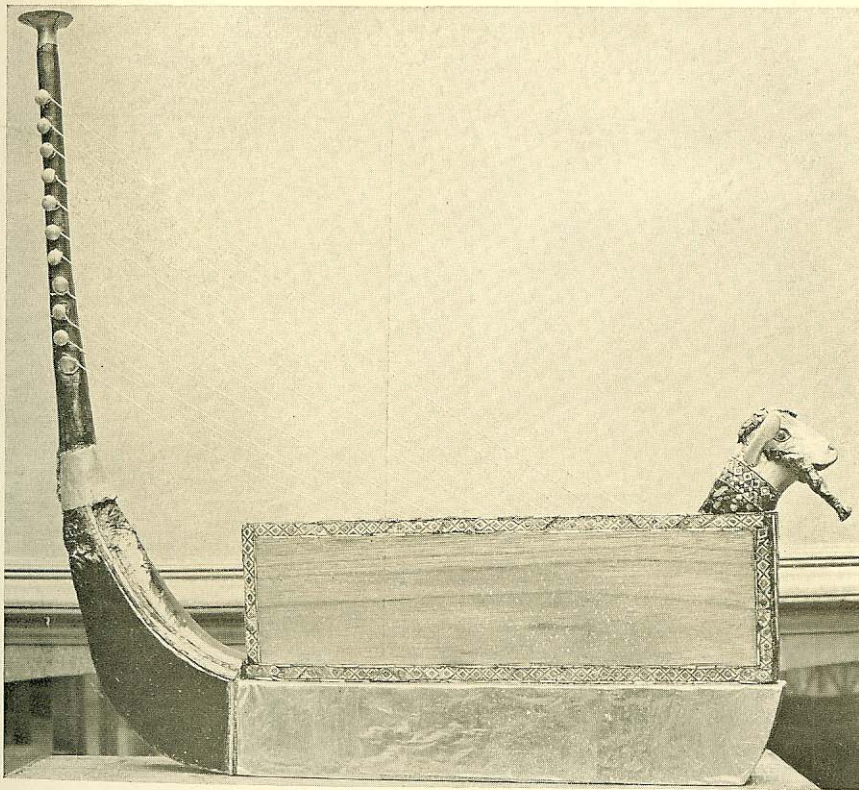




THE HARP OF QUEEN SHUB-AD, AS FOUND



THE HARP OF QUEEN SHUB-AD, RESTORED

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THE DOMINANT

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woolsack is in the fact that, despite the myriad and bewildering changes in the music of the last 30 years, there is scarcely a sentence that does not prove to have been absolutely true. Some of us may think that here and there he has overrated or underrated some special composer, though we should feel scant respect for anyone who pitted our opinions against his; but there is never one descent into that easiest of all critical degradations—the condemnation of what is new on the ground that it is unintelligible. Is there another critic in Europe who could reprint his thirty-year-

old verdicts and prophecies without a blush and an apology?

To commend to musicians the writings of Sir Henry Hadow is a work of supererogation; to quote from his writings, where every sentence is a link in an argument, is impossible; to praise him would be an impertinence on the part of one who has spent a lifetime picking up his crumbs. But we may at least express gratitude both to him, and to the Oxford University Press for persuading him to allow the collecting and reprinting of so much that we would not willingly have lost.

## THE HARP OF UR

THE HARP of Queen Shub-ad, discovered at Ur during the 1927-8 excavations, has already ceased to be unique, for Mr C. Leonard Woolley has reported the discovery of similar instruments during 1928-9. These harps, the elaborate construction of which suggests a long period of antecedent evolution, are the oldest musical instruments extant. Their period is that of the first dynasty of Ur, the third of those which reigned in Sumer after the cataclysm which we know as the Deluge, and evidence of which is among the more sensational results of this season's work. These remote dates are still the subject of controversy between the upholders of the 'long' and the 'short' chronologies, but even the latter, which is the more generally accepted, does not place the first dynasty of Ur any later than 3100 B.C. This is earlier than the rise of Egyptian civilization.

The recovery of these valuable relics of the most ancient music is beset with great difficulty because of the perishable nature of some of the materials. In this instance, the gold cap was the first portion to be

discovered. Beneath it a hole ran vertically into the clay with copper pegs or keys projecting into it. Obviously, the wooden upright had perished, but by pushing a length of copper wire into the hole and pouring plaster round it a cast was obtained which was used in the restoration. In some later instances even the strings were visible in the form of lines running through the clay. By collating all the subsequent 'finds' it may not be impossible to arrive at a still more detailed restoration.

Apparently there was more than one type of harp in use. On one of the shell plaques from the front of the body of the golden-headed bull from the King's grave, there is a large one of which the strings radiate from the base to a cross-beam set above. Yet another type can be seen at the British Museum on the Mosaic Standard, which is one of the finest results of the same season's excavations. The standard represents scenes of war on one side and peace on the other, and the harp portrayed upon it is a portable one in the shape of a trapezium, the strings being parallel to one of the diverging sides.