67. The Ostrich in South-Western Asia: A Further Note.

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It is possible to question whether the Parthians borrowed this fashion from the region which is now West Pakistan, or whether they introduced it in the course of their penetration and invasions, which were almost uninterrupted from the time of the Achaemenid Kings. According to the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (first century A.D.), the lower Indus valley (Sind) was occupied by numerous Parthian principalities.

FIG. 4. A PRIEST OF MOHENJO-DARO (c. 2500 B.C.)
Note the shaved upper lip. After Marshall

Several bas-reliefs of the Achaemenid period (c. 400 B.C.) show the same moustache, as on the Apadana stairs in Persepolis. In early Sparta (c. 800 B.C.), the ephors used to order the citizens "to shave their upper lip."? The custom was observed in ancient Syria and at a much earlier date in old Sumer and in Mari (3000 B.C.).

Ancient Egypt was an exception and never adopted the fashion; this fact may throw light on human relationships in the old world.

Finally we reach the Indus civilization of Mohenjo-Daro in Sind. Most of the heads excavated there had their moustache shaved. The well-known bust of a priest of Mohenjo-Daro, one of the best preserved, may serve as an example (fig. 4). Others are reproduced by Mackay 9 and Marshall.10

This fashion is not, however, used any longer by the inhabitants of the Mohenjo-Daro region or of the surrounding districts, and this may explain why it has not been noticed by the excavators of Mohenjo-Daro. Further to the north and to the south about 10 per cent of the population adhere to this mode.

In conclusion, I suggest that this fashion, probably the oldest extant on earth, began at Mohenjo-Daro towards 3000 B.C., spread to Sumer, Mesopotamia, Syria and Greece, lingered for a long time in Persia and survived to the present day in Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province in Pakistan, and among the Kurds and some tribes of Persia.

Notes
2 Ibid., Vol. IV, Plate CXXIV, c.
3 Ibid., Vol. I, fig. 211.
6 Ibid., Vol. IV, Plate XC (second human figure from left).
9 E. J. H. Mackay, Further Excavations in Mohenjo-Daro, Delhi, 1938, Vol. II, Plate LXXIV, figs. 23, 24, 25, 26, Plate LXXVI, fig. 18.
10 Sir John Marshall, Mohenjo-Daro, London, 1931, Vol. III, Plate XLIX, figs. 4, 5; Plate XLVIII is reproduced in our fig. 4.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Ostrich in South-Western Asia: A Further Note. With a text figure
67 Sir,—In 1928 during excavations in Mound ‘W’ by the Field Museum—Oxford University Joint Expedition to Kish, Iraq, we found a limestone plaque (fig. 1) showing an ostrich being ridden about 550 B.C. This remarkable scene (C.N.H.M. Neg. No. 75314J) is believed to be unique; additional information on similar data would be most welcome.

During the same year (Illustrated London News, p. 567, 7 April, 1928) Count P. Guerrini Malagnini of the Italian Consulate in Damascus described chasing six ostriches by car in the North Arabian or Syrian Desert. Four birds were shot and two were caught by the neck by Sheikh Midghem from the racing car.

Professor A. Aharoni (Science News Letter, p. 45, 18 July, 1931) described a similar chase near Qaryatan between Damascus and Palmyra. Four ostriches were chased: one escaped into the mountains; one was shot; and two were caught by the neck from the car after being pursued at high speed for two hours across the desert.

It is little wonder that the ostrich has almost disappeared from the Arabian Peninsula (MAN, 1952, 73).

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The Study of Race Relations. Cf. MAN, 1957, 145-148, 224, 245
68 Sir,—Dr. Freedman certainly contributes "to help reinforce the contention that race relations is not a distinct discipline with its own technique." His analysis is muddled. What for example does he mean by the statement that the study of contact between physically distinct races 'is morally wrong as well as being scientifically absurd'? As scientists we concern ourselves with facts, not with value or emotion, so that such statements are ammunition for those who charge that there is no science in social science.

Although Dr. Freedman has suggested that we may 'treat the race of race relations as fortuitous,' and that the scholar must remove 'the misconception that because there is a subject called