

## ARCHAEOLOGY

# Athenian Agora Yields New Archaeological Finds

## Quaint Hedgehog Figure Explained by Modern Folk Belief; Satyr Tries to Drink From Wrong End of Wine Vessel

**P**ILFERING habits of the Grecian hedgehog caused him to be immortalized 2300 years ago in the form of a terra-cotta figure that was recently dug up in the Athenian Agora, or market-place.

Final report of the eighth season of Agora excavations by the American School of Classical Studies in Athens was made by Dr. T. Leslie Shear, director of the work and professor of classical archaeology at Princeton University. Dr. Shear has recently returned to America.

Most unusual of his finds this spring was the hedgehog of the fourth century B.C., which he describes as having "round knobs scattered over the body, three on each side and four along the spine. The knobs have an alternate arrangement of either round holes or shallow grooves."

The scientists were at a loss to explain the knobs until one of the workmen declared that hedgehogs come to his vineyard and spear grapes on their quills, carrying them off for their young to eat.

Equally surprising was the discovery of a vase fragment decorated with the picture of an intoxicated satyr breaking through the bottom of a wine vessel. According to Dr. Shear, "the comic composition is due to the fuddled imagination of an inebriated brain."

Not only did the ancient Athenian artists occasionally take to drink, but they evidently had trouble themselves in interpreting the complicated mythology of the day, for on one of the vases described by Dr. Shear there occurs a mixture of legends.

"A beardless youth, who is armed with a double axe, is represented as engaged in combat with a man who is leaning down to grasp a rock. The youth with the double axe would normally be interpreted as Theseus, but beside him a knotted club is resting on the ground and a quiver is hanging from the branch of a tree.

"It therefore seems probable that this scene represents a contamination of the

legends of Herakles and Theseus, the Athenian hero replacing Herakles on an Attic vase," he concludes.

Outstanding historically this season was the investigation of the Klepsydra, a fountain house at the foot of the slope to the Acropolis, which had kept the citadel's defenders supplied with water from the fifth century B.C. to the Greek war of independence in the 1820's.

Entered through a fissure high in the wall of the building, the well-house gave evidence of being first built during the fifth century, at which time it consisted of a large forecourt with an antechamber for drawing water.

During the Hellenistic period (third to second century B.C.) the building was partially reconstructed, only to be filled with debris of battle after the siege of Sulla in 86 B.C. and to cave in early in the Roman period.

However, in the second century A.D. the fountain-house was rebuilt and connected directly with the Acropolis by a stairway cut through the rock bastion, and the Valerian wall was thrown around it. It remained so, according to

Dr. Shear, until the Greek war of independence, when the Bastion of Odysseus was built around the spring to defend it from the Turks.

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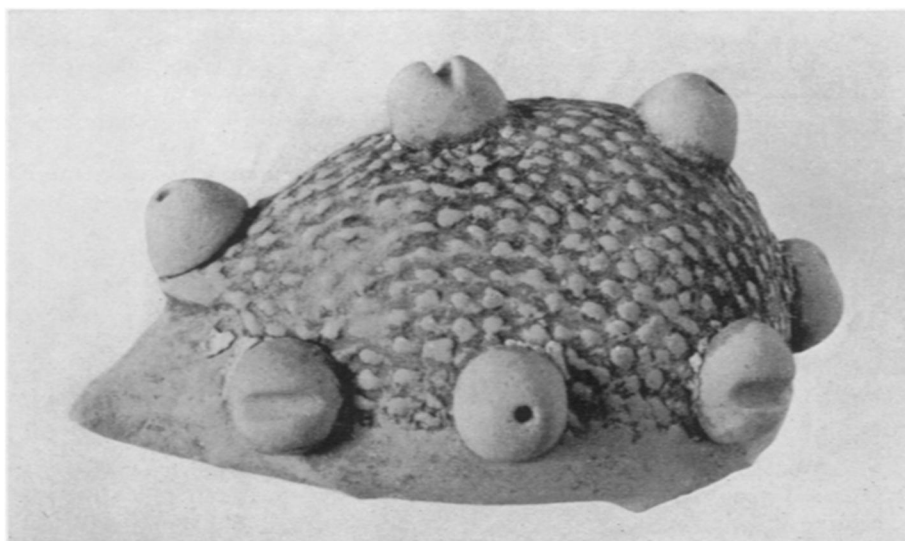
## BACTERIOLOGY

## School Books Not Likely To Carry Disease Germs

**E**VERY so often in some community comes up the question of disease germs being spread by school books. This is only natural since books handled by patients having tuberculosis, scarlet fever, diphtheria, meningitis, infantile paralysis and kindred diseases are more than likely to get some of the germs on them either from the patient's breath in sneezing or coughing or from his hands.

A pretty clean bill for ordinary school books, however, and some recommendations on books in general are now presented by Arthur H. Bryan, of the science department of Baltimore City College. He collected pages from very old and from newer school books, most of which had been recently used by students, cut up the pages, soaked them and shook them in sterile water for from 15 minutes to one hour, and then transferred some of the water to germ growth media to get some idea of how many germs actually had been on the pages of the books.

Ordinary school books, surprisingly enough, showed very few germs and those mostly of a harmless variety. Books that are not too old or dilapi-



**SHARP LITTLE THIEF**

*Folk-belief that hedgehogs steal grapes by spearing them on their spines made possible the identification of this little terra-cotta image made in Athens 2300 years ago.*