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Identity and Adornment in the Third-millennium BC Mesopotamian 'Royal Cemetery' at Ur

Amy Rebecca Gansell

This article presents a study of the deposition of jewellery on bodies in the third-millennium BC Mesopotamian 'Royal Cemetery' at Ur. Four assemblages of adornments are identified and evaluated in relation to burial type, gender, age, privilege, and behavioural role. Aspects of the social and ritual identities of the dead are then interpreted through adornment. While the historic definition of the interred community and the precise nature of their practices are open to speculation, this study begins to clarify dynamics of group and individual identity at this site of human sacrifice.

From an archaeological perspective, burials may be viewed as encapsulations not only of physical and material remains but also of culturally specific practices and codes of communication (Ray 1987, 68). Therefore, as Hodder (1987a, 6–7) has noted, comparison of the occurrence and organization of durable objects in relation to bodies across a cemetery may indicate identities and dynamics among the interred. In this article, I shall argue that bodily adornment, too, can exhibit meaningful patterns and that jewellery sets may be viewed as iconographic statements expressing an individual's social and ritual identity in relation to others within the reference group of a mortuary community.[1] Furthermore, the organization of adorned individuals both in tombs containing multiple burials and across a cemetery may clarify relationships among the population represented.

The evidence addressed here belongs to Sumerian culture, specifically the people of mid-third-millennium BC southern Mesopotamia. This period is marked by the maturity of large-scale urban civilization in the form of independent city-states under dynastic rule. Each city-state was dedicated to specific deities, and each ruler's theocratic power was probably invested by, if not administered through, an elite echelon of priests and priestesses. Although third-millennium BC Sumer included many powerful city-states, the early twentieth-century excavation of a vast 'royal' cemetery at the site of Ur provides its most coherent and complex mortuary record. No other cemetery of this scale or wealth has yet been discovered in all of Mesopotamia. Focusing on the adornment of the dead, this article analyses the Ur material, with an understanding that the interpretations I draw from it may, but do not necessarily, apply to the civilization of greater Sumer.

Roughly contemporary burials have been excavated at other sites in the region including Kish, Fara, Tell Abu Salabikh, and Tell al-Ubaid (Breniquet 1984; Martin 1982; 1988, 1847; Martin *et al.* 1985; Postgate 1980). Some tombs at these sites contained multiple bodies, but none demonstrates evidence for human sacrifice as conclusively as at Ur. At Kish archaeologists may have located an elite necropolis. At the other sites, interments were simpler and sometimes situated below the floors of private houses rather than in dedicated burial zones (Postgate 1980, 65–6). Nonetheless, across Sumer examples of tomb construction, corpse adornment, and grave goods are closely related to the Ur assemblage in both form and archaeological deposition (for select examples see Cohen 2005, 78, 90). Thus, while Ur's 'Royal Cemetery' displays unique extravagance, it is indisputably a part of third-millennium BC, Early Dynastic III, southern Mesopotamian culture.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Leonard Woolley excavated a concentration of thousands of burials near Ur's temple precinct (Woolley 1934). Through his carefully prepared grave plans and descriptions of objects, this now inaccessible site can be 're-excavated'. Woolley called Ur's burial area the 'Royal Cemetery' on account of 16 exceptional tombs containing multiple bodies. In the more elaborate of these tombs, it is clear that organized groups of people were dispatched in subordinate

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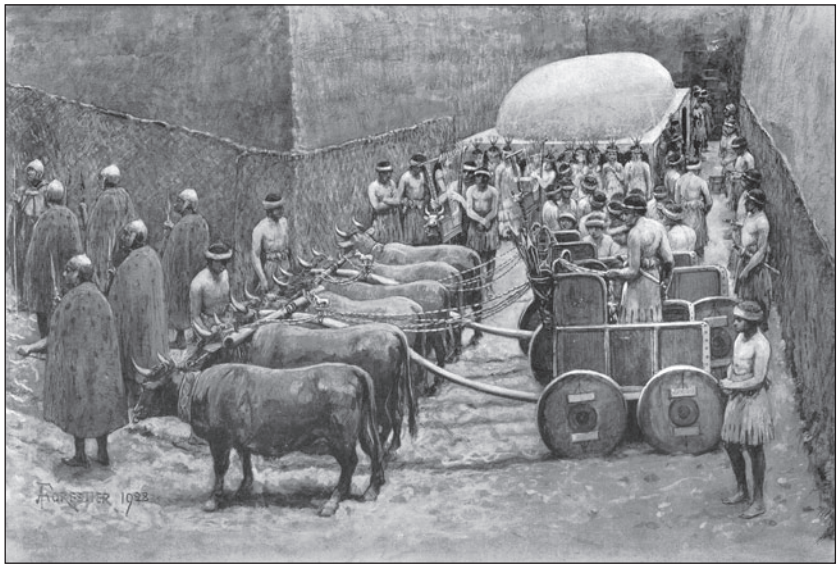


Figure 1. *Reconstruction of PG 789 death-pit before the death of the attendants (*Illustrated London News *June 23, 1928, 1172–4).*

relationships to a primary tomb occupant. Sacrificed individuals, referred to by Woolley as 'attendants', were present both in the personal quarters of the primary interred and in connected areas he called 'death-pits'.

Ur's 'royal tombs' and many private interments preserve *in situ* an astonishing wealth of finely crafted jewellery and objects made of precious stones and metals. The individual occupants of private graves at Ur were adorned to diverse degrees and were buried with a range of personal effects and grave goods such as cylinder seals, weapons, and vessels. In the 'royal tombs,' adorned dead were likewise buried with assorted objects and were often situated amidst choreographed scenes reflecting a variety of activities (Fig. 1).

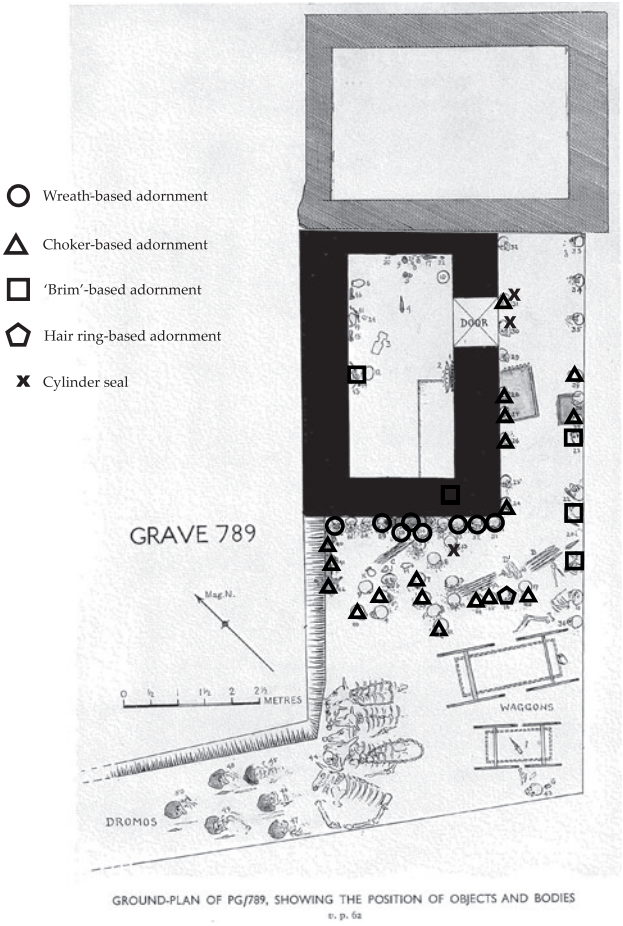


Figure 2. *Plan of PG 789 (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. no. 8944], modified by author).*

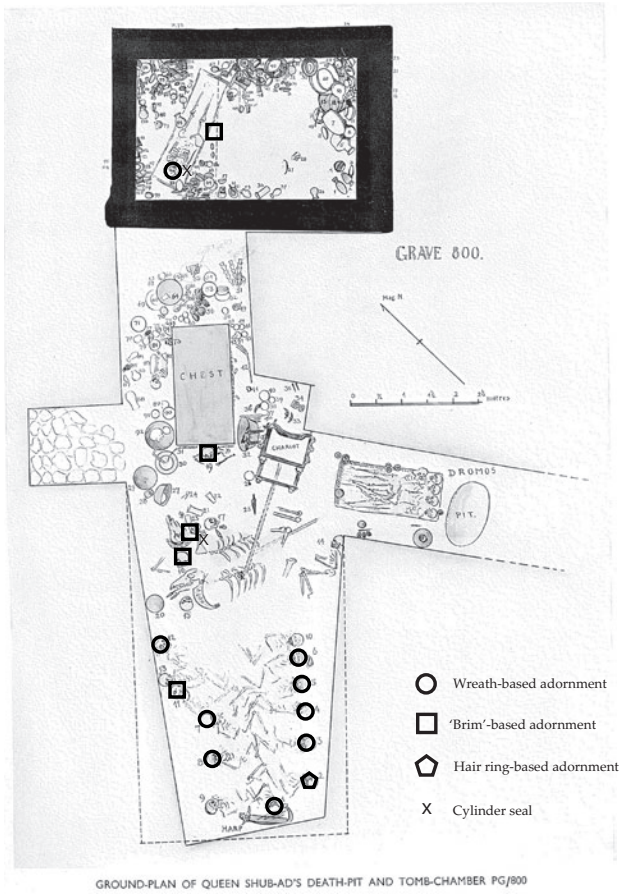


Figure 3. *Plan of PG 800 (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. no. S8-56378], modified by author).*

Although the specific identities (generally considered to be royal, priestly or both) and the nature of the events represented in the 'royal tombs' remains unknown, various hypotheses have been presented (Benzel 2006; Frankfort 1948, 264, 400–401; Marchesi 2004, 153–5; Moorey 1977, 37; Pollock 1991a, 180–82; Reade 2001, 23–4; Sürenhagen 2002, 336). These include Woolley's original proposal of cult suicide (1934, 41–2) and recent, more historically and archaeologically grounded, interpretations of ideological and ritual action (see, for example, Cohen 2005; Winter 1999).

Focusing on bodily adornment, I emphasize relative identities and relationships among the deceased. The deposition of jewellery on bodies, within tombs, and across the cemetery shows that stock articles were worn in standard configurations. In addition to signalling collective affiliation and, perhaps, initiation, recurrent assemblages indicate distinct sub-groupings of individuals. Much of the evidence examined here is derived from three large 'royal tombs' (PGs 789, 800 & 1237). These tombs are relatively intact and contain numerous, variously bedecked dead[2] (Figs. 2, 3 & 4). Looking beyond PGs 789, 800 and 1237, to the degree that their contents and preservation warrant, I incorporate evidence from other 'royal tombs' and many private graves.

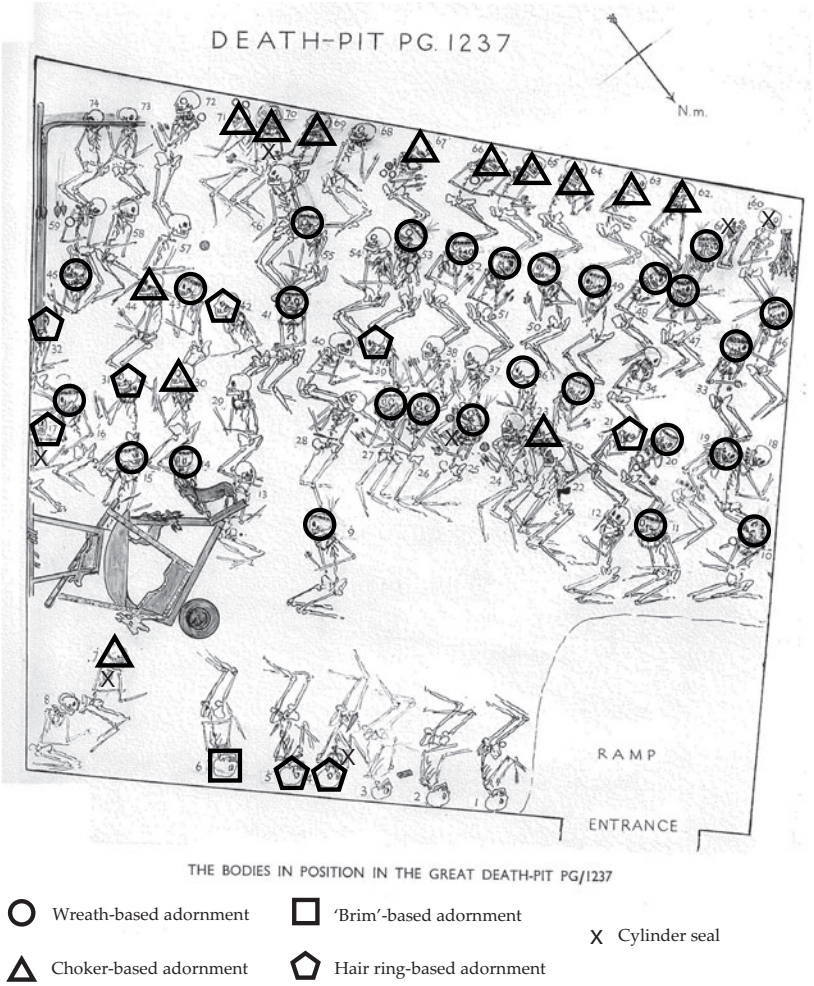


Figure 4. *Plan of PG 1237 (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. no. S4-14192], modified by author).*

Adornment sets

Based on the standard clustering of specific accessories on the bodies of the deceased, I propose four discrete adornment assemblages. These sets represent at least a core cross-section of potentially more numerous and, or, more varied jewellery sets, which would have been meaningful within this ancient community. While I define the essential basis of each set by items that were consistently present, I regard extra articles of adornment as variable components. Each personal assemblage may be examined as a package in which the pieces selected for inclusion, variables such as material or the position on the body of each item, and the resulting visual composition may have carried meaning (Sørensen 2000, 129–34).

A gold vegetal wreath (the 'gala' headdress, in Woolley's terminology) characterizes the first assemblage (Fig. 5). The second set is based on a gold and lapis lazuli choker ('dog collar') worn in conjunction with a garment pin and strings of beads (Fig. 7). Chokers of this type were sometimes components of the wreath-based assemblage but, when worn in the absence of a wreath, I view them as the essential element of this independent set. Next, a headband of large beads, referred to by Woolley as a 'brim', distinguishes the third assemblage (Fig. 8). The fourth set consists of silver 'hair rings', garment pins, and strings of beads worn in the presence of few other articles (Fig. 9).[3]

It should be noted, however, that most of the deceased across the cemetery did not wear any of these adornment packages, which predominantly occurred in the 'royal tombs' and other wealthier graves. On some deceased no jewellery was preserved, while most of

Figure 5. *Wreath-based adornment set including vegetal wreath (UPM 30-12-725), hair ribbon (UPM 30-12-757), earrings (UPM 30-12-715), string of beads (UPM 30-12-704), garment pins (UPM 30-12-565), floral comb (UPM 30-12-437), choker (UPM 30-12-722), beaded cuff (UPM 30-12-748), and hair rings (UPM 30-12-75) (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. nos. 152123, 152119, 152132, 152153, 152159, 152130, 152139, 152164, 152135]).*

the dead wore only one or two basic items from among the following: a string of beads, a single earring or pair, a single hair ring or pair, a ring, a bracelet, a garment pin. Furthermore, the jewellery of the more modestly bedecked majority was generally made of copper, shell, and local stone, rather than the more precious gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and carnelian dominant in the adornment sets presented and analysed here.

The gold wreath set (Fig. 5, Table 1)

The most basic parts of the vegetal wreath-based adornment set include gold hair ribbon and a gold 'beech' leaf head wreath (for a description of how these wreaths may have been worn, see Reade 2003, 124). Large gold lunate earrings (earring Type 1), long necklaces of precious stone and metal beads, and garment pins of silver or copper with lapis heads were usually worn as well. Supplementary pieces of jewellery often included silver combs with inlaid rosette-tipped vertical tines ('Spanish combs'), gold and lapis chokers, beaded lapis and carnelian wrist cuffs, silver finger rings, and silver hair rings. Similar adornment sets lacking gold vegetal wreaths or incorporating silver instead of gold wreaths are not included in this analysis but surely would have been closely related to this assemblage.

Comparing all of the gold vegetal wreath assemblages, the set worn with an extravagant beaded 'cape' by Puabi, the principal occupant of PG 800, was by far the most elaborate (Fig. 6; Woolley 1934, 84–9).[4] The primary occupant of PG 1054 also was bedecked in a relatively extravagant version of this jewellery set, as were individuals privately laid to rest in PGs 1068, 1234, and 1315. Paralleling aspects of Puabi's adornment, the deceased in PGs 1054 and 1068 each wore gold hair rings, a gold and lapis garment pin, and a head wreath of gold rings. A third wreath, of gold piriform pendants, was discovered on the occupant of PG 1068, who, like Puabi, may have worn a 'cape' of beads. The jewellery assemblages of those interred in PGs 1234 and 1315 included additional items such as beaded cuffs, silver combs, and chokers. Gold hair rings and five gold finger rings further complemented the ornament of PG 1315's occupant.

Attendants wearing vegetal wreath-based jewellery sets included over 40 people from PGs 789, 800, and 1237 (Figs. 2, 3 & 4). Notable differences are evident among similarly adorned groups of attendants from these various tombs. In PG 800, the standard assort-

Table 1. *Vegetal wreath headdress-based adornment sets. The information is derived from Woolley (1934). Imperfect archaeological retrieval and the vulnerability of ancient artefacts to decomposition may have influenced the data. Bodies are listed in the far right column, beginning with the principal occupants of 'royal tombs' (noted as 'primary'), followed by those interred privately, and concluding with the attendants. Attendants are identified by skeleton number within the relevant tomb (PG 800-1, for example, refers to Body 1 of PG 800). In the top row, select articles of adornment and personal possessions are designated. In some cases, the material of the item is indicated here, in others it is noted within the table. Items present in association with a body are marked either with an 'X' (referring to a single piece, standard pairing, or unknown total) or a numeral to indicate quantity. Quantity, as well as material, is recorded in anomalous cases and when significant variation has been observed within an adornment group. Some variable details and unique occurrences of accessories are suppressed in the table for purposes of clarity. Abbreviations: Au = gold; Ag = silver; Cu = copper or bronze; L = lapis lazuli; Att. = attendant.*

	Gold hair ribbon	Gold 'beech' leaf wreath	Gold willow leaf wreath	Gold ring wreath	Other wreath	Silver comb	Gold flowers on head	Gold and lapis choker	Gold lunate earrings	Hair rings	Strings of beads	Garment pin	Beaded cuff	Finger ring	Cylinder seal	Diadem
PG 800 Primary	X	X	X	X	no	X(Au)	no	(neck of cape)	X	4(Au)	'cape'	4(Au)	X	10(Au)	3(L)	no
PG 1054 Primary	X	X	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	2(Au)	2	1(Au)	no	2(Au)	X(Au)	X(Au)
PG 1068	no	X	no	X	X	no	no	no	no	2(Au)	1, plus possibly a 'cape'	2(Au)	no	1(Au)	X(L)	no
PG 1234	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	2(Ag)	1	no	X	no	no	no
PG 1315	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	2(Au)	4	2(Ag)	2	5(Au)	X(L)	no
PG 789-51	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	no	1	2(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-52	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	2(Ag)	2	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-53	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	4(Ag)	X	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-56	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	3(Ag)	no	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-57	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	X(Ag)	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-58	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	2(Ag)	7	2(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-59	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	1(Ag)	1	2(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 789-62	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	X(Ag)	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 800-1	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	X(Ag)	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	maybe (Ag)
PG 800-3	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	no	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 800-4	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	no	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 800-5	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	no	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 800-6	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 800-7	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	1(Ag)	1	1(Ag)	no	1(Ag)	no	no
PG 800-8	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	1(Ag)	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 800-12	X	X	no	no	X	no	no	no	X	X(Ag)	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-9	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	no	2	2(Ag), 1(Cu)	2	3(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-10	X	X	no	no	no	X	3	X	X	no	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	no	2(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-11	X	X	no	no	no	X	3	X	X	4(Ag)	1	no	no	2(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-14	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	X	X	no	2	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-15	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	X	X	no	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-16	X	X	no	no	no	X	1	X	X	no	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	X	X(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-19	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	2	1(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-20	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	X	X	no	2	1(Ag)	X	1(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-25	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	3	1(Ag)	2	no	X(L)	no
PG 1237-26	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-27	X	X	no	no	no	X	2	X	X	no	1	2(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-33	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	no	2(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-35	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	X	X	X(Ag)	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-36	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	2	2(Ag)	X	2(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-41	X	X	no	no	no	X	2	X	X	no	1	2(Ag)	X	2(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-43	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-45	X	X	no	X(Ag)	no	X	3	X	X	1(Ag)	1	2(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-46	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	1(Ag)	1	2(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-47	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	X	no	no	no

Table 1. *(cont.)*

	Gold hair ribbon	Gold 'beech' leaf wreath	Gold willow leaf wreath	Gold ring wreath	Other wreath	Silver comb	Gold flowers on head	Gold and lapis choker	Gold lunate earrings	Hair rings	Strings of beads	Garment pin	Beaded cuff	Finger ring	Cylinder seal	Diadem
PG 1237-48	X	X	no	no	no	no	3	X	X	no	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-49	X	X	no	no	no	no	X	X	X	no	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-50	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	no	no	2	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-51	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	X	X	X(Ag)	2	1(Ag)	X	2(Ag)	no	no
PG 1237-52	X	X	no	no	no	X	3	X	X	no	1	2(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-53	X	X	no	no	no	X	no	X	X	no	1	1(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-55	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	X	X	no	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-61	X	X	X	X	no	X	3	X	X	2(Au)	5	1(Au), 1(Ag)	X	6(Au)	X(L)	no
PG 755 (deposit)	X(Ag)	X	no	X(Ag)	no	no	no	X	no	4(Au), 12(Ag)	no	1(Au), 1(Cu)	no	1(Au), X(Ag)	no	no
PG 1312 (deposit)	X(Ag)	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	2(Au)	1	1(Ag)	no	no	X(L)	no

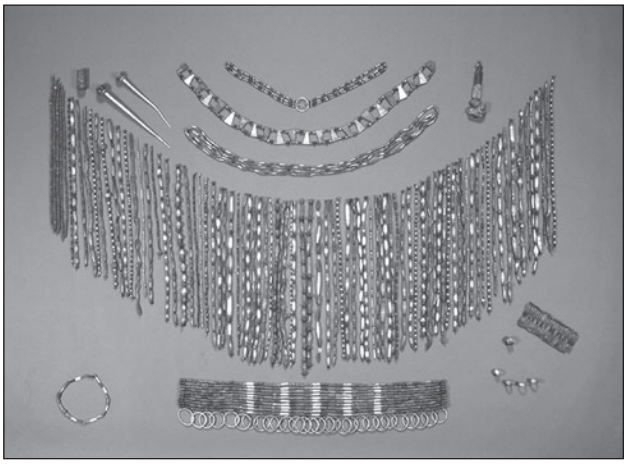


Figure 6. *Puabi's adornment (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. nos. 152100, 152106]).*

ment of wreath-based jewellery occurred, while almost all of the attendants in PG 789 wore a 'Spanish comb' in addition to a wreath. In PG 1237, the majority of wreath-wearing attendants wore the comb; all but one also wore a choker; and many had a beaded wrist cuff. In this manner, the PG 1237 attendants resembled the privately interred of PGs 1234 and 1315.

The choker-based set (Fig. 7, Table 2)
With the exception of its presence on Body 16 of PG 789, the choker-based assemblage was discovered exclusively in PG 1237, a very large, incompletely excavated death-pit containing only attendants (Figs. 2 & 4). In this set, chokers of gold and lapis triangular beads were worn with garment pins of silver with lapis heads and strings of beads (see Reade 2003, 123 for a detailed description of a choker). Gold lunate earrings were present in all but two cases, and beaded cuffs were worn the majority of the time. Among the PG 1237 attendants, adornment was notably consistent, but Body 7 was more lavishly provisioned with gold hair rings, a gold garment pin, and gold finger rings.

The 'brim'-based set (Fig. 8, Table 3)
A 'brim' is a headband of long stone and metal beads (usually gold, silver, lapis, and, or, carnelian) fastened around the forehead by a thin chain or, maybe in some cases, with organic cords now disintegrated. Differences are evident in the form, material and configuration of the beads comprising 'brims', but preliminary typological consideration does not reveal any consistent patterns of variation. 'Brims' were not invariably coupled with any other types of jewellery but, present most often in conjunction with them were daggers positioned at the hip. Independently associated with these

Table 2. *Choker-based adornment sets. For explanation of the organization and conventions, see caption to Table 1.*

	Gold and lapis choker	Gold earrings	Strings of beads	Garment pin	Beaded cuff	Silver hair rings	Finger ring	Cylinder seal
PG 789-16	X	no	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	no	3	no	no
PG 1237-7	X	X	1	1(Au)	no	2(Au)	3(Au)	X(L)
PG 1237-18	X	no	1	1(L)	no	2	no	no
PG 1237-23	X	X	2	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-30	X	X	3	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-44	X	no	1	2(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-62	X	X	2	1(Ag)	X	no	no	no
PG 1237-63	X	X	1	1(Ag)	2	no	no	no
PG 1237-64	X	X	2	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	2	X	2(Ag)	no
PG 1237-65	X	X	1	no	2	no	no	no
PG 1237-66	X	X	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-67	X	X	1	1(Ag)	2	no	no	no
PG 1237-69	X	X	3	1(Ag)	X	X	no	X(L)
PG 1237-70	X	X	1	1(Cu)	X	X	no	no
PG 1237-71	X	X	1	1(Ag)	X	no	no	no

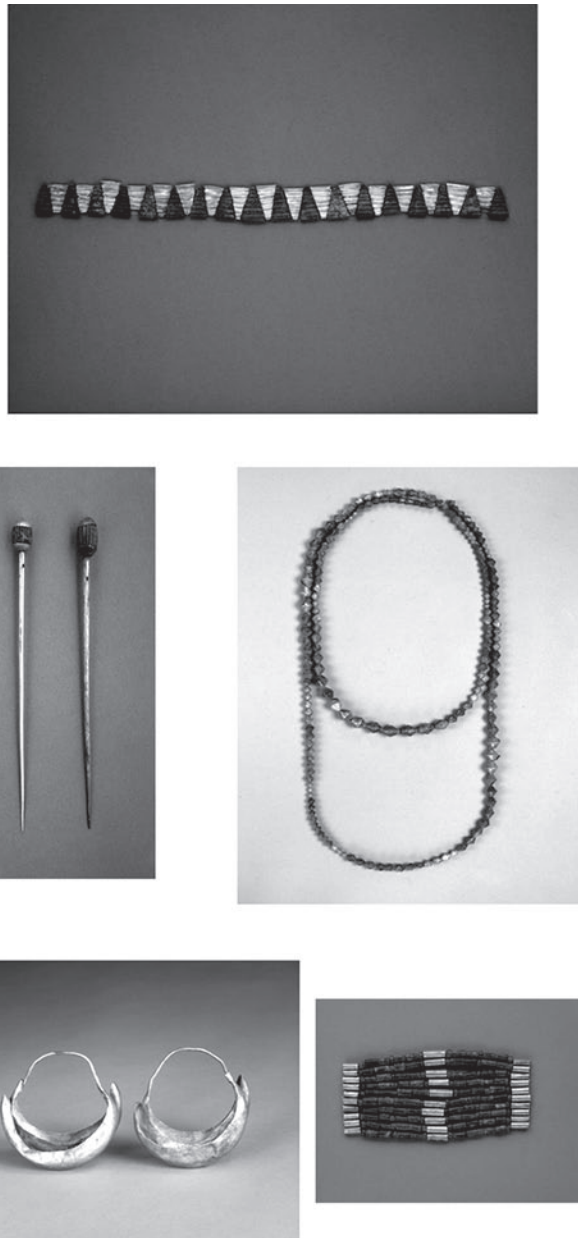
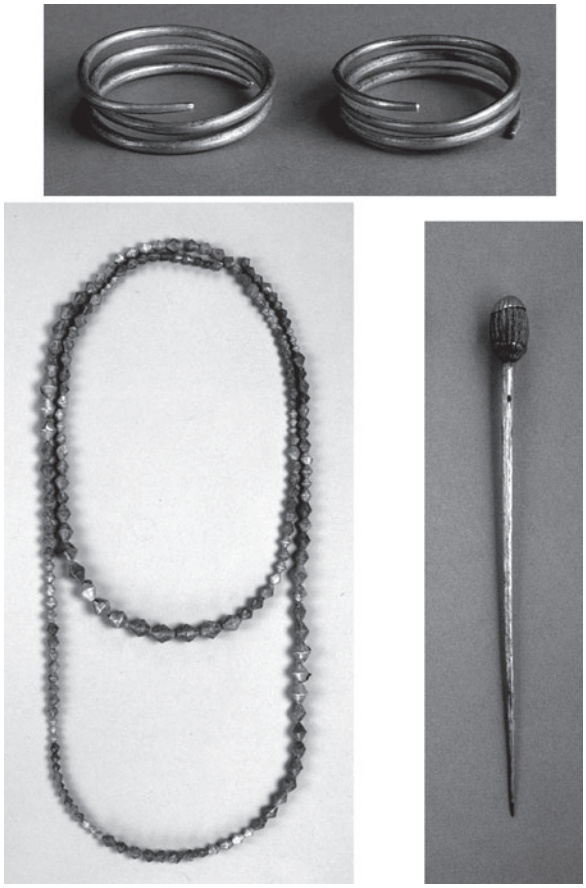


Figure 7. *Choker-based adornment set including choker (UPM 30-12-722), garment pins (UPM 30-12-565), string of beads (UPM 30-12-704), earrings (UPM 30-12-715), and beaded cuff (UPM 30-12-748) (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. nos. 152139, 152159, 152153, 152132, 152164]).*

Figure 8. *(on left) 'Brim'-based adornment set including 'brim' (UPM B17568), string of beads (UPM 30-12-704), hair rings (UPM 30-12-75), earring (UPM 30-12-715), garment pin (UPM 30-12-565) and dagger blade (UPM 30-12-318) (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. nos. 152118, 152226, 152153, 152132, 152135, 152159]).*

Table 3. *'Brim'-based adornment sets. For explanation of the organization and conventions, see caption to Table 1.*

	'Brim'	Dagger	Axe	Whetstone	Spear	Razor	Reticule	Strings of beads	Garment pin	Silver hair ring	Earring	Cylinder seal	Finger ring	Bracelet	Frontlet	Other diadem
PG 1151 Primary	X	X(Cu)	X(Cu)	no	no	X(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1618 Primary	4	X(Au)	no	X	no	no	no	X	no	no	X(Au)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1648 Primary	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1133	4 as deposit	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	3(Au)	no	no	no	no	X
PG 1312	X	X(Cu)	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	X(Au)	no	no	no	no	X(Au)	no
PG 1407	X	X(Cu)	X(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no	X(Cu)	2	no	2(L, red stone)	X(Ag)	X	no	no
PG 1420	X	no	X(Cu)	no	no	no	X	no	X(Cu)	X	no	X(L)	no	no	no	no
PG 777-SW Att.	X	no	X(Cu)	no	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	X(Au)	no
PG 789-Chamber Att.	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	X(Au)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-19	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-21	X	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-23	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	X(Ag)	2	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 800-Chamber Att.	X	2	no	X	no	no	no	no	X(Ag)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 800-11	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X	X(Cu)	X	no	no	no	X	X(Ag)	no
PG 800-15	X	X	no	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	X(Ag)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 800-16	X	X	no	X	no	X	no	no	no	no	X(Ag)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 800-18	X	no	no	no	X(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no	no	X(shell)	no	no	no	no
PG 800-19	X	X	no	2	no	no	no	no	no	no	X(Au)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1054-Att. A	X	2(Cu)	X(Cu)	X	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-6	X	no	X(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no



headbands approximately 20 to 30 per cent of the time were strings of beads, odd numbers of gold or silver earrings (usually of the small lunate type), one or two silver hair rings, and single silver or copper garment pins with lapis heads. Other items such as bracelets and finger rings were worn less frequently.

In tandem with 'brims', a few individuals wore 'frontlets', thin ovoid plaques of gold or silver positioned on the forehead by metal ribbons extending from a central plate. Frontlets seem to have replaced 'brims' as a fashion in the later graves, but they did occur both independently (PGs 543, 697 & 1266) and concurrently in mid-third-millennium BC burials. People wearing 'brims' were interred in all manners: as principal occupants of 'royal tombs' (PGs 1618 & 1648), in private graves (PGs 777, 1133, 1151, 1312, 1407 & 1420),[5] and as attendants (PGs 789, 800, 1054 & 1237) (see Figs. 2, 3 & 4.) Although there is significant disparity in the degree of ornamentation among these brim-wearing individuals, this variation appears to be unrelated to their burial contexts.

Figure 9. *Hair ring-based adornment set including hair rings (UPM 30-12-75), string of beads (UPM 30-12-704), and garment pin (UPM 30-12-565) (University of Pennsylvania Museum [Neg. nos. 152135, 152153, 152159]).*

The hair ring-based set (Fig. 9, Table 4)
Lacking a distinct 'centrepiece' such as a headband or vegetal wreath, a fourth assemblage may be considered. It consists of silver hair rings, strings of beads, and a silver or copper garment pin with a lapis head. Additional jewellery was worn infrequently and, in general, these three articles seem to comprise an intentionally configured set in which both the presence and absence of elements would have been meaningful. Across the tombs, hair ring assemblages were comparable, with the exception of that worn by Body 31 of PG 789, which incorporated unique articles and greater quantities of the standard items (Woolley 1934, 66). I do not include assemblages incorporating gold, rather than silver, hair rings or 'incomplete' versions of the basic set but relationships to this assemblage are anticipated.

Individuals adorned in hair ring-based sets have been discovered exclusively as attendants (PGs 789, 800 & 1237; see Figs. 2, 3 & 4). In PG 800 only one person (Body 2) wore this configuration of adornment. In PG 1237 deceased bedecked in hair ring sets were distinctly outnumbered by those wearing vegetal wreaths, but in PG 789 the majority of individuals arrayed in defined jewellery sets wore variations of this assemblage.

Typology and iconography
Variables including form, scale, material and the position in which an article was worn on the body may be evaluated with regard to jewellery sets, gender, find spot, and chronology, among other factors. Iconographic interpretations of adornment could further illuminate the circumstances and events preserved in the Ur cemetery (Benzel 2006). Although my investigation entails neither thorough typological nor thorough iconographic study of the articles included in the four jewellery sets, a few initial observations have been stated above. I also have found, for example, that in PG 1237 curved garment pins (Type 7), which occur in all jewellery sets, are at least as popular as straight pins (Type 1). Type 7 pins are rare in PGs 789 and 800, where Type 1 pins predominate; this preference may be a chronological indicator. Preliminary observations such as this underscore the benefits of further research.

Interpretations

I consider the selection and configuration of jewellery on bodies across the cemetery to represent visual communication within an encoded repertoire expressing information about the identities of the deceased. While grave material may have marked identities and played a specific role within a ritual process at Ur, it may also shed light on more general aspects of social or cultural organization (Bell 1990; Rawson 1987, 41; 1990, 98). Not only may interpretation of this ancient material code reveal the visually expressed affiliation of individuals within the cemetery but, reviewed in relation to other factors, it may also disclose independent and group roles or responsibilities, individual distinctions, and both inter-personal and inter-group dynamics. In comparison with patterns of personal ornamentation, I explore variables of gender, age, and privilege, as well as circumstances of personal association with particular objects and other individuals. Some social categories and relationships correspond to adornment, but I have found others to overlap independently or to be entirely unrelated.

Table 4. *Hair ring-based adornment sets. For explanation of the organization and conventions, see caption to Table 1.*

	Silver hair rings	Strings of beads	Garment pin	Dagger	Axe	Razor	Bracelet	Diadem
PG 789-2	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-5	X	1	2(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-7	X	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-9	3	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	X(Ag)	no
PG 789-10	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	X(Ag)	no
PG 789-12	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-13	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-14	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-15	X	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-17	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-24	X	3	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-26	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-27	X	1	1(Ag), 1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-28	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-31	X	3	2(Ag)	no	no	no	no	X(Ag)
PG 789-37	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-39	X	1	1(Ag)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-40	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-41	X	1	2(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 789-42	X	1	2(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 800-2	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-4	X	1	2(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-5	X	1	1(Cu)	X(Cu)	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-17	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-21	X	1	1(Cu)	no	X(Cu)	no	no	no
PG 1237-31	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-32	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-39	X	1	1(Cu)	no	no	no	no	no
PG 1237-42	X	2	1(Cu)	no	no	X(Cu)	no	no

Gender
At least some jewellery assemblages were gender-specific. Following Pollock's analysis and the physical

examination of remains carried out during Woolley's excavations, people wearing vegetal wreaths are gendered as female, and those wearing 'brims' are identified as male (Keith 1934; Pollock 1991a,b). The choker-based assemblage is also securely correlated with females: all of its elements were incorporated into variations of the unequivocally feminine vegetal wreath set. Moreover, the choker itself evidently belonged to women in the visual, archaeological and textual records (Andrae 1922, pl. 28c; Pittman 1998b, 109; Steinkeller 1980).

The hair ring-based assemblage is less definitive in terms of gender identity. Its main components (hair rings, garment pins and beads) occur with each of the other adornment sets, but in some cases associated portable objects suggest masculinity (Pollock 1991a, 180; 1991b, 372–6). Present with many male 'brim'-wearers, daggers, 'razors', and an axe were found with a small but significant range of individuals wearing hair ring-based jewellery sets. But assigning gender on the basis of such objects is hazardous, especially since personal assemblages containing both 'male' and 'female' items were found at Ur (such as the primary occupant of PG 1054, described in Pollock 1991b, 378–9; Woolley 1934, 107) and at Kish (see, for example, Graves 4, 8, 19, and 23: Moorey 1970, 105–9).[6]

Cylinder seal material and imagery may reflect gender more directly. Various studies have established that lapis lazuli seals bearing banquet imagery were characteristically female possessions while those of red and white materials carved with animal, hunting and contest motifs typically belonged to males (Pittman 1998a, 76–7; Pollock 1991b, 380; Rathje 1977, 25–32). According to established paradigms, the glyptic material associated with members of the vegetal wreath, 'brim', and choker adornment groups generally correlates with the genders discussed above. Yet a review of the seals belonging to individuals wearing hair ring-based jewellery assemblages is inconclusive: there were seals with masculine, feminine and mixed gender features, perhaps, if anything, indicating gender variation within this group.

Age

Almost all of the people interred in the 'Royal Cemetery' were adults (Pollock 1991a, 175). It remains to be determined whether membership in the living community represented in this cemetery was age-specific, or if, within the community, primarily adults were eligible for burial.

Of the many bodies considered in this analysis, Woolley described four as sub-adult according to skeletal size and dental development. Buried both privately and as attendants, these children were associated with diverse adornment assemblages. Nick-named 'The Little Princess' by Woolley, the child buried privately in PG 1068 was equipped with an elaborate version of a vegetal wreath-based set. Another child, an attendant in PG 1237 (Body 9), was bedecked in all of the basic tomb-specific components of the wreath-based assemblage except for a choker, which almost all others wearing gold vegetal wreaths in PG 1237 had (Fig. 4). In the context of this tomb, therefore, the absent choker may have marked unrealized maturity or achievement. It may even have indicated that the child was male, rather than female. A third child (Body 10) was found in the death-pit of PG 800 (Fig. 3). Situated among adults adorned in vegetal wreaths, this attendant wore only a garment pin and beaded necklace (Woolley 1934, 41). Because the children buried in PGs 1068 and 1237 were arrayed in full vegetal wreath-based assemblages, youth itself evidently did not prohibit one from this manner of ornamentation. Other factors, then, operating simultaneously with or independent of age, may have contributed to the spare adornment of PG 800's Body 10. Finally, privately interred in PG 1133 was a toddler, distinctively dressed in a miniature beaded headband. Beside the child's head was a pile of four adult-size 'brims', maybe indicating that the deceased tot would eventually have had access to this (potentially adult) form of adornment.[7] No dagger accompanied the 'brims', suggesting that specific circumstances may underlie the association between these headbands and weapons.

Privilege

Defined as exclusive benefits or conditions of advantage, 'privilege' is reflected through personal adornment and other archaeological factors at Ur. The disparity in privileges among the dead may indicate differences of power within and among groups of people similarly adorned. In addition to various types of burial (primary, secondary or attendant, and private), I review privileges displayed through material assets and personal distinction. Evaluating degrees of individual status within the ranges of these domains of advantage, it is evident that some deceased possessed significant privilege in multiple areas, while others displayed specialized or less prominent notability.

Variations in burial treatment at Ur surely designated differences in personal identity. On account of their private chambers and personal presentation in a coffin or on a bier, principal occupants of 'royal tombs' are deemed the most privileged. The difference of advantage between attendants and people laid to rest privately is less clear. Either of these interment

opportunities may (or may not) have been extended to all members of the community not afforded primary burial status, and certain qualifications may have determined a person's eligibility. The timing of one's death, too, would have affected availability for burial as an attendant. Attendants may have had to be alive in order to be killed upon the passing of a person receiving principal treatment in a 'royal tomb', while in other cases attendants might represent the collected bodies of those dying naturally around the time of a primary interment.[8] Therefore, all or some of the individuals buried privately may have been qualified to serve as attendants, but were buried singly because their lifespan did not correspond to the death of a person requiring them as attendants. What is clear is that the opportunity to serve as an attendant was considerably rarer than the conditions for private burial; almost all of the burials in the cemetery are single interments.

People attired in vegetal wreaths and 'brims' were buried in all manners but excavations have only uncovered attendants wearing choker- and silver hair ring-based jewellery assemblages. Unlike the seemingly restricted opportunities for individuals wearing choker and hair ring sets, the greater diversity of consequences for those adorned in vegetal wreaths and 'brims' may refer to broader ranges in personal status. This could be a result of higher potentials for hierarchical mobility among those wearing wreaths and 'brims'.

I define material privilege at the Ur cemetery as wealth indicated through supplementary pieces of jewellery, higher quantities of standard adornment items, and, or, articles made of more precious resources.[9] The use of different types and quantities of luxury materials may reflect degrees of prestige and, or, power (Pollock 1983). Lapis lazuli and carnelian, from Afghanistan and the Indus Valley respectively, undoubtedly embodied wealth (Casanova 1999; Inizan 1999). Weight in metal, particularly silver, served as the standard of value in third-millennium BC Mesopotamia; more gold, silver, and copper, then, would have represented greater privilege. In addition to wearing precious jewellery, a deposit of metal as material wealth may be demonstrated in PG 789. Here an attendant (Body 10) adorned in a hair ring-based assemblage was associated with 'short lengths of gold hair ribbon folded up into little lumps; the total weight of these was one shekel', the standard weight of measurement for metals (Woolley 1934, 66).

Shopping in Middle Eastern souks today, one buys jewellery and metalwork at prices determined by weight. Considering ancient Sumer's economic system, I explored potential differences in value among the Ur jewellery sets by weighing representative items and assemblages in the collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, which includes Puabi's adornment.[10] Puabi had far more jewellery in general than the other deceased (Fig. 6). In most cases, not only were her individual pieces of metal jewellery significantly larger and heavier but often her items were made of gold instead of silver. Clearly, Puabi's jewellery demonstrated the utmost material privilege.

My investigation also showed that adornments worn by attendants from different tombs had roughly equivalent weights, indicating uniform economic value of standard elements. Instead of having more massive pieces of jewellery, material wealth among attendants was more often expressed through greater quantities of standard items, the use of costlier than standard materials, and the inclusion of non-standard, or even unique, items. It should be kept in mind, however, that although jewellery was fundamentally valued with regard to the weight of its materials, quality craftsmanship certainly contributed to aesthetic appreciation and may also have augmented worth (Boardman 1996, 9–10; Winter 1995, 2570–72; 2003). Thus, small items, such as finger rings, may have played a greater role in material privilege than their negligible weights imply.

As described above, material privilege is quintessentially exemplified in the lavish ornament of Puabi, while the principal occupant of PG 1054 also displayed very great wealth. Among those wearing gold vegetal wreaths, two of the three privately interred individuals (PGs 1068 & 1315) adorned in this manner were exceptionally provisioned. Only one attendant wearing a wreath (Body 61 from PG 1237), one person wearing choker-based jewellery (Body 7 of PG 1237), and one person adorned in a hair ring assemblage (Body 31 of PG 789) displayed significant privilege (Figs. 2 & 3). Among those wearing 'brims', three were associated with four headbands each while all others possessed only one. The burial circumstances of these three brim-wearers varied: a principal occupant of a 'royal tomb' (PG 1618), a privately interred person (PG 1133), and an attendant inside Puabi's private chamber (PG 800; Fig. 3).

Overall, material privilege was most significant among the primary occupants of 'royal tombs' and more prevalent among people buried privately than among attendants. However, the diverse circumstances of the luxuriously adorned deceased confirm that degrees of wealth were accessible to all who were buried: age, gender and the type of adornment set worn do not seem to have restricted one's potential for material privilege. Yet material privilege does seem to have underlain other opportunities or at least to have been

closely related to them. People demonstrating significant wealth were more likely to be personally identified and affiliated with uncommon objects; as attendants, they often held unique responsibilities.

A number of individuals maintained personal identity in death through the possession of items bearing graphic markers of their individuality and, or, nominal inscriptions. The main vehicle for this was seals, in the form of perforated stone or shell cylinders carved with distinct imagery and occasionally inscribed with the owner's name and title (Pittman 1998a, 75–84). Seals were used in life to transfer the 'signature', and thereby the authority, of their owners to clay surfaces in witness of their presence in a particular matter or event.[11] In a mortuary context, seals could serve as memorials, preserving the personal identity of the dead. The distribution of seals in the 'Royal Cemetery' may denote dynamics of authority among the deceased as well as reveal who held the 'privilege' of enduring personal identification.

Aspects of identity represented through seals must have differed from those which determined the type of interment. Seals were present in all types of burials, and their formal properties are not linked to particular contexts. Most primary occupants of 'royal tombs' probably had seals but ancient looting removed much of the evidence. Puabi's intact tomb chamber (PG 800), for example, preserved an exceptional quantity of three seals. The principal occupant of PG 1054 possessed a rare gold seal and, although the archaeological context is less secure, seals also appear to have been buried with the primary deceased of PGs 1050 and 1236 (Woolley 1934, 94, 113).

Privately interred individuals wearing vegetal wreaths (PGs 1068 & 1315) and 'brims' (PGs 1312, 1407 & 1420) had seals too. The discovery of a seal in PG 1068 is particularly notable, as a child ('The Little Princess') was buried here. 'The Little Princess's' lapis seal, close to her body, was of suitable scale (h. 2.4 cm) to have been worn with her child-size garment pins and jewellery (Collon 2001, 19; Woolley 1934, 163, 571). Conceivably, this seal belonged to and referred to the child; smaller than average size seals were also found in child burials at Tell Abu Salabikh and Kish (Postgate 1980, 75). Because children could hold the privilege of personal identification, this benefit may in some cases have been inherited rather than earned. Furthermore, at least in these juvenile burials, it seems that seals would have been primarily intended to mark identity rather than serving as administrative tools.

Seals were found with attendants wearing all types of jewellery sets but were far less common among the secondary interments than among primary occupants and those buried singly. This disparity may reflect an emphasis on group affiliation over personal distinction among attendants; and it may mean that attendants were derived from a less prominent social rank. In PG 789 three attendants had seals: Bodies 13 and 31, who both wore hair ring-based jewellery sets, and Body 30, who was adorned in select components of this assemblage (Fig. 2). In PG 800 only Body 18, who wore a 'brim,' possessed a seal (Fig. 3). Finally, in PG 1237, 7 of the 74 attendants had seals. These individuals wore assorted jewellery sets including vegetal wreaths (Bodies 25 & 61), choker-based assemblages (Bodies 7 & 69), hair ring sets (Bodies 4 & 17), and a non-categorized array (Body 60) (see Fig. 4).

Some attendants affiliated with seals and demonstrating multiple categories of privilege (for example, Bodies 30 & 31 of PG 789, Body 18 of PG 800, and Bodies 60 & 61, PG 1237, discussed at more length below) may have held exceptional responsibilities within the death-pits. Positioned amidst similarly adorned, sealless attendants, these individuals may have held otherwise archaeologically 'invisible' positions of distinction and, or, leadership. Conversely, their seals may have been strictly personal effects, not carrying immediate significance in the death-pit choreographies.

Inscribed seals and artefacts served most precisely to mark individual identity and tended to name otherwise highly privileged deceased (Burrows 1934). Noted previously, in PG 800 a seal identified the primary occupant, Puabi. In the luxuriously provisioned burial of a man in PG 755, it cannot be determined if the poorly preserved shell seal carried an inscription, but nearby vessels were inscribed with the personal name, Meskalumdug (Woolley 1934, 156). Yet, challenging the premise that only people with the highest levels of wealth or responsibility possessed personally inscribed seals, some privately interred and more moderately provisioned deceased, such as the single occupants of PGs 261 and 697, had personally inscribed seals too (Woolley 1934, 149, 154, 314–16). Both seals of the man buried in PG 697 identified him as a scribe, while other seals found across the cemetery refer to the roles of priest, porter and cook.

Trends of association with objects

Relationships between objects and bodies may reveal domains of activity generally associated with people wearing particular assemblages of jewellery. In addition, mutual affiliations with objects link contrastingly adorned persons, while other finds specify restricted personal responsibilities and, or, may mark unique aspects of personal identity. I shall consider musical instruments, weapons and metal vessels.

Harps and lyres often graced with ornate animal protomes were preserved within the ceremonial or ritual scenes of PGs 789, 800, and 1237 (Barnett 1969) (Figs. 2, 3 & 4). Here, in position to play, present, or simply bear instruments, were attendants who mostly wore vegetal wreaths and hair ring-based jewellery sets. Yet, because in PG 789 it looks as though lyres actually were placed atop the remains of the attendants, an active or even direct link between the instruments and the deceased must be carefully considered (Woolley 1934, 69–70).

Adjacent to Bodies 60 and 61 of PG 1237 were found sculptures portraying goats rearing up into vegetation (Fig. 4). Originally, each attendant may have held one of these statues, which probably belonged to now deteriorated wooden furniture or musical instruments (de Schauensee 1998; Rakic 1998). The exclusive link between the goat sculptures and Bodies 60 and 61 demonstrates that group affiliations referenced through personal ornamentation did not necessarily indicate exclusive relationships of cooperation. Body 61 wore an elaborate version of a vegetal wreath assemblage, while the ornament of Body 60 does not fit into any category defined here.

Many individuals wearing 'brims' and hair ring-based sets possessed daggers, axes and spears. Although sometimes discovered together, I regard these weapons, the blades of which were made of gold, silver or copper, as discrete, but conceivably related, cues to the responsibilities and identities of the deceased. It is not certain whether these objects implied prospective action or had a static visual valence. This, in fact, may have varied depending on whether a person was laid to rest in a private or primary burial, where I would suggest that arms were probably symbolic, or in a death-pit, where weapons more likely indicated prospective action.

Positioned adjacent to one another in the death-pits of PGs 789 and 800 were attendants wearing 'brims' and, or, possessing daggers but generally affiliated with no other portable effects (Figs. 2 & 3). In PG 1237, attendants wearing daggers and hair ring assemblages were lined up near the tomb's entrance ramp with other armed but minimally adorned individuals (Fig. 4). The primary, cooperative duty of the variously bedecked attendants in the above scenarios was established through weapons rather than denoted exclusively through adornment. These relatively loosely defined groups of armed attendants are probably related to six bodies (Bodies 45–50) positioned together at the entrance to PG 789 (Fig. 2). Probably 'guards', Bodies 45–50 wore copper helmets with no other adornment and carried one or two spears each.

In principal and private burial contexts, people possessing weapons were provisioned with a range of other objects as well. For example, a group of attendants (Bodies 15–18) in PG 800 wearing 'brims' and carrying weapons were affiliated with drawn vehicles (Fig. 3). This scenario does not signal a definitive role for individuals who wore headbands or carried weapons but it may reflect their eligibility for functions related to transportation. In another example, many attendants wearing hair ring-based jewellery sets and situated near piles of broken spears in PG 789 had small cups and dishes near their hands (Fig. 2). Here, where weapons were not found immediately on or with bodies, but merely in proximity to them, they more likely may represent ritual residue. Therefore, the role of these PG 789 attendants probably was related to the vessels they held, rather than the nearby spears.

Vessels were the most common type of grave good at Ur, and their specific and, or, multivalent significance may have ranged greatly (Cohen 2005, 167–220; Müller-Karpe 1993, 245–63; Winter 1999, 251). Many of them would have contained nourishment, cosmetics, aromatics and miscellaneous substances. Although no specific type or set of metal vessels corresponds to manners of adornment, in an exploratory study of metal vessels, I consider their role in relation to the identities of the deceased.[12] Some metal vessels were directly associated with the dead.[13] Personalized scale and nominal inscriptions directly linked vessels to a few bodies; these pots certainly were not just in the deceased's proximity or possession by coincidence upon the sealing of their tombs. In PG 1068, for example, in addition to numerous standard-size pots, child-size shallow silver bowls (metal Type 7), a gold cup (metal Type 16 variant), and a gold tumbler (metal Type 42) were clearly meant for the youth ('The Little Princess') buried here (Woolley 1934, 163). In PG 755, two gold bowls (metal Types 7 & 9) and a gold conch-form vessel (metal Type 115) behind the head of the deceased were inscribed with the personal name, Meskalumdug. (Outside the coffin, in a pile of copper vessels (Types 3 and 4) was another vessel inscribed 'Meskalumdug' as well as one bearing the female name, Nin-banda nin: Woolley 1934, 156, 159, pls. 163, 190; Marchesi 2004, 161–2, 183–5, 190–93.)

Metal vessels were not consistently organized in sets such as those in PGs 755 and 1068, nor did these vessel types occur exclusively in affiliation with other bodies. For instance, while metal Type 7 shallow bowls were found in or near the hands of many skeletons, they were also stockpiled in tombs among mixed objects; and even though they were personally linked to 'The Little Princess', Puabi (PG 800) and the primary

occupant of PG 1054, 'tumblers' (metal Types 42 & 43) were not generally associated with specific individuals. However, on the basis of their clear, direct association with especially privileged bodies (PGs 755 & 1068), certain bowls, cups, tumblers, and conch-form vessels (for example, metal Types 7, 9, 16, 42 & 115) may be interpreted not only as intentionally buried with individuals, and thereby relevant to personal identity, but also as indicators of restricted benefits or opportunities.

Most significant for the present study, no types of metal vessel were predominantly linked with adornment assemblages. The common possession of particular types of vessels therefore must denote circumstances independent of those represented through adornment. Certain vessels may signify distinctions that a person held in life, during funerary events, and, or, in after-life (Winter 1999, 249). Additionally or alternatively, vessels may represent utensils from ritual practices or standard offerings dedicated to the deceased by the living (Cohen 2005, 67–98; Winter 1999).

Dynamics of personal association

By personal association, here, is meant physical proximity and, or, behavioural involvement between individuals. Of particular interest are relationships between secondary and primary interments and between attendants of apparently unequal privilege. I evaluate these situations in terms of power.

In the looted chamber of PG 789, three skulls were discovered with various bits of adornment and weaponry, and in intact PG 800 there were three attendants, two of whom were positioned in direct proximity to the Puabi's bier (Figs. 2 & 3). Tomb chamber attendants are distinct from those in the death-pits through their contact with and probable responsibilities relating to the bodies and space of a principal tomb occupant. They may be regarded as 'personal attendants', and their access to the restricted realm of the primary interment may have been a privilege.

Various possible dynamics of association may be observed among death-pit attendants in PGs 789 and 1237. In PG 789 the circumstances of Bodies 30 and 31 provide a striking example (Fig. 2). While Body 31 was adorned in a very elaborate variation of the hair ring-based jewellery set, Body 30's had only select components of this set. Both were situated in front of the door to the principal burial chamber, wore unusual garment pins with gold heads, and possessed seals. Their relationship to the chamber entrance may result from their distinct rank and, or, they may have required seals as officials charged with not only controlling the entry but also sealing it. While the cooperative responsibility of Bodies 30 and 31 is evidenced, differences of adornment may express a nuance of power.

There are three potential incidents of personal association in PG 1237 (Fig. 4). First, Bodies 60 and 61, discovered in the eastern corner of the death-pit, appear to have been directly affiliated (see above, on associations with harps and lyres). They each possessed a seal and were near goat sculptures. Body 61, wearing an elaborate variation of the gold head wreath-based assemblage, was positioned adjacent to Body 60, who was not ornamented with a gold wreath but, nonetheless, was relatively richly outfitted. Body 60 may have been a subordinate of 61 in whatever responsibility linked the pair in the custody of the statues. In the western corner of this tomb, Body 7, with an exceptional version of the choker-based jewellery set, was found next to Body 8, whose unique jewellery assemblage mirrored Body 7's on a reduced level, consisting solely of gold finger and hair rings. The similarities in adornment and their isolation from equivalently bedecked bodies imply their exclusive status as a pair. Body 8, displaying less wealth, may have been subordinate to Body 7. At the rear edge of PG 1237 was a long line of attendants who all wore choker assemblages, except for Body 68 who wore nothing but silver hair rings. This sparsely adorned attendant (or 'sub'-attendant) was situated next to Body 69, the only person in the line to have a seal.

Summary and conclusion

It is evident that, within the vegetal wreath- and 'brim'-based adornment groups, individuals displayed diverse degrees of privilege and were eligible for all manners of interment. People wearing wreaths have been identified as female, and some children were buried as members of this group (PG 1068 & PG 1237, Body 9). Within the death-pits, no one behavioural role predominates but several wreathed attendants were associated with string instruments. 'Brims' were specifically male costume elements and, unlike vegetal wreaths, children may have been prohibited from burial in them. Some deceased adorned in 'brims' were affiliated with drawn vehicles but their identity seems to have been referenced primarily through weapons, presumably relating to military or security responsibilities.

With regard to visual presentation, the deceased outfitted with choker-based jewellery sets were certainly related to those wearing vegetal wreaths, and they seem to have been female too; but, due to their more limited representation, their potential roles and eligibility for private or principal burial are not evidenced. Likewise, individuals wearing hair ring-based assemblages were discovered only as attendants. At least some people

carried items generally signalling masculinity, while others, of unclear gender, may be linked with musical instruments. Among those wearing choker and hair ring assemblages, degrees of personal privilege were apparent through wealth and cylinder seals.

The social nature of adornment group boundaries may be indicated through relationships among the variously bedecked attendants in the death-pits. In PGs 789 and 800 attendants were positioned in groups with corresponding adornments, while in PG 1237 people wearing vegetal wreath-, hair ring-, and choker-based assemblages were interspersed together (Figs. 2, 3 & 4). In all tombs, attendants whose jewellery does not fulfil the standards of any defined set were proximate to and may have cooperated with members of all adornment groups. However, direct interaction between members of the four groups defined in this article is nowhere demonstrated (Figs. 2, 3 & 4).

On a very visible level, identity certainly corresponded to adornment, as exemplified by the four jewellery categories that I propose (Figs. 5, 7, 8 & 9). At the same time, facets of identity independent of, and overlapping with adornment affiliations are evident through associations with objects such as musical instruments and weapons. Additionally, both hierarchical and individual identity is marked through various privileges (burial, personal distinction, affiliation with uncommon objects) and dynamics of personal association.

I should like to emphasize the diversity of the deceased, demonstrating individualism, privilege and, perhaps, private status. Men, women and children were buried in private graves, as primary 'royal tomb' occupants and as 'royal tomb' attendants. Among them, jewellery sets based on vegetal wreaths, chokers, 'brims', and hair rings were represented. In addition to Puabi of PG 800, exceptional bodies include: a 'brim'-adorned spear-bearing attendant (Body 18) in the death-pit of PG 800; an attendant (Body 31) wearing a hair ring-based set positioned in front of the door to the chamber in PG 789; Body 7 of PG 1237, adorned in an elaborate, predominantly gold choker-based assemblage; Body 61 of the same tomb also outfitted with a vegetal wreath and associated with one of the goat sculptures; the wreath-adorned primary occupant of PG 1054; and the likewise bedecked 'Little Princess' of PG 1068.

The present study was initiated primarily to mine the archaeological evidence recorded by Woolley for patterns yielding information on social and ritual identities of individuals across the cemetery. What has transpired through the observation of mortuary circumstances is a pattern suggesting that key distinctions and affiliations among individuals were visually communicated through adornment. The observed jewellery sets and patterns cross-cut large populations in a number of tombs: dispersed but similarly adorned persons can be grouped into categories of visual affiliation that may reflect fundamental components within the social and, or, ritual framework of this cemetery. Examination of the typological and iconographic variations of adornments may elucidate further differences and affiliations of individuals within and beyond the groups introduced here.

Closing thoughts

The analysis focused on relative identities and dynamics. Although the definition of the assemblages and the identity of the community of which they were a part remains open to speculation, interpretations generally advocate royal and, or, priestly spheres (Benzel 2006; Cohen 2005; Marchesi 2004; Moorey 1977; Pollock 1991a; Reade 2001, 17–24; Woolley 1934). With the caveat that what follows is primarily a creative exercise, I now offer my thoughts on the more specific identities of those interred at Ur. What was this community? Who belonged to it? What took place here?

Agreeing most closely with Pollock (1991a, 175–7), I hypothesize that both royal and priestly elite are buried in the 'Royal Cemetery', but I would specify that this occurs within the framework of a temple community or religious structure. Either rulers and their families would have been symbolically integrated into this community upon death and, or, in life they would actually have held religious offices either independent of or indivisible from their political responsibilities. The primary interred of the 'royal tombs' may be identified as rulers, their wives, and the highest ranking royal elite, such as crown princes. The attendants were probably members (or expendable substitutes for living members) of the court and, or, temple hierarchy; their own ranks and roles may be reflected in adornment and death-pit choreography. Those buried privately may include members of the temple and royal deceased who had not yet achieved or never would achieve or inherit the highest royal offices and likewise were not eligible to serve as attendants (Pollock 1991a, 177). Also, perhaps in exchange for service to the temple or royal court, independent individuals may have attained personal burial privileges within this sacred cemetery as well. Finally, it should be kept in mind that some private graves earlier and later than the fashion of the great 'royal tombs' may even belong to rulers and courtiers.

Who, then, would have orchestrated burials at the 'Royal Cemetery'? I agree that members of the royal dynasty managed this tradition of burial for ideologi-

cal purposes (Cohen 2005) and I would suggest that the group who organized the funerary displays and interments were likely to have been the temple elite and staff. I would describe the events of 'royal tomb' burials as aesthetically overwhelming public ceremonies in which live attendants processed to their deaths displaying the ornamented corpse of the primary interred as if it were a cult statue (Cohen 2005, 149–50). I would link the material wealth disposed of in these extravagant burials to the temple, rather than the ruling dynasty: the adornment sets would have been religious rather than political; and this may explain why they are not represented, in the visual record, as worn by royal figures. However, it would only have been through political power that this wealth would have accrued so, ultimately, it cannot be divorced from its royal source.

On the welcome occasion of more positive evidence, it is hoped that the relative identities laid out in this article might be integrated into a more historically specific and less speculative picture. Eventually, correlations might be established between the deceased and their living identities by pursuing new and hitherto under-utilized evidence and parallels for adornment sets and acts of communal ornamentation in the textual, visual, archaeological and even ethnographic records.

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Notes

1. Much scholarly attention has been given to costume in living societies, often from the perspectives of sociology and anthropology. The analysis of archaeological material, however, poses specific challenges due to the fragmentary record of past cultures (Boardman 1996, 3–13; Hodder 1987a, 7). Yet, particularly when dealing with cases in which numerous examples of costume are represented *in situ* within a shared context, such as a cemetery, relative identities and relationships may be discerned. Although dress and adornment are generally transient acts of communication in living societies, like the customs of tattooing or scarification during rites of passage, ornamentation of the interred takes place in the context of a critical event and has a permanent effect, suggesting that it may express especially meaningful aspects of identity in relation to a society's cultural values (Sørensen 2000, 129–35; Wiessner 1989, 56–63).
2. PG 789 was looted in antiquity, at which point all or most of the remains of its principal occupant were removed, but its L-shaped death-pit was left intact. The presumed entirety of 'PG 800' was undisturbed, but a new interpretation of its stratigraphy proposes that two different burial complexes are represented here. The death-pit of PG 800 appears to have belonged to another (yet undiscovered) tomb chamber, while the true death-pit of PG 800 may remain unexcavated (Zimmerman 1998). No private tomb chamber was uncovered with PG1237 but the excavated area it entails probably belonged to an even more expansive death-pit connected to a still buried principal interment (Woolley 1934, 62–91, 113–24).
3. 'Hair rings', heavy wire coiled into triple loops, may actually have been a type of earring (Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 5; Pittman 1998b, 108; Reade 2003, 123; Woolley 1934, 241).
4. The bones were identified as female. On the body was a cylinder seal inscribed with the personal name 'Puabi' followed by the title 'nin'. The name 'Puabi' was originally read as 'Shub-ad', but a recent study favours 'Pu-abum' (Burrows 1934, 316; Gelb 1957, 12; Marchesi 2004, 193–4). While 'nin' denotes an elite position, no philological consensus has been reached as to whether it referred specifically to a royal or priestly position. This title is often translated as 'Queen' or 'Lady', yet it remains unclear even whether these possibilities may have denoted independent female status and authority or were primarily indicative of the position of 'wife of the ruler' (Burrows 1934, 312; Gansell & Winter 2002, 3; Marchesi 2004, 175–8, 186–9).
5. Woolley (1934, 183–4) dated PG 1420 to a later period but Pollock's study of its ceramics and seal imagery revises his dating to the mid-third millennium BC (Pollock 1985, 155). Relative dating of this cemetery and its internal chronology have been addressed, but room for possible refinement remains (Nissen 1966; Pollock 1985; Reade 2001, 15–29; Woolley 1934, 208–27).
6. Pollock has pointed out that gender tends not to be clearly marked among lower-status individuals, who, at Ur, may be less elaborately adorned. When gender is discernible among those of lower status, it is generally interpreted through male-gendered artefacts, such as weapons (Pollock 1991b, 376). The occurrence (or archaeological visibility) of male-gendered objects with biologically sexed women is not entirely uncommon and occurs across diverse cultures (Linduff 2002, 266–7; Weglian 2001, 147–50). At Ur, seven elite burials contained objects of both gender categories; had these bodies been less extravagantly provisioned, perhaps only male signifiers would have been visible for interpretation (Pollock 1991b, 378).
7. Among other possibilities, these 'brims' may have been intended as offerings to the dead or divine. They may also have served to 'stand in for' an individual not actually interred here. A similar explanation may be applied to piles of 'female' vegetal wreath-based assemblages (incorporating silver, rather than gold, hair ribbon) discovered near the bodies of privately interred 'males' in

PGs 755 and 1312 (Moorey 1977, 36; Pollock 1991a, 175; 1991b, 378–9; Woolley 1934, 158, 173).

8. The articulation of *in situ* skeletons suggests that bodies had not decomposed at the time of potential deposit.
9. Although the distribution of material privilege is relevant regardless of questions of ownership, this issue warrants attention and, it is hoped, further study. Dating to a slightly later period than the Ur tombs, texts from the Syrian site of Ebla (which displayed significant cultural affinity with southern Mesopotamian cities such as Ur) suggest that royal women were buried with their personal clothing and jewellery, articles which they had received either upon marriage or initiation into a priestly order (Archi 2002, 178–9). On the contrary, the adornment (and equally luxurious grave goods) present in the Ur burials may have been the property of an institution. Members may have been costumed in wealth and associated with precious objects in a manner representing their distinction and responsibility within the institution. Of course, too, social status and institutional identity may have gone together. Beyond this, some items may have been strictly personal, such as cylinder seals and 'amulets' (Woolley 1934, 242, pls. 142–3).
10. The following objects and groups comprise my weight sample: nos. U. 9977–82, U. 10597, U. 10890, U. 10933–7, U. 12374, U. 12388, U. 12423, U. 12403b, U. 12420 and U. 12425e–d. I thank Richard Zettler for permission to weigh these objects and Shannon White for facilitating and assisting me with the work. I also extend my appreciation to Aubrey Baadsgaard, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, who shared with me a number of unpublished weights that she recently recorded for her dissertation in progress, 'The Semiotics of Dress in Early Dynastic Mesopotamia'.
11. Pollock (1991b, 380–81) has pointed out that possession of a seal may not necessarily imply 'use in authorization'. Because only one impression of a banquet scene was found (compared to 26 contest scene sealings) in the 'rubbish heaps' of administrative refuse contemporary with the burials, she has posited 'a limited use of banquet seals for sealing' and suggested that women (with whom banquet scene seals are generally associated) may have worn seals primarily for adornment. Perhaps, however, women used banquet scene seals in different contexts, leaving their impressions in unexcavated and, or, unpreserved contexts.
12. I focus specifically on metal vessels in part on account of the foundation for analysis offered by Müller-Karpe's catalogue (1993) and Winter's study of vessel deposition in and across graves (1999). Recently begun by Cohen (2005, 167–220), the additional analysis of stone and ceramic vessels will certainly be illuminating, but it requires more study.
13. Various bowls (metal Types 4, 7 and 9) were consistently discovered near the hands of both male and female bodies in all burial contexts. Most of the attendants in PG 1237 had both stone and metal pots, but they were too poorly decayed to be assigned to a type. For examples of metal vessel Types 4, 7 and 9 see: PG 263 (Woolley 1934, 150), PG 543 (152), PG 1618 (129), PG 755 (156), PG 867 (161), PG 1315 (174), PG 1100 (165), PG 1400 (176), and PG 1407 (176–7). Hollowed out bivalve shells (referred to by Woolley as 'cockle-shells') and metal imitations were frequently associated with individuals of both genders in all burial contexts. Many shells contained pigment, probably for cosmetic use (Danti & Zettler 1998, 144; Woolley 1934, 245, 248).

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