



Venue: Consular Section Building

1801 P Street, NW Washington, DC 20036

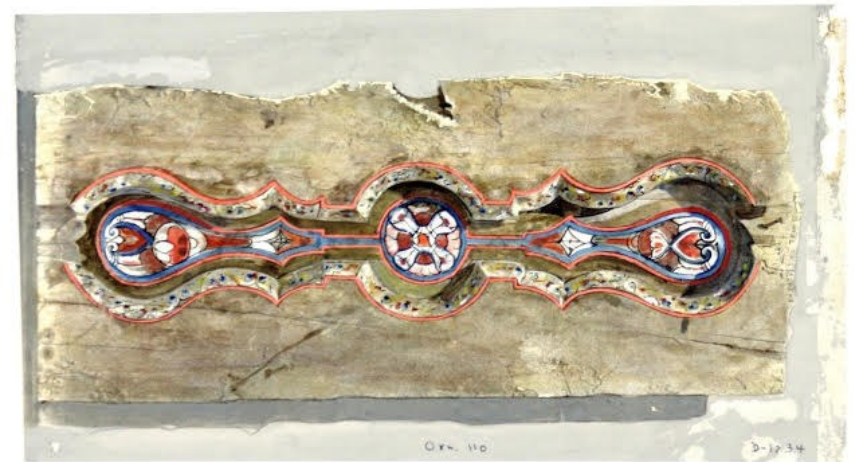
Friday, September 15th, 2017 (6:00pm to 7:30pm)

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Mesopotamian Cultures in Washington D.C.

1882-2017

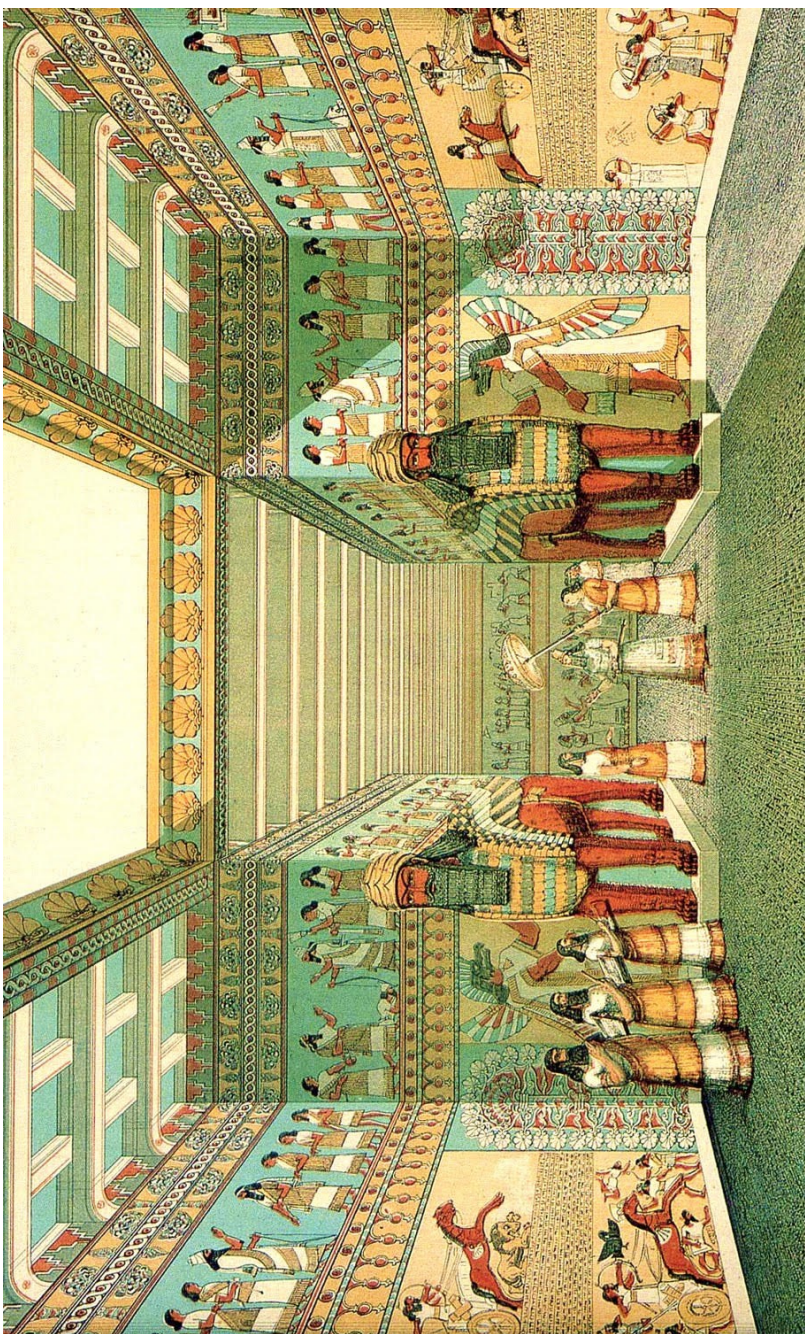
A Rapid Review



Presented by: Dr. Alexander Nagel

Moderated by: Mr. Ahmed Utifa

September 15, 2017



Woolley led a joint expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania to Ur, beginning in 1922. There, he made important discoveries, including the Copper Bull,^[8] in the course of excavating the royal cemetery and the pair of Ram in a Thicket figurines. Agatha Christie's novel, *Murder in Mesopotamia*, was inspired by the discovery of the royal tombs. Christie later married Woolley's young assistant, Max Mallowan.

Ur was the burial site of what may have been many Sumerian royals. Woolley discovered tombs of great material wealth, containing large paintings of ancient Sumerian culture at its zenith, along with gold and silver jewellery, cups and other furnishings. The most extravagant tomb was that of "Queen" Pu-Abi. Amazingly enough, Queen Pu-Abi's tomb was untouched by looters. Inside the tomb, many well-preserved items were found, including a cylindrical seal bearing her name in Sumerian. Her body was found buried along with those of two attendants, who had presumably been poisoned to continue to serve her after death. Woolley was able to reconstruct Pu-Abi's funeral



Leonard Woolley lifting up the remains of the harp preserved with plaster

Description: Sumerian cities and settlements such as Uruk and Ur formed part of the technologically highly advanced monumental landscapes in southern Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BCE and later. Further up north by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, grew new world capitals with palaces and libraries in Babylon, Nimrud and Samarra. Decades before the twenty first century and from far away, individuals in the District of Columbia began increasing and sharing knowledge about these monumental and highly civilized River cultures. This richly illustrated lecture will introduce an ongoing project on mapping and conducting research on the provenance of archives and objects from Mesopotamia in the District of Columbia, discuss ways of storytelling and narratives and lay bare the links between soft power diplomacy, science and scholarship. Learn about the earliest displays of ancient Mesopotamian palaces in the houses by the Potomac River, past local attempts to recreate a colorful ancient Assyrian throne hall, and attempts to study Sumerian cultures and Abbasid poetry in the US capital between 1882 and 2017.



Dr. Alexander Nagel is a Research Associate in the [Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History](#) in Washington DC.

Originally from Germany, he received a PhD from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, with a dissertation on "Colors, Gilding and Painted Motifs in Persepolis: Approaching the Polychromy of Achaemenid Persian Architectural Sculpture, c. 550-330 BCE" in 2010. Nagel conducts fieldwork and research on the monuments and preservation of crafts and cultures in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, collaborates with Embassies and colleagues in the Middle East and South Arabia, and has curated a series of highly successful exhibitions on ancient Near Eastern cultures in Washington, DC. A former Assistant Curator of Ancient Near East in the Smithsonian's [Freer Gallery of Art](#) and Arthur Sackler Gallery, he has been working on the history, provenance and collections of ancient materials in Washington, DC since 2009. Nagel published widely on museums, polychromies, and aspects of heritage preservation.

