Ogden who said “I am sending you today a couple of slides that the Imperial Airways have made me. I told them to make a duplicate set for you and ask you to accept them with my compliments” (OFA, letter Ogden to Woolley, 8th July 1927).

Ogden was one of the first to use the aerial photographic technology to illustrate his lectures about the excavations. He described how airmen flying thousands of feet above the earth were able to discern the outline of earthworks and boundary lines which are not discernible to those on earth. He said that reports of the uncovering through archaeology of countless proofs of the historicity of important events in the Old Testament had become an almost everyday occurrence. However, “this feat of establishing historic certainty from the air is something new” (Ogden, 1934: no page).

Lecturing on 6th March 1929, he said:

“Here is a picture of Ur of the Chaldees from the air. The new science of flying is going to revolutionise many things. See here you have the layout of Ur from the air. We traced the streets of Ancient Ur – uncovered so much of the city that from the air we have got a perfect plan of the layout of the city – its broad and narrow streets, its general contour and this as you now see it is one of the first photos from the air of one of the world’s earliest cities, the ancient city of Ur of the Chaldees – the home of Abraham – the Father of the Jews” (OFA, Lecture report, Birmingham Association of Jewellers and Silversmiths, 6th March 1929).

Ogden’s information was so up to date that when in February 1936 he lectured on “Palestine” at Westminster Chapel in London to an audience of

“2,500 critical Londoners, this vast audience, roused to extraordinary enthusiasm by some of the wonderful unexpected slides indulged in a sudden outburst of applause. The chairman rose to his feet smiling and said: ‘I quite understand how you feel.’ Mr Ogden had actually put on a slide of the site of a
new Palestinian discovery which had been reported in the early editions of the London evening papers that very day” (Lincolnshire Echo, 1936: no page).

When Ogden lectured on ‘Bible Lands’ in 1934, it was reported that “out of 80 pictures, 50 were being shown in Europe for the first time” (Harrogate Herald, 1934a: no page).

The technology was not always reliable however; when Ogden lectured at City Temple in London “with the new lantern, the fuse refused to work for 40 minutes” leaving him to improvise with “delightful asides and happy talk” until he could begin his lecture (Harrogate Herald, 1928: no page). Ogden also delighted his audiences by “never using the old fashioned wand in showing details in lantern pictures, but a torch of his own which flashes a little travelling arrow upon the screen” (The Christian, 1936: no page).

Most slides used at this time were black and white, although some colourists tried to introduce one colour scheme by simply tinting the slides, relying on the photographic base to give the tone values. It was felt that enough care could be taken with the colouring to convey an impression of the nature of the original item for the viewer (Harrogate Herald, 1933b: no page). When trying to convey the richness of the gold discoveries however, Ogden felt that better results could be obtained with tinted slides. When Plenderleith of the BM Research Laboratory sent him some negatives to be made into slides, Ogden replied:

“I have today sent them to be made into lantern slides, and I will send you the negatives and a slide of each. I am writing to ask if you would like them painting in the original gold colour, as they make far more effective slides. If so, ring the photographer and tell him that at my request, all the slides have to be painted as gold. I am glad to do this service for you because of your many kindnesses” (BMRL, Plenderleith papers, letter Ogden to Plenderleith, 2nd December 1933).

Ogden kept meticulous records of the details of the finds and then sent these, with the negatives, to the photographer for tinting. Accompanying the negative of the “crushed Skull” from Ur were the following instructions:

- “This is the skull of a woman before it was removed from the earth.
- All the outside rough edging in black wax.
- All the ribbons are gold.
- All the leaves are gold
- The necklet on the head—the long beads are blue lapis, the light coloured are gold
- All the skull is of dark ivory
- The teeth in the skull are white ivory
- The boat shaped earring is gold
- The collar alternately blue and gold
- The white beads gold, the dark beads blue”

(OFA, 21st August 1929, note to photographer).

Ogden’s arrangement with Kenyon to get current photographs from the excavations for making into slides suited the BM very well. Ogden always had copies made for them at the same time as for himself, so they got slides of their photos at no cost to them (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 7th June 1932). Ogden’s collection of slides became so comprehensive that some BM staff and archaeologists began to use them for their own lectures. He told Hall, who was due to lecture on the Ur discoveries “I have 2 beautifully coloured slides of the Gold Head cover and the Dagger with the Lapis Lazuli handle and its sheath, and if they would be of any service to you for your lecture next week, I shall be delighted to lend them to you” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 17th February 1928).

Hall was eager to have them but needed them urgently so wired Ogden who replied

“I have received your wire and am sending you by tonight’s post what slides I have for your selection. Pick out what you like and I will make you a slide of each. I am sending you herewith a letter that Woolley has sent me (which only arrived this morning) which has some interesting facts about the gold wig. I shall be glad to have the letter back at your earliest convenience” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 20th February 1928).

**The Lectures**

Woolley spent his summer months between excavation seasons on the lecture circuit, frequently in response to requests from various theological societies in Britain and America. His annual lecture to the Society of Antiquaries became one of the highlights of the year. The Society had a membership in 1928 of 789, but the average attendance for most lectures during the lecture season was about 50 (Evans, 1956: 396). However
as Woolley's reputation as a lecturer spread and the press reports of his excavations became more dramatic, the numbers attending his special lectures at the end of the season grew significantly. Among his audiences were members of the BM who had been made honorary members of the Society in 1926, fellow archaeologists and historians such as Gordon Childe and James Breasted. Breasted attended his first lecture after his election as an honorary fellow to hear Woolley on the 2nd of July 1925 (Society of Antiquaries, Members’ registers).

The lectures had several purposes, namely to inform and dazzle, but also to voice personal opinions about opponents, and to take the opportunity to present the superiority and primacy of the Sumerian civilisation over Egyptian finds. On the 12th May 1927 Woolley lectured on his finds at the Royal Cemetery to an unprecedented audience of 119, including Audrey Caton Thompson, Harold Peake and Howard Carter (Society of Antiquaries, Members’ registers). Woolley was often led astray by his own zeal in his efforts to excite the public imagination and made claims in his attempts to outdo discoveries in Egypt that were not always accurate or scientifically based (Mallowan, 2001: 49). This lecture was an example of how much the press and media attention to Tutankhamun’s tomb rankled with Woolley. Woolley claimed that the magnificent discoveries in the Royal Cemetery - the work of the gold and copper smiths, of the sculptors and engravers in shell - showed an art far superior to what Egypt could boast at the same time, the period when Menes founded the first Dynasty (Woolley, 1927b: 385-423). He claimed that the techniques were that of practiced master-hands that had taken centuries to mature and were to dominate the Sumerian craftsman for nearly another thousand years. “Contemporary with the barbarism of prehistoric Egypt, there existed in the Euphrates Valley a civilisation deeply rooted and of no mean order”. He then reported the opinion of “Arthur Keith the distinguished craniologist, who has come to the conclusion that the Sumerian brain-pan was far more capacious than that of the predynastic Nilote” (Woolley, 1927b: 385-423).

Summing up the lecture, Hall said that the claim of Babylon being older than Egypt was likely to produce lively debate elsewhere, and “though the Keeper of both the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities might be expected to remain neutral, I confess that my own mind is inclined to regard Babylon as the older focus of culture”. Without deprecating the value and interest of gold finds, Hall said that he prized more highly the stele fragment with the representation of a chariot, as it was the oldest picture of a wheel. Clumsy as it was, he said, that Sumerian invention was not known till 1000 or more
years later in Egypt, where the sledge was the only means of carrying a vehicle till the time of the Hyksos (Woolley, 1927b: 385-423).

Carter’s reply to the thinly veiled attacks was remarkably restrained:

“I feel appropriately humble, as an Egyptologist, but I have concentrated on the store chamber for the last 7 months and have a good deal to show on the other side of the account, the contents of the chamber being of special interest in connection with Egyptian art and religion” (Woolley, 1927b: 385-423).

The President of the Society closed the proceedings by trying to achieve balance, stating that Ur could not claim the invention of the wheel as he had seen a similar specimen in south Manchuria, adding that

“[i]t is sad though that at such a moment of great discovery, Mr Woolley should have had to suspend operations for lack of financial support. The Society of Antiquaries should set an example by subscribing liberally to archaeological enterprises, especially at home” (Woolley, 1927b: 385-423).

Woolley pursued the line of the seniority of the Sumerians whenever he could. Lecturing to the Royal Asiatic Society he declared the Mesopotamian civilisations to be older than the First Dynasty of Egypt, saying that

“[a]lthough the objects (found in the excavations) went back to so very early a date, the civilisation at that date must have been of very much older standing, for it needed centuries of work and experience before objects such as these could be produced. However much we may quibble about the exact date of a tomb, there can be no doubt that the developed state of Sumer does go back to a very early period indeed and that it antedated by several centuries at least the civilisation of the first dynasty of Egypt” (Woolley, 1928c: 635-642).

Some of Woolley’s colleagues were not convinced by his enthusiastic claims. Smith, Keeper of EAA at the BM, remarked after this same lecture:

“I may be allowed to point out that much that Mr Woolley has told us is very surprising, and, so far as I can see, everything that he has told us he will be able to prove. Had we been told a year ago that such an object was as early as
**he is prepared to prove it to be, we should have been politely incredulous**” (Woolley, 1928c:635-642).

As the publicity campaign rolled on, audience excitement at the lectures at the Society of Antiquaries increased. When Woolley spoke to the Society on 13th of June 1929, shortly after his "Flood" claim, the attendance broke all records. There had been heavy press coverage of these findings and the public were eager to hear from Woolley himself. Unusually, there is a comment recorded in the Society register.

“Ur report: Room absolutely packed – like a tin of sardines. We had lots of extra seats, but these were insufficient. Over 60 were standing and for the last half hour or so (owing to tiredness) a dozen or so were sitting on the floor in front of the High Table. Not less than 256 present” (Society Register minutes).

The presentation of the discoveries at Ur began to be seen as major events, and were among the most excited and crowded lectures the Society had known (Evans, 1956: 406-7). The lectures by Woolley became so popular that the events had to be restricted to members only for fear of overcrowding (Evans, 1956: 414). Evans commented that

“[t]he excavator’s skill in presentation and the scale of publication permitted by the Society, revealed the importance of his discoveries not only to specialists. They were particularly informative upon a period which they have revealed as the most flourishing in all the long history of Babylonia; the last epoch of the still not fully literate Sumerian culture” (1956: 406-7).

Not all archaeologists met with such acclaim though, even when talking about similar subjects. When Langdon gave a lecture on his own claim to have found the flood, it was reported that

“[t]here were scarcely fifty people at the Royal Society to hear yesterday’s lecture by Professor S.H. Langdon […] one of the greatest archaeologists of modern times, and yet his lecture was an epoch making event […] He has brought to light the whole civilisation before and during the Flood – and the Flood took place 3200 years before Christ” (The Evening News, 1930: no page).
Woolley toured the country in 1929 and 1930, thrilling audiences with his descriptions of how he “dug down to the bottom of Mesopotamia” and found unmistakable evidence that the Flood of the Old Testament really occurred.

“Our discovery does not prove any detail of the story of Noah but does prove that the story goes back to a basis in fact. Do not think that this sort of investigation is all very pleasant but not of any use. I tell you that it does matter. If this civilisation had nothing to do with us, frankly I should not be trying to dig it up. It is the earliest civilisation we know of, those tombs I have described were dug in Mesopotamia when Egypt was still a barbarous country” (6th October 1930, Woolley lecture review, no page, unaccredited Newcastle newspaper).

While lectures created an income and spurred on audience members to make donations, their promotion and advertisements needed to be paid for upfront. Again it was Ogden who helped out. He frequently covered the promotion and expenses for the publicity for Woolley’s lectures himself, receiving the advertising proofs at his shop. Ogden also previewed Woolley’s lectures in the press, stating that “World’s Greatest Explorer to Lecture at Harrogate”. He described how

“Major Woolley has worked for eight years in excavating and uncovering the ancient city of Ur of the Chaldees, the home of Abraham, and the most important of all the cities of the world, ancient or modern” (Ogden, 1930: no page).

The Ogden Lectures

Ogden too was in great demand as a lecturer, often being invited back many times, always for charity or fundraising and always to great acclaim. In total he gave an estimated 2000 lectures over 30 years (Ogden’s Obituary, Harrogate Herald, 1940: 2). His repertoire covered a wide range of subjects but frequently with a biblical theme:

- “Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham lived.” (85 slides)
- “The Fabulous Golden Treasures from the Tomb of Tutankhamun as I saw them.” (80 slides)
- “The Wonderland of Egypt!” (80 slides)
- “My third visit to the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1927.”
- “The BM and it’s Treasures from Egypt, Assyria and Babylon” (75 slides)
- “The BM and its Treasures from Greece, Ephesus, Rome and Halicarnassus.” (75 slides)
- “My ten visits to Palestine, or how the land explains The Book.” (85 slides).
- “The Thrilling Discoveries in Bible Lands in 1933.”
- “Babylon the Great where Nebuchadnezzar ruled.” (85 slides)
- “My Recent Motor Ride through Syria and Palestine”

(Ogden lecture flyer, OFA)

Although many of Ogden’s lectures had a biblical theme, this was not unusual at the time. The programme of official lectures at the BM in 1930 shows that only one lecture out of eight (“Assyria, Chaldea and Persia”) did not have a biblical reference in its title, the others ranging from “Ancient Mesopotamia – from the Flood to the Days of Abraham” to “How the Bible was handed down to us in Manuscript and in Print”. Those attending the lecture were advised to bring a pocket Bible to each lecture (Figure 9).

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**Figure 9:** BM Lectures 1930, OFA.
Ogden’s lectures frequently concerned biblical history, defending it against the current trend of biblical criticism. He stated that every fresh discovery

“adds to our respect for the writers of the Old Testament, whose apparent contradictions are so often unexpectedly reconciled by the addition of later archaeological knowledge – a fact which demonstrates that the spade is mightier than the sword or even the pen” (OFA, Ogden lecture notes).

He described archaeology as

“the science or knowledge of ancient things, nations, places, languages – which have been buried in oblivion for centuries until resuscitated by its magic wand. A great part of the ancient East has thus been brought to light – each city a history proving forever the faithfulness of the record of the Holy Writ. The discoveries of the archaeologist have provided or produced one of the finest commentaries on the Bible. These discoveries have illuminated numberless pages of the Old and New Testaments, confirmed many sacred statements, and rectified many wrong opinions of the Word of God” (OFA, Ogden lecture notes).

Out of 600 place names mentioned in the Scriptures, he said that over 450 had been identified by archaeology. In no discovery had revelation been invalidated, but the “findings of the spade” had constantly confirmed the history of the inspired word.

“When by archaeology, sacred sites are identified, we are possessed of additional proof of such weight and value, scientific fact corroborating Holy Writ and appealing to a section of the community more particularly susceptible to scientific finds” (PEF, Ogden’s lecture notes).

The lectures were frequently illustrated with ‘scenes’ from the Bible. For example, contemporary drawings of reconstructed ziggurats were compared to the Tower of Babel. The descriptions made a lasting impression, and combined with the media campaign became firmly lodged in the public imagination. Many contemporary writers picked up on the themes and repeated some of the phrases used by Woolley and Ogden in their own works. Morton, writing of his travels through “The Lands of the Bible” in 1938, reworked the now familiar theme:
“When the priests in coloured robes ascended and descended the ramps [of the ziggurats], well may the scene have inspired, as Sir Leonard Woolley has suggested, the dream of Jacob’s ladder, with its train of angels going up and down” (Morton, 1938: 94).

Ogden was adept at enthraling his audiences. After lecturing on “Ur of the Chaldees and Babylon the Great” at the City Temple in November 1928,

“[q]ueues thronged the aisles. It was quite exciting to witness the crowd of members who stayed to view the stones from the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar. To see the City Temple so packed was a wonderful sight” (November 1928, (“The City Temple Tidings” Ogden Lecture Flyer, North Yorkshire County Reference Library, Harrogate).

Part of the reason for Ogden’s popularity on the lecture circuit was his up-to-date knowledge of the excavations, finds and interpretations thanks to his close relationship with Wooley. Woolley frequently stayed with Ogden in Harrogate, and Ogden travelled to Ur at Woolley’s invitation, staying with him at the expedition house. This arrangement allowed Ogden to get up to the minute reports for his lectures, and to exchange lantern slides with Woolley for his own lectures, while also receiving tips about other photos. “Mr Woolley was staying with me at the weekend and suggested you might have a photograph of the new Ishtar Gate. If so, I wonder if I could borrow it in order to make a lantern slide” (BMME, letter Ogden to Hall, 8th October 1930).

Ogden frequently referred to the work at Ur in terms of “us” and “we”. He would show a photo of the expedition house and say “this is the house where we lived”, “these are the discoveries we made” (Ogden lecture notes, OFA). The connection between Ogden and Woolley became so close that when Manchester Public Library mounted an exhibition of Ur discoveries in 1930, it was described as

“a series of remarkable discoveries during recent years at Ur of the Chaldees, the City of Abraham (made by Mr C.L. Woolley). With the exception of the aerial views of Mesopotamia by the Royal Air Force, the photographs shown in the cases have been taken by Mr Woolley’s assistant, Mr James R. Ogden, F.S.A., of Harrogate, who has lent the collection to the library. In view of the treasures already discovered it is anticipated that many more remain to be unearthed, and
it is confidently expected that in the near future, still further light will be thrown on the Cradle of Civilisation” (Manchester Guardian, 25th November 1930: 11).

Ogden, the Lecturer

One of the main reasons for Ogden’s popularity as a lecturer was his up to date and first-hand information, gained by being “in personal touch with the work” (Ogden lecture flyer, North Yorkshire Reference Library, Harrogate). Apart from his ‘hands-on’ role of advising the BM on the ancient metalwork being discovered at the excavations (Millerman, 2004a; 2008), Ogden was in correspondence with everyone who could keep him fully up to date with the latest developments in archaeology and the excavations so that his lectures would be as accurate as possible. Mallowan gave Ogden notes on his personal interpretation of the correspondence between the Ur and Nineveh prehistoric periods. He pointed Ogden to particular journal articles and photographs, promising to add evidence from Nineveh which was currently in publication, but which he would let him have “as soon as it comes out” (Ogden’s lecture notes, OFA). Margaret Murray was a fount of first-hand information for Ogden’s lectures (Brotherton MS 436/174, 14th April 1923, Brotherton MS 436/175, 10th May 1923) and R. Englebach, the Chief Inspector of the Service de l’Antiquités in Egypt, enabled him to have access to the more restricted areas (Brotherton, Englebach letter to Ogden, 7th May 1923). Apart from describing the discoveries of “his friend Major Woolley, who has been digging at Ur of the Chaldees” (Ogden lecture notes, OFA), Ogden was among the first to visit the tomb of Tutankhamun (“Excavations that confirm the Bible” reviewing Ogden’s guest appearance at their conference, undated article, OFA). Before travelling to Iraq in October 1926, Ogden wrote to Carter

“I am going to Babylon and Nineveh in October, and hope by the middle of November to spend a couple of days in Luxor. Do you think it would be possible for me to be allowed to go into ‘Tut-ankh-amen’s [sic] Tomb’?”

Carter replied that he would be pleased to make every endeavour when he came (Brotherton MS436/178, October 1926). These first-hand contacts gave Ogden’s lectures the benefit of a personal connection with the work, bringing “first-hand information free from pedantry and illustrated by striking lantern slides” (Reviews of his lectures, Ogden Lecture Flyer, North Yorkshire Reference Library, Harrogate).
Despite the significant publicity that Ogden and Woolley generated for Ur, the greatest audiences were reserved for Ogden’s talks on Egypt. Ogden’s personal beliefs meant that Ur held more significance to him in terms of biblical connections, but his fascination with archaeology and his numerous trips to the region kept him fully informed of the latest discoveries in Egypt and he was aware of its popularity with his audiences. The excavation of Tutankhamun’s tomb by Carter was financed privately by Lord Carnarvon and therefore Ogden was able to give the public what they wanted but use the money raised to assist the Ur excavation. The public were enthralled by Egypt and ‘Tutmania’ following the discoveries in the Valley of the Kings and desperate for as much news of it as they could get. Ogden obliged with a series of slide illustrated lectures (including eventually a complete set of the official black and white negatives taken by Harry Burton and given to Ogden with the permission of Howard Carter) of all the latest discoveries, and first hand reports from his visits there (BMRL, Plenderleith papers, letter Carter to Scott, 21st May 1932; Millerman, 2004a).

Ogden even began to sell Egyptian designs in his shop to great popularity. For many people attending his lectures it was their first experience of seeing such remarkable archaeological finds. There were enthusiastic reviews:

“By universal consent, the lecture on Tutankhamun’s tomb was voted one of the most remarkable ever given”.

“He had some extremely fine pictures showing the actual handling of the mummy”.

“Mr Ogden held his audience spellbound with a subject that is supposed to be only really intelligible to the scholarly” (Reviews of his lectures, Ogden Lecture Flyer, North Yorkshire Reference Library, Harrogate).

When he lectured at Hackney Central Hall on “Tutankhamun's Tomb” in 1927, a crowd of over 1000 people gathered to hear him (Excerpt from The Hackney Gazette and North London Advertiser appearing in Ogden lecture flyer, North Yorkshire Reference Library, Harrogate). In Leeds,

“[t]he crowd was so great that scores of people were turned away. A large group gathered chairs and forms [benches] from the adjoining houses and sat outside in the open-air. The screen was placed at the window, which was opened, and Mr Ogden had the unique experience of speaking to two audiences at once, one in the crowded hall, the other in the open air viewing the
back of the screen through the lecture room window” (Ogden lecture flyer, North Yorkshire Reference Library, Harrogate).

Ogden was well-known for his lecturing skill in the north of England, but eventually his Yorkshire frankness, mixed with “great scholarship and a most racy and humorous style” meant that he became in great demand for lectures around the country (The Christian, 1936: no page). His ability to inject humour and contemporary relevance to his topics appealed particularly to his audiences such as when he described a wig which belonged to an Egyptian woman stating “the permanent wave has lasted 4000 years and every curl is still perfect” (Yorkshire Post, 1932: no page).

Many of Ogden’s lectures were aimed at specific audiences for particular purposes. His talks to theological, historical and archaeological societies were tailored to attract donations for the work at Ur, Kish and Arpachiyah and encourage wealthy visitors to the site, but also to raise money for various charities. Ogden’s expertise in ancient metals meant that goldsmith and silversmith societies were repeatedly inviting him to lecture specifically on the finds in the Royal Cemetery. The BM were able to make use of Ogden’s connections in this field, when for example, in 1928 the BM were interested in purchasing a 12th Dynasty Egyptian gold openwork plaque of circa 1795 BC, which had come up for sale in Beirut. Its provenance is unknown but is thought to have originated in Byblos. This was an important connection because it showed that Egypt probably had trade links with this important port during the Middle Kingdom (2040-1750 BC). The BM did not have the necessary funds for purchase so approached Ogden for help in raising them.

The appeal was presented to the Birmingham Jewellers’ and Silversmiths’ Association by Ogden and at the beginning of 1929, they bought and donated the piece to the BM. In return, they received a replica of the plaque which was to be placed in Birmingham City Art Gallery (April 1929 – footnote to a review of JRO’s lecture, “The Wonderful Goldsmiths of Ur and Babylon”, Silversmith and Optician, OFA).

When the BM wanted to purchase the Codex Sinaiticus in 1933, they launched an appeal to the public. The government agreed to loan the necessary funds to the BM. In addition, they offered to give £1 towards the cost for every £1 subscribed by the public. By an intense effort, the greatest part of the sum was raised, the government contributing £30,000 (Miller, 1973: 33). Further sums were raised by individual contributions and collections in churches around the country. This proved to be one of
the most successful fund raising tasks ever undertaken, up to then, by a national museum (Miller, 1973: 33). Ogden gave lectures describing the progress and arrival of the Codex in London “wrapped up as an ordinary paper parcel. It was my privilege to be one of the few present to receive it” (Harrogate Herald, 1934c: no page) and gave the donations raised to the BM.

From today’s more sceptical approach to the Bible, and its debatable association with archaeology, it is easy to dismiss the approach of Ogden in his lectures as ‘Bible driven’ and of no lasting consequence. At the time there were those who disagreed with Ogden’s opinions and conclusions, and there would be many more now, but he compelled their interest by attention to detail and meticulous research. His humour and scholarship, combined with great powers of vivid description, put him in the front rank of contemporary lecturers. In part, he also received reflected status from his connections with the archaeological world; he was very much regarded as a man in the know, one with expert connections. He obviously took immense pride from these connections as there are frequent references to them in his lectures. He was not averse to showing lantern slides of autographed photos of his museum and archaeological contacts. The Christian wrote of Ogden that

“[i]n all his lectures he seeks to make the Bible live. There was a "missionary" in all his lectures and a well-defined purpose working through to a better understanding of ‘the impregnability of Holy Scripture’. He seized on every new discovery which confirmed the truth of the sacred record and passed it on to others in the most fascinating way” (The Christian, 1929b: no page).

The lectures not only served the cause of promoting the excavations and raising many of the necessary funds, but they brought entertainment, education and enlightenment to thousands of people. By the early 1930’s, archaeology had become a very popular subject with the man in the street “who is greatly interested in it and delights in the pictures and brief accounts” (Randall-Maclver, 1933: 5). For the many who were not able to travel to the excavation sites themselves, the lectures brought the exciting discoveries to them. By the end of the Ur excavation, Ogden had become as well known around the country as he was in his home town (Harrogate Advertiser, 1933: no page). He would have been responsible for inspiring hundreds of people to visit the BM to see familiar objects with new eyes after hearing him talk. With the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to criticise the methods taken, but their effectiveness was indisputable. As was demonstrated in Chapter 6, the continual efforts to promote the Ur
excavation directly led to an increase in subscriptions, the Ur excavation becoming largely self-sufficient.
Chapter Nine
Conclusion

“As for research, it is not much use
Unless it follows conventional views,
Arthur, Robin Hood, witches curses
These will appeal to visitors’ purses”
(Clarke, 1990: 113)

~

The Ur excavation was the joint project of the British Museum and Philadelphia Museum, University of Pennsylvania, running between 1922 and 1934 under the leadership of Sir Leonard Woolley. The Ur excavation findings are still critical for much of our knowledge about archaeology in that region, however recent criticism tends to dismiss much of Woolley’s work, as ‘Bible driven’, prone to outlandish claims and descriptions and consequently of little scientific validity.

The questions posed at the beginning of this thesis asked whether the criticisms made of Woolley and his Ur campaign were justified. I questioned whether the expedition was led by an archaeologist who was driven by his personal biblical agenda, which blinded him to the need for substantiated evidence of his claims, or whether he was in fact reacting and responding to drastic funding problems caused by circumstances beyond his control and which threatened the expedition with closure. I sought to examine if the claims and interpretations made by Woolley were justified by those circumstances, or whether he was a ‘populariser’ who sometimes allowed his “imagination to get the better of him” (Mallowan, 1960: 14).

My thesis analysed Woolley’s legacy to archaeology nearly a century after the Ur excavation took place, to discover if he is remembered more for the vast publicity that surrounded ‘Abraham’s city’ and the ‘Biblical Flood’, rather than as the experienced, accomplished excavator of the Royal Cemetery and the ‘flood pit’ (Romer, 2000: 128). It would not be unreasonable to question whether Woolley is remembered at all, other than as a yardstick by which to measure how far archaeology has ‘progressed’ in the
intervening century. The first lecture I attended on Ur and Woolley in 2005 was accompanied by laughter and derisory comments that archaeologists at that time claimed to have ‘found the flood’! During my first visit to the BM at the start of my research, it was explained to me that the Ur excavation was a particularly poor undertaking, a remark that was again accompanied by derisory remarks. On neither occasion was any consideration given to the notion that these viewpoints were not an entirely accurate representation of the Ur excavation, nor was there an acknowledgement that despite its modern ‘entertainment value’, the Ur excavation remains the primary source for archaeological knowledge about that region.

The Ur excavation, like many others, was blighted by funding problems. This thesis argued that it was only able to continue through its twelve year course because of a targeted and highly organised promotion campaign designed to inspire the ‘wider public’ to subscribe financially to it. My research showed that Woolley was not alone in this promotion campaign, but was closely assisted by the goldsmith and collector James R. Ogden. Ogden was a relatively wealthy, well-travelled and successful businessman with jewellery shops in London and Harrogate. His acute business sense recognised the power of advertising and appealing to people in an accessible way, making him instrumental in thrusting the Ur campaign into the forefront of public awareness.

Ogden had a complex relationship with the BM. He had expertise in ancient metallurgy and was able to advise Woolley and the BM on their discoveries during the early years of the British Museum Research Laboratory (Millerman, 2008). He also generated substantial subscription to the Ur excavation by a dedicated media campaign and numerous lecture tours. These two aspects of Ogden’s contribution were enhanced by his largesse. Not only did he shower gifts upon those he admired, but his generosity extended to the assistance that he gave the BM which he provided at no charge. He frequently bore the expense of restoration, repair and replication himself as described in Chapters 3 and 7.

Ogden has virtually disappeared from public record, but during the Ur campaign he became identified with Woolley to such an extent that in 1930 he was described as “Mr Woolley’s assistant”. Ogden amassed a large archive related to Near Eastern archaeology during the inter-war years, and this was described in Chapters 1 and 3. It is my access to this previously unresearched source which, in conjunction with archives in museums and institutions in Britain and America, enabled me to revisit the
Ur excavation and its promotion campaign, and examine it from a contemporary perspective. By examining the excavation and Woolley’s presentation of it as part of a much wider process, we reach a much clearer perspective on the workings of British archaeology in inter-war Britain, the contemporary attitudes of the excavating nations and the awakening nationalism of the host country. This thesis therefore has not been a re-examination of the archaeology of Ur, as this has been done many times before. Rather, it is as stated in the Introduction, an examination of the social history of the Ur excavation and the processes it went through to reach its conclusions during a time of great change both in Britain and the Near East.

Ogden and Woolley were very much products of their time, having both been born in the second half of the 19th century. Any discussion of the Ur excavation and its representation therefore needs to understand this period and the influences bearing on society at this time. This was a period of immense change socially, economically, politically and academically, all of which were to impact on the Ur excavation and its interpretation. The temporal and spatial setting of the Ur excavation is essential in its consideration, therefore this thesis explored these circumstances in an attempt to examine the Ur excavation within its own parameters, rather than with the benefit of hindsight or using today’s theories and approaches to archaeology.

British society entered the 20th century with a strong biblical culture and this pervading influence decided the choice of many sites for excavation in the area called ‘The Holy Land’. It is difficult to imagine in today’s climate of scepticism the intensity with which the search for evidence connecting the sites to the Bible was made and the passion that was felt for the subject in the late 19th and early decades of the 20th centuries. As explored in Chapter 1, the development of the ‘New Sciences’ during that period began to question and challenge previously held views about the validity of the Bible as historical record, inspiring quests for biblical evidence. ‘Biblical Archaeology’, as it became termed, saw the founding of some of the earliest archaeological societies dedicated to that subject during those decades and was a magnet for attracting funding from the public as discussed in Chapters 2 and 5. ‘Digging the Bible’ is more recently the pejorative term applied to this branch of archaeology and it is within this category that Woolley and his presentation of the Ur excavation has been placed without question.

There has been a tendency among recent critiques of Woolley to pick and choose those aspects of his work, particularly his interpretation and presentation of it that
comfortably fit the pigeon-holing of him as a biblical archaeologist, thus making him easy to dismiss or disregard. However, the Ur excavation does not account for the whole body of Woolley’s career and this critique is not directed at his other work. Woolley initially worked in Britain on the Roman remains at Corbridge, then for Penn at Nubia with Maclver excavating a Meroitic necropolis. This was followed by work in Egypt and then at Carchemish where he worked until the outbreak of the Second World War (Winstone, 1990: 17-25). Woolley did not use biblical references in reporting any of this previous work, as discussed in Chapter 4 concerning his reports on Hogarth’s work at Carchemish, making their application to Ur all the more notable and, as this thesis argues, a deliberate and conscious choice.

However what he had learned was that he had a gift for writing reports that newspapers wanted to publish, and the thrill of public acknowledgement (Winstone, 1990: 18). Winstone wrote that in his early career, Woolley began to sense that his kind of work, involving expensive large-scale projects, “needed public support if it was to attract the necessary funds from governments and wealthy institutions, and that newspaper publicity was the key” (Winstone, 1990: 18).

The Ur excavations ran for 12 years from 1922 until 1934 and was very successful in terms of discovery and the high public profile it achieved, placing it at the time on par with Howard Carter’s discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in Egypt. Woolley’s career spanned many years before and after Ur, but nevertheless he is largely remembered as the eponymous figure of Winstone’s “Woolley of Ur” (1990).

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Much of the basis of the criticisms directed at Woolley and which forms the starting point for the argument of this thesis, comes from what I call ‘the Mallowan effect’, examined in Chapter 4. Mallowan’s Memoirs (2001) are a frequently quoted source of much of the criticism directed against Woolley, which are repeated without question in virtually every account of Woolley’s work at Ur (Woolley & Moorey, 1982; Bernhardsson, 2005). Mallowan worked as Woolley’s assistant for six years of the Ur excavations, but he did not express his opinion of Woolley’s attitude to his work until after Woolley’s death. Mallowan’s own motives in criticising aspects of Woolley’s work have not previously been scrutinised; he has instead been regarded as a reliable eyewitness of events at the time. As described in Chapter 4, Mallowan was a significant
figure in the development of Near Eastern archaeology in Britain. The generation of
archaeologists working in Iraq in the 1940’s and 50’s would either have worked with
him or worked with people who had, thus creating a tradition based on oral memory
that has been disseminated to the present day.

Woolley died in 1960, after which point Mallowan was able to reconstruct the narrative
of Ur and distance himself from Woolley. There may have been an issue of continuing
to promote the status quo concerning Ur while Woolley was alive, or there may have
been a reluctance to challenge his mentor during his lifetime. There is no doubt that
Mallowan had a high personal regard for Woolley:

“I could not have served a better apprenticeship, for Woolley in spite of all he
had to do, spared no pains in training us […] for in the art of exposition, spoken
and written, he was a model of lucidity, patient and understanding of one’s
difficulties” (Mallowan, 1960: 6).

Whatever the reason, Mallowan chose not to take advantage of the opportunities after
Woolley’s death to refer to and explain his own part in the Ur promotion campaign.
Mallowan (2001: 34) instead described Woolley as instinctively turning to the Bible as
his point of reference. He also described him as a man of strong imagination, who was
overburdened with work and unable to keep abreast of other discoveries, and therefore
his work was prone to substantial error, particularly concerning the chronology of the
civilisations uncovered (1960: 14). The implied suggestion by Mallowan is that it was
Woolley’s pride which prevented him from later acknowledging these errors, which he
claimed were based on Woolley’s determination to follow his own agenda rather than
seek out scientific archaeological ‘truth’. The quest for archaeological ‘truth’ however
has always come laden with the influences of the pervading culture of the time (Trigger,
2006: 540-548); the archaeologists and archaeology cannot be separate from society,
operating as they do within its norms and conventions (Trigger, 2006: 543; Shanks &

However, enough time has passed since the time of the Ur excavation to allow us to
identify more clearly the factors that were affecting Woolley’s motivations and
interpretations, rather than rely on hearsay written some years after the event. By
examining the primary source evidence it became apparent to me that during the Ur
excavation, Woolley, rather than blindly following his own supposed personal and
biased agenda, was in fact attempting to place the Ur excavation and its discoveries at
the very forefront of the public's imagination, to direct their attention away from the high profile Tutankhamun discoveries and persuade the public to reach into their pockets to finance Ur - a campaign in which he proved very successful.

After the excavation, his reluctance to adjust his own chronology despite new evidence to the contrary, and his publication of Abraham in 1936, suggests that Woolley was satisfied with the interpretations he had reached during the campaign and continued to promote them. There is no doubt that Woolley was a religious man, thoroughly versed in the Bible through his upbringing and education. However, he did not set out to excavate Ur to confirm his own beliefs, he was appointed as the most suitable person for the position of director of the Ur expedition by the two participating museums. He was, as Winstone said “content to be at the fount of biblical history, away from the over-dug and over-publicised sites of ancient Egypt” (Winstone, 1990: 120). Woolley's initial reports show that apart from referring to Ur as Ur of the Chaldees, the normal language of the time, biblical reference did not begin in earnest until the financial situation became problematic. His own beliefs therefore should not detract from his promotional methods during the campaign, the reasons for them and their successful outcomes. To judge Woolley’s entire career from the perspective of whatever his personal religious beliefs were, is to distort and undervalue his work and legacy:

“His great work on the Royal Cemetery of Ur is a masterly, detailed and lucid statement of the facts – an open book to all who have the knowledge to see how they fit with modern archaeological progress” (Mallowan, 1960: 14).

Maisels (1998: 39) regarded it as fortunate that the earlier excavators, such as Layard, Botta and Place, uncovered the large mounds in the northern regions “and not the earlier remains from the south (Sumer) where all the 20th century excavation and conservation skills of a Leonard Woolley were required to do justice, for instance, to the ‘Royal Tombs of Ur’, dating from early in the third millennium BC”.

Vidale (2011: 427) also recognised the contribution made by Woolley's work at Ur stating “[i]n terms of excavation and field recording, Woolley, evidently ahead of his time, stands out as one of the most successful archaeologists of the 20th century”, crediting Woolley's work with inspiring “unbroken interest in the Royal Cemetery of Ur” and the new ideas this led to.
Funding was, and still is, a perennial problem for archaeology, with archaeologists needing to compete with each other for a share of the limited money available from institutions and private sponsors. Wealthy sponsors enabled many excavations to take place when no official funding was available. But this sponsorship frequently caused problems as sponsors dictated the terms of excavation. In Chapter 5, I examined these problems and the effect of private sponsorship on the excavations.

The Ur excavation, like many archaeological projects, was to face severe financial problems when, early in the proceedings, the two participating museums had difficulties concerning the terms of their agreement and the funding arrangement changed. The BM and Woolley were placed in the position of needing to find the necessary extra funding to enable the excavation to continue. Having discovered evidence of rich archaeological evidence during the first season’s work, Woolley was determined not to close the excavation and began a campaign to involve the public and gain their sponsorship. He enlisted the help of James Ogden in a publicity drive to raise funds that appealed directly to the public's desire for an exciting, well written story and their religious sensibilities.

Woolley and Ogden were brought up in devout families with an extensive knowledge of the Bible. Whatever may have been the private beliefs of Woolley however, there is no written evidence to show that he discussed the possible biblical connections of the Ur excavation with any of his colleagues. There is only one written reference to Abraham between himself and Kenyon at the BM (BMCA CE 32/28/11/1, 31st January 1929), and only one between himself and Ogden (OFA, letter Woolley to Ogden, 15th August 1925).

Ogden’s records on the other hand suggest that he fervently believed that excavations in ‘The Holy Land’ would corroborate or, at the very least, enhance much of the biblical record. His lecture notes, articles and newspaper reports show that he promoted this aspect of the excavation with an almost messianic zeal, seeing it as his duty to share the knowledge coming from the Near East.

The two men may not have had entirely the same motivations for the excavation of Ur, but undoubtedly had the same drive to see it completed. As Chapter 7 illustrated, rather than simply having an overriding agenda to ‘dig up the Bible’, it was the ability of Woolley and his colleagues to tap into this passion among their audience that was so
successful in raising the profile of Ur and encouraging the public’s financial support. As the financial problems of the two contributing museums continued season after season, so Woolley, supported by Ogden, continually tied in the discoveries of the excavation to biblical references. They constructed such a compelling portrait during the Ur excavation of where and when Abraham was born, that this view became for many years part of the common psyche. This view of Abraham even entered the sphere of children’s bible stories causing a generation to grow up absorbing the Woolley version of Abraham (Chalmers, 1950: 7-13). The announcement by Woolley in 1929 that he had discovered evidence of ‘the Biblical Flood’ caused such public excitement that subscription reached a level where the excavation became more or less self-sufficient, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7.

As illustrated, the portrait of Ur constructed by Woolley and Ogden became so much a part of the accepted view, that for many people at the time, the Bible was corroborated as historical record again rather than a theological document. We now live in a more sceptical age where there is much less certainty about acceptance of the Bible as historical record. The pervading opinion today is more likely to be reflected in Gore Vidal’s description of the Old Testament as “the sacred books of a Bronze Age nomadic tribe” (Lezard, 2006, no page). However it is from this more sceptical approach that much modern academic criticism is directed at Woolley.

The perspective of public opinion however, is not necessarily reflected in this more secular approach. Although society now is seen as much more informed and questioning about the historicity of the Bible, there is still much media attention when a ‘religious artefact’ is discovered. Silberman stated that

“[d]espite the transformation of archaeology into scientific archaeology, the past has lost none of its power to inspire. One only needs to mention ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’ to understand the political and emotional force that it still commands” (1982: 201).

The media in particular still recognises the value of using biblical references to make a connection with the public when describing areas that may not be so familiar to today’s audience. It is also apparent that some museums use the same biblical references to appeal to their visitors today as they did during the Ur campaign. The BM and Penn each display one of two identical statues discovered at Ur in their respective exhibitions. These statues are described in academic circles as “rampant he-goats”
(Woolley & Moorey, 1982: 99; Cohen, 2005: 132), a fairly neutral but exact description of them. However, 90 years after the event, both museums still persist in labelling the statues as “The Ram caught in the Thicket”, an association established by Woolley who stated that they reminded him of the biblical story (see Chapter 6). In an article for the Royal Society of Arts, Woolley was still only referring to the statues as “the so-called ‘ram in a thicket’”, a slightly cautious labelling (Woolley, 1933: 49).

The retention of the original suggested name by the museums indicates that the Biblical reference is still more meaningful to many of today’s visitors to the museums than the less evocative ‘academic’ reference. Therefore Woolley’s recognition of his public audience’s agenda in inter-war Britain appears to be similarly reflected in the differing approaches to ‘public’ and ‘academia’ today. We recognise the need for these differing approaches to different audiences today, but there has been less willingness by today’s archaeologists to recognise Woolley’s similar approach, to separate the reports intended for the museums and academic institutions from the more popular books, articles and broadcasts intended for the wider public.

Hodder commented that historians of archaeology need to acknowledge the way that the writing of archaeology has changed through time (Hodder, 1989: 268). He argued that archaeological reports today now follow a code in presenting data, largely void of interpretation or contextual narrative, but that in doing this, they become devalued. “It is in the writing of reports that there has been the plainest trend towards a more impersonal, abstract, timeless and objective style” (Hodder, 1989: 273-274). Allen described “the Hidden Audience” that archaeologists should be aware of when writing their reports, namely a “committed core of archaeological readers” among the marginally interested wider public (Allen, 2005: 245-247). It is this audience that he thinks archaeologists should be writing for, not the smaller, scholarly audience, or what Hodder called “the delirious specialist” (Hodder, 1989: 273). Allen recognised that ‘the hidden audience’ exists in “hundreds of thousands”, offering a much wider public than usually available to scholars, providing greater potential to generate income (Allen, 2005: 246).

This is advice that Woolley was already aware of and utilised to his utmost ability. What was Woolley doing during the Ur campaign that was so different from today’s archaeology? All archaeology now must compete for funding in a very competitive environment and ‘public archaeology’ is very much the norm. Woolley’s method of competing for funding involved attracting the public’s attention through different
strategies. He encouraged their interest through exciting, colourful and humanised stories in books, newspaper and journal articles, broadcasts and lecture tours and he rewarded them with mementoes from the excavation. The public however have their own agendas, their own idea of what does or does not interest them. This is exemplified by the excavation of the ‘Royal Cemetery’ at Ur which gave the public glamour and excitement that was only matched by Carter’s findings in Tutankhamun’s tomb and Woolley publicised this to maximum effect. However, as shown in Chapter 7, not only was Woolley able to report spectacular findings of gold and silver, but also tales of human sacrifice entered the heady mix when Woolley uncovered mass human burials in the royal tombs. Despite the commonly held idea that Woolley used this situation to its greatest advantage, filling the media with lurid tales, attracting headlines everywhere, the reality of the situation was rather different. A diffident and apparently shocked Woolley initially gave relatively little emphasis to these human discoveries, seemingly finding it difficult to equate a civilisation that could produce such fine metalwork with one capable of mass homicide.

There is a rather confusing double-edged criticism of Woolley here. Not only is he accused of taking advantage of the situation and publicising it for maximum effect, but he is also then criticised for displaying unease at the discoveries. This unease has been at the base of some of the criticism levelled against him; that his attempts to describe these deaths in ‘user-friendly’ terms for his audiences betrayed his Victorian sensibilities (Leick, 2001: 115; Wellard, 1972: 94; Crawford, 1991: 120). The problem with this criticism, however, is that it seems to be suggesting that Woolley, a man born in the Victorian era, was guilty of behaving in an entirely appropriate way for his time and culture. It needs to be acknowledged therefore that archaeology as a subject today is not the same as it was during Woolley’s time, nor is it reported in the same way.

In retrospect however, it is clear that Woolley’s popularisation of the message, though more successful in generating public subscription, meant the essence of the message was lost. It was the popularisation that was eventually to be remembered, not the facts as Woolley became remembered for ‘Abraham’s City’ and the ‘City of the Flood’.

Archaeology today is a subject that has changed almost beyond recognition from the time in which Woolley was operating. Wheeler, a contemporary of Woolley, commented that in
“field-archaeology and digging [...] the period 1914-1954 has been one of violent transition; so much so that the present generation, with its assumed techniques, its fluorine, nitrogen and radiocarbon tests and others in prospect, can only by a deliberate act of imagination re-create the conditions of 1913-14” (Wheeler, 1955: 230).

As archaeology developed during the 20th century, it began to diversify into different types of archaeology, and different schools of thought within archaeology. From its small, esoteric origins, archaeology has grown and diversified greatly, with each branch of the subject now operating within its own constraints (Champion, 1991: 151).

Each area of archaeological study in today's competitive academic world needs to justify its presence within the subject. Each branch therefore offers its own 'view' of the past, distinguishing it from earlier study. This maps the 'chain of progression' illustrating how the subject has evolved to where it is today. Gender archaeology for example, enabled McCaffrey (2008: 173-215) to offer a different perspective on the findings in the Royal Tombs. She critiqued Woolley's opinion that a cylinder seal discovered in the tomb could not have belonged to the female deceased, but must have been her husband's (2008: 181). Her criticism therefore follows a common thread, namely that Woolley's attempts to describe the Royal Cemetery deaths to his audiences betrayed his Victorian sensibilities and that his view is out of touch with the modern world.

However we need to look at Woolley's interpretations in the context of contemporary society in 1926/7 when the Royal Tombs were discovered, rather than our own time. Enfranchisement of women only took place in Britain in 1928 (Harvey & Bather, 1965: 61); therefore a feminist interpretation of the subject would not necessarily have been contemplated by Woolley at the time of the discovery. Woolley's interpretation of early dynastic Ur reflects the mood and understanding of inter-war Britain rather than that of modern times. The new aspects to archaeology enhance our knowledge and understanding of the subject today, but we need to contextualise that the archaeology was carried out during a time of completely different cultural values. More diverse interpretations are possible now because of the perspectives allowed by the development of new theoretical approaches coupled with advances in science and technology (Trigger, 2006: 534-539; Daniel, 1981: 186-187).

Our contemporary view of archaeology is of a subject that has changed into one much wider and more complex than during the Ur excavation. The subject sits astride the
border between art, social science and science, the cause of a hotly contested debate in the late 20th century and one that continues to some extent to the present day. When Mortimer Wheeler was asked whether archaeology was an art or a science, he is alleged to have replied “neither, it’s a vendetta” (Shanks, 1992: 2).

Hudson described the changing view of what archaeology was in the 1930’s compared with that in his time of writing (the early 1980s). He described its elevation from the study of antiquities to the rank of a science and questioned how archaeologists themselves may have seen their role during this time of change. He mentioned that “in his immensely successful Ur of the Chaldees, published in 1929, Sir Leonard Woolley does not use the words ‘archaeology’ or ‘archaeologist’ even once” (Hudson, 1981: 4).

This is a significant observation by Hudson as it suggests that Woolley himself saw his role as an excavator and populariser, rather than as archaeologist and academic as we recognise the terms today. This again points to the blurring, by current perspective, of Woolley’s output. Today’s academics understand and differentiate very clearly between different styles of presentation for different audiences. They seem to be less able to recognise this distinction in Woolley’s case however and merge all his output into one unified record. At a time when academic positions in archaeology were scarce, Woolley was more likely to be aware of the interest of the ‘wider public’, basically the source of his income, than of the few fellow academics. Fagan (2003: 120) stated that “Woolley never held an academic post, but relied on modest private funds and earnings from his writings for a salary”.

It was the change in academia during the inter-war years, and the development of archaeology as a ‘discipline’ in its own right, that turned a spotlight on Woolley’s work, challenging and questioning him in a way that had not happened before. Woolley is criticised today for not seeming to meet modern standards in academic archaeology. However, Woolley sat astride the changes of the time, seeing the move away from reports for the benefit of museums, institutions and very limited public audiences such as libraries in stately homes, to the addition of less formal reports for a much more diverse audience. When Layard published his reports to great public acclaim in the nineteenth century, no such diversion existed. The expectations placed on his behaviour today therefore are different from those placed on Woolley and he is not subject to the same criticisms. Instead of recognising his archaeological abilities, Woolley is acknowledged as having a genius for publicising his discoveries (Bohrer, 2003: 64).
Woolley’s formal reports of the excavation were published initially in 1934, but took many years to complete, the final volume being published after his death. They remain the principle source for much of our knowledge about Ur. This was achieved because of a grant from the Carnegie Foundation which enabled Woolley to avoid the fate of many archaeological excavations of remaining unrecorded and unpublished (1993: 204-205). Lack of funding or motivation led many archaeologists to fail at this hurdle, which Wheeler (1955: 199) described as “destruction,” regarding “prompt and full publication as a matter of honour”. Woolley not only fulfilled that obligation but enjoyed writing and presenting his interpretations in a more accessible form for his wider audiences. Scholarly reports on excavations are the norm now in academia, but as stated, Woolley was writing at a time when the outlets for academic reports were limited. His reports represent a new era of publishing detailed reports of the findings of an excavation rather than a catalogue of discoveries and portfolio of plates. Mallowan wrote “[t]he lesson he left us is that not to publish is a crime and that we should brand others who have not lived up to these expectations as criminals” (1977: 2).

Archaeology as an academic discipline did not feature prominently in Britain before the inter-war period, still being in the process of emerging from its basis in antiquarianism and collecting (Stout, 2008: 13-16). In the early decades of the 20th century however, particularly between the two world wars, archaeology slowly developed as a subject of study in its own right. It was no longer just about uncovering the material remains of the past, nor the domain of a privileged and interested few. Its study and practice during that period represented Britain’s ‘centric’ view of its status in the world, and the notion that archaeological remains provided evidence of the supposed progress and superiority of European people (Bohrer, 2003: 39).

Not only has archaeology as a subject changed significantly since Woolley’s time, but within the areas of debate about the different types of archaeology, there are also the different ideological approaches to archaeology. Archaeological theory has moved through cultural-historical theory (Trigger, 2006: 211-214), to processualism, post-processualism, and the counter arguments to those theories (Shanks & Hodder, 1998: 3-5). In Chapter 4 I examined the approaches taken by previous writers to Woolley and the Ur excavation. All these different approaches to the subjects under discussion lead to a diversity of interpretation of ‘the facts’. It becomes essential that when interpretations are applied, source data must be examined to ensure that the premise for the interpretation is more informed. Archaeologists use their own interpretation of
the past to ‘distance’ themselves from their predecessors, and add weight to their own standing within the field of study.

Jones stated that “it cannot be assumed that archaeologists (and other social scientists) hold some privileged perspective outside of society and its ideological constraints” (1997:144). Woolley was part of British inter-war society, reflecting a particular way of looking at the world he was excavating. He interpreted the results according to that view and presented those results to an audience also of that mindset. The audience for archaeology began to diverge into that of the wider public and that of academia, reflecting the significant social changes happening in Britain in the inter-war period.

This social change was facilitated by and reflected in the emergence of “the new Behemoth” (Mowat, 1968: 240-41), namely mass communication. In Chapter 7, I examined how Woolley and Ogden took advantage of the new means of communication and used it to great effect. Never before had it been so easy to reach large numbers of people on such a vast scale as methods of publication and broadcasting made the transfer of information much more accessible to people of greatly differing economic means.

This was enhanced by the development of photography which now illustrated the new flurry of weekly and monthly journals that began to appear at a more affordable price. Written in a more general style, they were recognition of the interest among the general public in archaeological discoveries that had previously been presumed to belong to only a wealthy and elite minority. This was the beginning of the division between public and academia that is so widely recognised and understood today. Woolley stood at the hub of this change, aware that to a greater extent his audience was the wider public. And he was fully aware that this audience would have completely different presentation requirements than the reports he published in the very few existing academic outlets.

The ability to engage this new audience and impart information in an entertaining and accessible manner set Woolley apart from most of his contemporaries. The very success of this approach however, makes Woolley open to criticism from academics today. The public reports were so popular and widely broadcast, that largely, it is they which are remembered and criticised, rather than his more formal, academic reports. To understand Woolley’s handling of the Ur excavation and the reasons he interpreted and presented it as he did, it is necessary to look at the wider picture of Woolley’s work.
at Ur, and place it in its contemporary setting. We need to understand all the varied aspects of the Ur excavation; the circumstances in which it took place, the problems it faced and solutions that were found.

Were the methods employed by Woolley and his colleagues to reach the public unique and did this generate the beginning of a new, more public archaeology? Most archaeologists wrote reports and articles about their work for newspapers and journals, normal practice at the time. Some realised the financial benefit of writing 'popular' books aimed at a wider readership. Many went on lecture tours to inform and educate the public but also to gain financial benefit. The success of these different methods depended on the ability of the archaeologist to engage the interest of the public. Woolley, with the assistance of Ogden, was adept at targeting different audiences, through the use of national, regional and local newspapers, various societies and their journals as well as broadcasting regularly on the radio. Visitors were encouraged to the site, and those who were unable to visit were rewarded with mementoes.

The public began to be seen as a vital ingredient to the success of archaeological projects. Mortimer Wheeler excavated at Maiden Castle during the years immediately preceding the Second World War and, like Woolley, was adept at public relations. Wheeler held regular press briefings on progress of the excavation – they were very small, low key affairs arranged for the local press, ILN or The Times, but were a foretaste of the role played by the media which was to increase after World War Two. Wheeler was of a similar mind to Woolley, believing in spreading the concept of "a dig being public property, something potentially interesting to non-archaeologists" (Hudson, 1981: 112-3). Wheeler took this attitude into the television age after the war and established himself firmly in the public arena (Daniel, 1954: 202, 1981: 195-197). One can only imagine how Woolley, such a consummate publicist, would have made use of that means of mass communication.

The circumstances affecting the Ur excavation were of great importance and exerted immense pressure on the participants. This thesis also studied the political environment in which the Ur excavation was being undertaken. As methods of transport and communication improved in the late 19th and early 20th century, so western archaeologists could work in more remote areas, taking full advantage of the
opportunities presented by the influence of the British Empire and this was described in Chapter 1. Archaeology began to be used to reinforce western preconceptions about the past and consolidate the West’s status in the world. However, as the excavations in these regions increased, so archaeology was also being used to justify the host nations’ views of their own position in the world. Changes to the Near East in the aftermath of the First World War completely altered the face of the region and precipitated the emergence of the nation-states, and the waning of British influence in the area.

Not only did these changes affect the circumstances in which the archaeologists were working, but also led to changing attitudes to antiquities and the right to ownership previously assumed by the excavating countries. The new challenges to the assumed right of western archaeologists to excavate and remove objects for display in their own museums shook to the core the establishments and institutions whose imperial views reflected Britain’s far reaching empire and opinion of its status in the world. Relationships between excavators and host countries deteriorated; the traditional view of the western scholar being the rightful inheritor and translator of the past, while the inhabitants of the region were portrayed as disinterested and disengaged, was confronted and challenged (Meskell, 2003: 149). The era of the archaeologists’ priorities being considered paramount to the considerations of the local population had ended.

The changes in Antiquity legislation in the region meant that discovered items could no longer be brought back for domestic exhibition in the West. These items were now replaced by copies, a process that relied to a large extent on the expertise of Ogden to duplicate them to the required standard (Millerman, 2004a; 2008). The replacement of the artefacts with copies led to a loss of pride in Britain’s own national identity, a change in status that met with astonishment by the British press. The Daily Mail, in 1932, complained about the ignorance of the native Mesopotamians who now had the original articles in their own museums, treasure that in their opinion belonged in the BM (Owen, 1932: 8). Slowly however the press, public and archaeologists began to come to terms with the changing status of the countries involved. These changing views inevitably led to questions about whose heritage was being excavated, and who owned the past (Branigan, 1990: 188).

Britain and America entered the Ur expedition from the traditional position of right of possession in the area, guardians of the heritage that was seen as more relevant to
them than to the local inhabitants (Bernhardsson, 2005: 33; Diaz-Andreu, 2001: 434-437). Woolley's reports were intended to show that the areas that were named in the Bible and excavated by him, were already familiar to his audience, names and ideas that they had grown up with. However, the very sense of history, continuity and ethnic identity that was described by Woolley to forge the link with Western heritage was to have a counter effect. The traceable line of the history of these countries became a powerful resource for the newly emerging nationalist movements in the region.

This thesis' validity therefore is not just to shed new light on Woolley's excavation and promotional campaign as a response to desperate circumstances, but to reach an understanding of the part played by archaeology in the changing world of the 1920’s and 30’s. I was fortunate enough to have access to the private, extensive records kept by Ogden of his dealings with Woolley, the BM and the Ur excavation. This access helped me view Ur from its contemporary perspective, and to uncover the first tentative steps of Woolley, Ogden, the BM and its fledgling Research Laboratory, in identifying and understanding the discoveries, many of which were to challenge previously held traditional views about the history of the region. By reconstructing the early debates and conversations, we can appreciate more fully the multi-disciplinary contributions that reached the conclusions that underlie our current knowledge about the region. This approach to acquiring knowledge set precedents for today's more expansive studies in the discipline; it could be described as a turning point in establishing archaeology’s academic credentials.

Many of the discoveries from Ur, as well as from other excavations of the period, asked questions that had not been considered before and were instrumental in making the BMRL the department it is today. The BMRL was established in 1920 to try and answer some of these questions, but the fact that the BM needed to rely on so many ‘volunteer experts’, like Ogden in his role as an expert metallurgist, to find these answers shows how lacking in ‘academic’ depth archaeology was. There were very few opportunities for studying archaeology as an academic subject in inter-war Britain with even fewer paid jobs available. Expertise was therefore limited within the discipline but the Ur excavation became a model of co-operation between experts in different fields as Woolley tried to piece together the discoveries for his final reports, particularly in the field of ancient metal (Millerman, 2008). Ogden was able to involve his colleagues Steward and Smith in the analysing and interpreting of the methods and techniques used to assist Plenderleith in writing his chapter on the metalwork of Ur (Smith, 1930: 20-23; Steward, 1933: 3, 11). This was a period of much greater collaboration among
people of many different skills, foreshadowing the multi-disciplinary development in archaeology.

Braidwood is usually recognised as introducing multi-disciplinary archaeology with his work in Iraq in 1947 for the Oriental Institute’s Jarmo Project. He brought together archaeologists, biologists, and geologists in what is now described as a groundbreaking study (Bienkowski & Millard, 2000: 159). However, the tentative attempts by Ogden and his colleagues to analyse and understand the findings coming out of Iraq and Egypt in the 1920’s actually foreshadowed many aspects of it (Millerman, 2004a, 2008). The BM did not have the expertise or finances available to import such expertise after the First World War. The expert, voluntary contributions made by Ogden and his associates, as well as other archaeologists such as Garstang, though not always hitting the mark with complete accuracy, helped to move archaeology towards becoming the more scientific study we recognise today.

This thesis argues that the Ur Expedition, rather than representing the end of an era, was actually the beginning of a new era of archaeology. It shows that the excavation crossed the divide between large excavations led by colourful, larger than life figures, to a new period of co-operation between experts to analyse and interpret results, the beginning of multi-disciplinary archaeology. This co-operation was not just a modern aspect of the Ur excavation but was effectively used in the inter-war period, contributing to the professionalisation of archaeology.

The Ur Expedition also represents the change in public perception of archaeology, as it moved from private pursuit into the full glare of public scrutiny and involvement. The co-operation among experts, the interpretations of those experts and the archaeologists and the manner in which all this information was then presented to a growing and better informed public, had a lasting effect on archaeology’s place in the public arena.

The promotion of Ur by Woolley and Ogden achieved such successful results in raising the profile of the excavation that several of their ‘interpretations’ became firmly entrenched in the public psyche and remained there for many decades. When applied to the promotion of the Ur campaign, the astute business instinct of Ogden in accessing the public imagination reaped great dividends. The level of private subscription resulting from this publicity meant that by 1929 the BM could drastically reduce its financial contribution to the excavation as it became largely self-sufficient, an
unprecedented involvement of the public in the funding of an archaeological excavation.

The Ur excavation can be seen as a further turning point in British archaeology, as the public were no longer seen as just interested bystanders and potential funders of campaigns, but as an integral part of future thinking about the subject. If their interest in archaeology was aroused and encouraged, the progress and status of archaeology as a discipline could only be enhanced. These were lessons to be learned, not just by other archaeologists, but by museums and institutions as well. The BM’s distant and aloof method of dealing with the public became a thing of the past as they realised that involving the wider public directly in an accessible way was more successful and lucrative than their previous elitist, distant attitude. Museums today have moved towards popular presentation, to entertain, inform and educate by making the past accessible for the wider public as separate from the archaeological community (Shanks & Tilley, 1987: 91).

If this was a lesson learned in the inter-war period, it is apparently still an issue for debate. The academic world of archaeology today, needing to come to terms with communicating with the public, is learning again of the public benefits of archaeology, that there is a widespread interest and potentially lucrative support among the general public (Little, 2005: 3-4; Allen, 2005: 245-246). Carman described the archaeological audience as our public, clients or readers (Carman, 1998: 95). Woolley understood exactly who his audience were and frequently referred to them as his readers (Winstone, 1990: 272-277).

However as archaeology became more popular, and almost more romanticised in the entertainment medium than it had been between the wars, it was seen as belonging more to the public. There were far reaching consequences of this new dimension in the development of nationalist heritage and public archaeology. This led to the emergence and development of the Heritage Industry, and the balance that needs to be achieved between all the vested interests concerned when considering an archaeological project (Branigan, 1990: 188-189). There is however concern that this move to make archaeology more ‘public’, has paved the way for a new wave of unauthorised excavating and collecting among untrained enthusiasts, “wrecking the past for material gain” (Shanks & Tilley, 1987: 93).
Woolley and Ogden spearheaded a change in the relationship between archaeology and the public that lasts to the present day. Their actions were purely pragmatic during a time of severe financial hardship in inter-war Britain, but had lasting consequences for today's 'public archaeology'. Perhaps it is this aspect of the Ur excavation, its marketing strategy and involvement of the public that should more rightly be seen as Woolley's legacy, rather than his claims to have uncovered the 'City of Abraham' and the site of the 'Biblical Flood'. The ‘Spinning of Ur’ was a well-choreographed, co-ordinated and ultimately highly successful strategy to involve the public in raising the necessary funding for an excavation faced with closure. The final thought should perhaps go to Mallowan who summarised Woolley’s extraordinary achievements:

“There is no doubt that this great leader of all the Ur Expeditions would be highly gratified if he could witness the impact of his work, fifty years on, for the scientific bearing of his finds, artistic, architectural, epigraphic, and the wide repertoire of objects discovered on the site is still being actively developed” (Mallowan, 1977: 1-2).

The topics that I have not had a chance to address within the scope of this thesis, but are important topics I wish to research subsequently, involve a comparison between Woolley and Garstang in the respect of the multi-disciplinary developments in archaeology. There is also their use of biblical reference and their maintaining some beliefs after their excavations had ended, namely Garstang’s book on Jericho and Woolley’s on Abraham, another comparison not within the scope of this thesis but a project for my future research. The relationship between Ogden and Garstang is also an area that warrants future attention as letters indicate that Ogden was helpful to Garstang, but not on the scale or in the organised manner of his assistance to Woolley. Ogden fund-raised for several archaeologists of the period, including Mallowan at Arpachiyah and Langdon at Kish, which is an area I have already begun researching. The Ur digitisation project progresses at the two museums, and I have begun discussions with Penn and the BM.
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* The bibliographical format follows the University of Manchester Harvard Referencing Guide.


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Appendix 1

Woolley and Ur Reports


British Museum and Philadelphia University Museum


(1931) 'Excavations at Ur, 1930–1', *Antiquaries Journal*, 11, pp. 343-381.


## Appendix 2

### Supplementary lists (SL) from the BM Ur Excavation Accounts

(BMCA WY1/4/42-43, CE32/33/60-74)

(private donations)

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<thead>
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<th>Season</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>SL 1925/6</td>
<td>1.2.1926</td>
<td>Subscriptions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo Persian Oil Co.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Passage paid Mallowan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Raphael</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RIBA</td>
<td>£70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sidney Smith</td>
<td>£2.2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mrs Mallowan, Cresswell Place</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gertrude Bell</td>
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<td>SL 1926/7</td>
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<td>James R. Ogden (William Huntingdon Lectures)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>October 1927</td>
<td>James R. Ogden</td>
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<td>April-Nov 1928</td>
<td>Sir A. L. Reckitt</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>British Academy</td>
<td>£350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anon from Germany</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Mond (has promised)</td>
<td>£200</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL 1933</td>
<td>21.9.1933</td>
<td>Sir A. L. Reckitt</td>
<td>£250</td>
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<td>27.6.1933</td>
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<td>27.4.1933</td>
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Appendix 3

Locations of the Ogden Archives

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<th>Archive</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lantern slides –Near Eastern. Approx. 10,000 in 7 large tea chests, uncatalogued.</td>
<td>Ogden family archive, Harrogate (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters – Ogden’s correspondence with the Woolleys spanning the period of the Ur campaign. Howard Carter, Frederic Kenyon etc. letters on paper and lantern slides.</td>
<td>Ogden family archive, Harrogate (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden’s Lecture notes (several books) and photos (2 small albums largely pertaining to his tour of the Near East in 1926).</td>
<td>Ogden family archive, Harrogate (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden’s Newspaper and Journal cuttings – loose and bound together in scrapbooks - on Near Eastern archaeology and the political situation in Iraq.</td>
<td>Ogden family archive, Harrogate (private)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters – Ogden’s correspondence with the BM.</td>
<td>BM Middle East Dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters – Ogden’s correspondence with the BM (Plenderleith and Woolley) concerning the metalwork from Ur and Tutankhamun’s tomb.</td>
<td>BM Research Laboratory archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excavation reports – Woolley's official reports.</td>
<td>BM Central Archives and the Society of Antiquaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports on Ur. The Woolley papers, Standing Committee records.</td>
<td>BM Central archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper cuttings and photographs of Palestinian archaeology.</td>
<td>Palestine Exploration Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letters – Ogden’s dealings with the BM</td>
<td>concerning the Amarna Crock of Gold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters – BM and Philadelphia; correspondence</td>
<td>about the choice of Ur and financial aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press cuttings from American papers</td>
<td>concerning Ur.</td>
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<td>British archaeology – Ogden’s involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artefacts – Egyptian, Near Eastern, Roman etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letters - with Howard Carter, Lord Carnarvon</td>
<td>(1 only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lady Florence Bell etc.</td>
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<td>Artefacts – Ur, Arpachiyah, Egypt</td>
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