

Correspondence

SIR,

The Fourth auditory ossicle: Fact or Fantasy

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Dr. Ian Wind, of the Academisch Ziekenhuis der Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, assures me that the *Os Lenticularis* is no Dodo, but a Phoenix.

This minute ossicle has reared its head again.

An electron microscope photograph of the '*Os Lenticularis*' di *Callicebus* (a species of Primate) was published in 1974 by Masali and Ferraguti (*Il microscopio elettronico a scansione nello studio di alcuni aspetti evolutivi degli ossicini dell'udito dei Primati*; *Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia*. Vol. VIIV, p. 315), who say that the ossicle is minute, fragile and easily lost at the moment of disarticulation.

Dr. Wind adds '*The Os Orbiculare* has been found in (a) a chimp and (b) a New World monkey. Its presence, I think, is best seen as a phenotypical variation due, for example, to feeding conditions or diseases affecting calcium metabolism.

'Dissection of non-Caucasian, human middle ears could be interesting.'

Yours faithfully,

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