Bull-Headed Harps

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**Introduction**

Bull-headed harps is having the bull’s head forward-facing and enameled piece is of one of the ancient musical instruments on the earth. The historians claim that it is from the earliest times of Mesopotamian site of Ur. The whole panel portrays a gallant figure grasping man-headed bulls up and animals acting as persons underneath. There is also a third panel where there is an animal group in which ass is seen playing as a bull-headed lyre same as the one on the enamel ornaments. Moreover, this ancient musical tool is 14 inches tall and it was found by Leonard Woolley in 1920s, while excavating in Ur. The archeologist was looking for information regarding the old city of Mesopotamia. It is thought that this instrument was played at the funerals (Woolley & Legrain, 1934). When it was found, it was laying between ten dead bodies of women in the Royal Graveyard (Woolley, 1929). However, this piece can be used as a symbol to describe the ancient cultural practices in that city. Moreover, it also helps to understand the philosophy of that period by observing this musical instrument.

**Discussion**

The Harps of Ur is also known as the lyres of Ur. This is made up of wood, gold, lapis and silver. It is a musical instrument so it depicts that people of that era were font of music and all the art pieces on the instrument also support it. However, it is believed that lyre was played to complement the mantras of anthems and melodies of tribute (Barnett, 1969). There are 11 strings in the instrument which were played to awaken the godly bull. According to the historian the Bull was considered as the gate keeper of one of the gods. The eyes, head, horns and beard are made up of some expensive ornaments, which shows the significance of those expensive adornments in that era. Therefore, it depicts that the bull was a sacred icon of that culture.

The beards of the bull might show the wisdom and experience and the head which is covered with a gold demonstrates the wealth. At the same time, all the attributes of the lyre and the bull’s head links to the representation of the Sumerian Culture. The three panels under the Bull’s head have their own identification. There are animals with human figures and it portrays the ancient Mesopotamian belief that in order to gain power qualities of different species are required. People of that era thought that power is related to having attributes of different creatures.

The first panel where man is standing between two animals that depicts the heroic nature of human beings. It symbolizes that man was considered superior over the natural world. There several descriptions provided by the historian regarding the Lyre. Some of them think that as the instrument was played in the funeral ceremony of any royal personality. Therefore, the animal figures performing human activities means they were preparing for the afterlife of the person who died. Furthermore, it is from the Sumerian Culture, so it explains that the people from that culture were used to be the experts of metal work (Galpin,1929). The use of expensive jewels show that how progressed their civilization was.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, Bull-headed harps having the bull’s head forward-facing and enameled piece is of one of the ancient musical instruments on the earth. It also shows that it is a religious instrument which was played on the funeral of the individuals from Royal family of that era. At the same time, animals having manly figures depict the concept of the power in that time period. Therefore, this piece is used as a symbol to describe the ancient cultural practices in that city. Moreover, it also helps to understand the philosophy of that period by observing this musical instrument.

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