

ARCHAEOLOGY

Assyrians Threw Dice To Choose High Official

ONE OF THE DICE used by Assyrians 3,000 years ago in choosing an official for a great national honor has been discovered in the Babylonian Collection of Yale University, Prof. Ferris J. Stephens, acting curator, announced.

The die is a cube of baked clay a little over an inch across. It is labeled the "lot of Iahai." Historians recognize Iahai as a high official of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria in the ninth century B.C. Iahai was one of the dignitaries whose name was put into the hat, so to speak, in choosing the "eponym official" for one year. The lucky man would have lasting fame, because the next year would be officially known by his name.

The name of a missing king of Babylonia has been restored to royal history through discovery of a brick from walls of a temple in Nippur. The brick, acquired by the Babylonian Collection of Yale recently, reveals the impressive sounding name of Hashmargalshu, who lived about 1550 B.C. Although he tried to take care of his historic immortality by setting up a memorial tablet in the temple of a god, this King Hashmargalshu had the perverse bad fortune of being the only king out of 36 in his dynasty to be forgotten—until now.

A story of rivalry between two queens has also come to light through deciphering of writing on a stone pillar. The inscription tells of a queen Shalabashtashu who calls herself the "beloved

wife of Rim-Sin," Prof. Stephens said.

"We knew already the name of another wife of this king," he said, "who also called herself 'the beloved wife of Rim-Sin,' and who dedicated a memorial in honor of her husband.

"Apparently this new inscription shows that Shalabashtashu was trying to outdo the other wife, for she says that the structure which she has caused to be erected is something 'which up to that time no woman had ever done.'"

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Architects Discover Danger at Temple

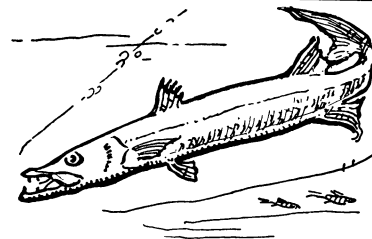
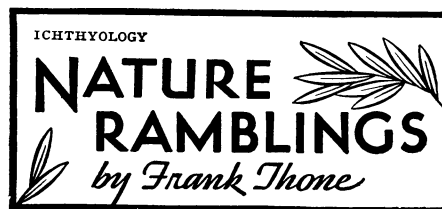
THE LITTLE temple of Nike, or Victory, one of the architectural gems on the Acropolis, is in danger of caving in. Architects, investigating the foundations, reported the weakness of the structure.

As a result of the report, arrangements are now being made to take down the temple and re-build the base on which it stands. The temple will then be set up again on the new, firm foundation. The project is expected to require a year. Temporary removal of the building is welcomed by archaeologists, who see a chance to learn whether a still more ancient structure stood on the site of the Temple of Victory.

Athenians came to this temple to worship Athena as Goddess of Victory. After the Athenians defeated the Persians, it was said, they desired to bind Victory to themselves, and so they cut off her wings to make flight impossible. The Greek writer Pausanias called the temple that of Wingless Victory.

The Nike temple was built about 410 B.C. and stood until 1687, when it was damaged in the bombardment of Athens by the Venetians. The Turks at that time took the temple materials to use in building a bastion. About a century ago, German and Greek architects attempted to restore the temple to its original delicate beauty, but lack of experience in this type of problem resulted in a reconstruction lacking in permanence. Violent storms or even slight earthquakes threaten the edifice.

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The Big, Bad Barracuda

WHEN President Roosevelt cracked about coming back from his vacation a "tough guy," having "learned all kinds of lessons from barracuda and sharks," he singled out about the most appropriate pair of submarine professors that could have been selected by one whose job it is to battle the big fish in the rough waters of our present economic turmoil. Anybody who can get the better of those spike-toothed "hard babies" off the Florida keys need not hesitate to challenge their human counterparts in Wall Street or the Wheat Pit.

The shark's reputation is already thoroughly and widely established. He is popularly looked upon as the epitome of all that is insatiably voracious, cruelly cold-blooded, utterly indifferent to the rights of anything else in the sea—even other sharks. He is rugged individualism to the ruthless limit.

But the barracuda surpasses even the shark. His voraciousness, his cruelty, his rapacity are at least equal to the shark's, and he adds to these two qualities that make him even more formidable. He is of a higher evolutionary status than the shark, and is therefore more intelligent; and he is much readier to attack.

His truculence is perhaps the most outstanding thing about him. A shark will seldom attack a man under water, but a barracuda is apt to rip at him entirely unprovoked. Dr. Paul Bartsch, Smithsonian marine biologist, who often puts on a diving helmet and walks about on the sea bottom to get better acquainted with things down there and to take photographs, states that he has always found the shark a gentleman, but confesses to nervousness whenever a barracuda is about.

The barracuda is a big fish, though nowhere nearly the size of a man-eating shark. The latter ranges from twen-

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an address by

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Wednesday, May 2, at 3:40 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, over Stations of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Each week a prominent scientist speaks over the Columbia System under the auspices of Science Service.