

lieved to be the origin of the lion's head figure in more modern fountains, where a stream of water squirts from the animal's jaws.

Celestial Time Table for April

April.	EST	
5	6:00 a. m.	Mercury farthest west of sun (but not far enough to be easily visible)
	10:28 a. m.	Full moon
8	4:47 p. m.	Moon passes Jupiter
12	8:00 a. m.	Moon farthest, 251,200 miles
13	9:23 a. m.	Moon in last quarter
18	12:37 a. m.	Moon passes Venus
20	11:19 p. m.	New moon
21	early a. m.	Meteors of Lyrid shower visible
24	6:00 a. m.	Moon nearest, 227,800 miles
27	8:23 a. m.	Moon passes Saturn
	5:18 p. m.	Moon in first quarter

Subtract one hour for CST, two hours for MST, and three for PST.

Science News Letter, March 29, 1947

ARCHAEOLOGY

4,000-Year Old Epic Poem Tells of "War of Nerves"

➤ A "NEW" EPIC poem, scratched in clay 4,000 years ago, is being translated by Dr. Samuel N. Kramer of the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

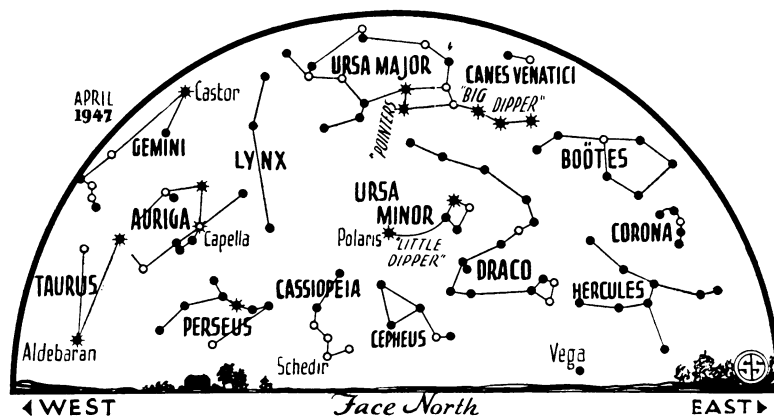
Unearthed half a century ago in the Near East, the poem is the oldest and longest Sumerian poem known. Sumer, where the ancient literature was written, was the southern division of ancient Babylonia.

The story told in the poem, which deals with events 1,000 years before the author wrote his epic, or 5,000 years ago, sounds like a modern tale. Dictators, psychological warfare and political intrigue are all important elements in "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," the title Dr. Kramer has given the ancient work.

Smaller than an ordinary sheet of writing paper, the tablet on which Dr. Kramer found the poem was rediscovered by the archaeologist in the Museum of the Ancient Orient, Istanbul, Turkey. Dr. Kramer made his find during the past seven months while engaged in research in the Near East under the joint sponsorship of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the American Schools of Oriental Research.

The small slab with the epic scratched on it is a 12-column tablet containing a record total of more than 600 lines of Sumerian poetry.

Enmerkar, hero of the poem, was a Sumerian hero who ruled the biblical Erech, a city-state in southern Mesopotamia. The epic tells how the ancient Sumerian used a "war of nerves"



to capture a wealthy city nearby without bloodshed.

Dr. Kramer has translated enough of the ancient story to define clearly the main characters and the plot, but a full translation and interpretation will require further work.

Science News Letter, March 29, 1947

PHYSICS

Static-Reducing Devices To Aid Commercial Pilots

➤ CLEARER RADIO communications in bad weather and greater air safety are promised by simple wartime devices now being made available to commercial flying.

The devices are static dischargers and suppressors for shielding planes from accumulating static which disrupts radio communications in a storm. During the war, the dischargers and suppressors were credited with aiding safety of military planes, but all production went to the military. Now the devices have been released from government restrictions and are available to commercial flying, the Air Materiel Command said.

Consisting of a series of antenna insulators, tension units and conducting cotton wicking, the anti-static equipment is designed to fight precipitation static, which interferes with radio communications.

Precipitation static is set up in aircraft radio equipment when the electricity accumulated by the plane in flight is greater than in the surrounding air. This situation comes during storms and bad weather when dust, sand, smoke, ice crystals, snow crystals or rain strike against the surface of the plane and generate static electricity.

By shielding the plane and carrying off the accumulating static, the dis-

chargers and suppressors reduce the interference with radio communications.

The Air Materiel Command laboratories at Wright Field developed the antenna insulation system during the war, while the wick dischargers were made in cooperation with the Naval Research Laboratories. The equipment has been manufactured by Dayton Aircraft Products, Inc., Dayton, Ohio, under government contract.

Science News Letter, March 29, 1947

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