



Bits & Pieces – Issue No. 99

Christopher L. Murphy

Edited by Gene Baade



Vasitri by Philippe Coudray

Among the various hominoids said to inhabit South America, we have the following report:

The earliest is that of the Baron Alexander von Humboldt, being a careful record of the local Amerindians' descriptions of a creature they called the Vasitri which, they said, constructed primitive huts, was carnivorous, and would eat men but carried off women for breeding purposes. There is nothing outrageous about this, for many ABSMs [hominoids] have now been reported to be carnivorous (at least at times), and their carrying off of women for reproduction is almost standard. [Something, incidentally, that all Africans that I have met who know and live among gorillas and chimps absolutely deny that those apes ever do.] Several other early



Baron Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859)

writers are said to have mentioned the same creatures in this area.

Reference for this material: Ivan Sanderson, 1961. *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life*, pages 171–172.

—00—



No discussion of South America is complete without mention of the infamous de Loys' Manbeast. Exactly 100 years ago (1920), François de Loys alleged that he shot the creature seen in the above photo in Venezuela, and stated that it was over 5 feet tall. He had collected the head and skin of the creature, but such were lost in a boating accident, along with other photos.



François de Loys (1892–1935)

When it was noticed that the creature was sitting on a fuel crate with known dimensions, the animal's height was calculated to be within the range of spider monkeys common to the region. What was the beast's height? Using a computer, I calculated it to be a maximum of 4 feet (48 inches) tall. Ivan Sanderson calculated just 27 inches tall. He obviously did not take into account that the creature was sitting down, so would need to add about 8 inches to begin with. Just how he would mess up with other numbers is beyond me, but whatever the case, spider monkeys can be up to 5 feet tall.

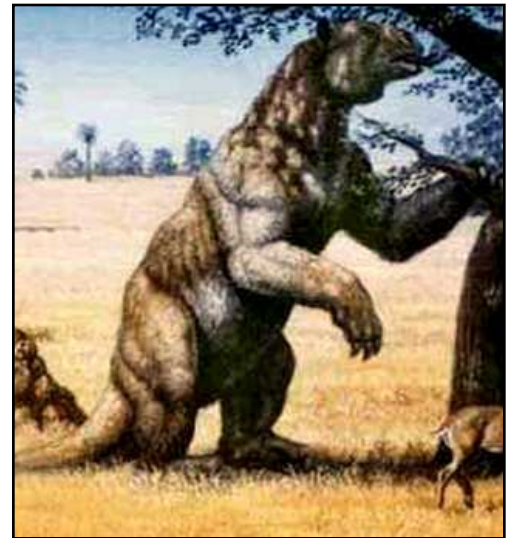
I have not seen any scientific justification for a spider monkey other than the height issue, so here is a

comparison of the head of a spider monkey and the head of the de Loys' creature, with their facial features about the same size. I would say that they are almost identical.



Reference: Book title previously provided, pages 174–175.

—00—



Although the giant ground sloth became extinct in about 2660 BC, something resembling it called a mapinguary is said to live in South America. This creature is blamed for odd oxen mutilations whereby an ox is killed and its tongue ripped out.

The mapinguary leaves large human-like footprints (although no example) so it gets mixed in with hominoids. The image provided is said to be of a mapinguary, but it's simply an extinct giant sloth; although likely one in the same if the animal exists.

This sort of thing gets difficult to deal with. I don't consider it a part of hominology.

—00—



Gran Sabana plateau in Venezuela (average altitude 3,280 feet) with its Guyanese massive (land formation) seen above, is the magic land in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's book *The Lost World* (1912). It is here that Doyle imagined the home of the last dinosaurs as well as monkey-men (the missing link).

Is it likely Ivan Sanderson read Doyle's book and had *The Lost World* in mind when he wrote the following?

...Here, if anywhere, is the place where really ancient relics should have been able to linger; and there are some real lusus that have done so there. It is notable that the representatives of almost all the great groups of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and especially of fishes and insects, found in South America turn up there in strange and sometimes fabulous guises. There are great numbers of living fossils in this area; creatures like the Hoatzin or "Stinking Pheasant," a bird that, when young, has a clawed finger[s] on its wing [s], like an Archaeopteryx. This block of ancient mountains seems, indeed, to have been a refuge from flooding throughout geological ages—a sort of last retreat for wave after wave of creatures throughout time, driven out of their previous habitats by shifts or submergences of the earth's crust. This is where we would most expect to come across ABSMs [relict hominoids] if there are any, or have ever been any, on this continent. And it is indeed from there that the most reports, and the most definite ones, have come.

Reference: Book title previously provided, pages 177.



Although Venezuela sounds much more romantic, British Columbia has the same sort of "other world" regions—certainly much colder, but the same kind of thing.

As to Sanderson's reference to the "Stinking Pheasant," as seen in the following image, this is really quite interesting.



Wikipedia tells us:

The hoatzin ["stinking pheasant"] (*Opisthocomus hoatzin*), also known

as the reptile bird, skunk bird, stinkbird, or Canje pheasant, is a species of tropical bird found in swamps, riparian forests, and mangroves of the Amazon and the Orinoco basins in South America. It is notable for having chicks that have claws on two of their wing digits [both wings—like thumb and forefinger. The claws are functional but are lost when the bird becomes an adult].

The hoatzin was originally described in 1776 by German zoologist Statius Müller. There has been much debate about the hoatzin's relationships with other birds. Because of its distinctness it has been given its own family, the Opisthocomidae, and its own suborder, the Opisthocomi. At various times, it has been allied with such taxa as the tinamous, the Galliformes (gamebirds), the rails, the bustards, seriemas, sandgrouse, doves, turacos and other Cuculiformes, and mousebirds. A whole genome sequencing study published in 2012 places the hoatzin as the sister taxon of a clade composed of Gruiformes (cranes) and Charadriiformes (plovers).

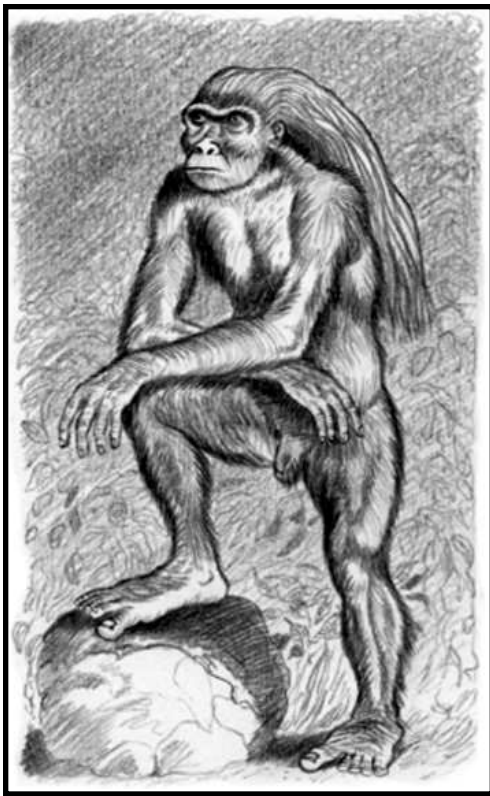
In 2015, genetic research indicated that the hoatzin is the last surviving member of a bird line that branched off in its own direction 64 million years ago, shortly after the extinction event that killed the non-avian dinosaurs.

With regard to why the hoatzin stinks, here is the reason:

This so-called 'stink bird' reeks of fresh cow manure or sweet-smelling hay, because of its unusual diet [only eats leaves]... A hoatzin digests its food incredibly slowly. A meal takes up to 45 hours to pass through their systems. This is why these birds loaf around for up to 80 per cent of the time—they are effectively chewing the cud.

...Its leafy diet is responsible for its distinctive smell. Bacteria in its gut breaks down the vegetable matter, and the fermentation process releases smelly gases.

I wonder if this sort of thing has anything to do with hominoids who emit a foul odor?



Séhité by Phillippe Coudray

Bernard Heuvelmans related the following regarding small (Pygmy-size) hominoids in Africa:

According to an African technician of mine from Toulepleu called Mehaud Taou, an intelligent boy keenly interested in these questions, there was recently a system of barter between the negroes and these forest creatures; various manufactured goods were left in the forest in exchange for various fruits. This was supposed to have gone on until 1935. The little men who practiced this barter were hardly known even to the negroes themselves. The Guerres called them Séhité.

Reference/Definition: Book title previously provided, pages 190. The definition of this hominoid from the *Encyclopedia of Cryptozoology* is: "The séhité is a cryptid small hominid reported from the rain forests of Côte d'Ivoire, from Seguela to Abidjan."

The possibility that these hominoids traded with human natives indicates high "humanness." Early reports of sasquatch in British Columbia also indicated a trade practice with First Nations people.



Agogwe

In a 1937 article entitled "African Mystery Beast" by Captain William Hichens the following is stated:

Some years ago I was sent on an official lion-hunt to this area [Ussure and Simbiti forests on the western side of the Wembare plains] and, while waiting in a forest glade for a man-eater, I saw two small, brown, furry creatures come from dense forest on one side of the glade and disappear into the thickets on the other. They were like little men, about 4 feet high, walking upright, but clad in russet hair. The native hunter with me gazed in mingled fear and amazement. They were, he said, agogwe, the little furry men whom one does not see once in a lifetime. I made desperate efforts to find them, but without avail in that well-nigh impenetrable forest. They may have been monkeys, but, if so, they were no ordinary monkeys, nor baboons, nor colobus, nor Sykes [*], nor any other kind found in Tanganyika. What were they?

Reference: Book title previously provided, page 191.

*Oddly, the reference is to the Sykes' monkey named after William Henry Sykes (1790–1872).



Mau or Mau man

Roger Courtenay relates the following account of a small hominoid provided to him by his guide. The information is in Courtenay's book's book *The Greenhorn in Africa* (1940).

"But have you heard of the little people who live in the Mau—small men, who are less men than monkeys? Less than shenzi (i.e. loathsome foreigners), these little men, and almost monkeys in their lives and ways..." And he went on to tell how his own father, who was driving his sheep to pasture on the slopes of Mount Longenot, fell into the hands of these gnomes when he went into a cave, following the trail of blood left by one of his cattle that had been stolen. He was stunned from behind, and when he came round he found he was surrounded by strange little creatures. "The Mau men were lower even," he told his son, "than those little people of the forests [the pygmies] for, though they had no tails that I could see, they were as the monkeys that swing in the forest trees. Their skins were white, with the whiteness of the belly of a lizard, and their faces and bodies were covered with long, black hair." To his great surprise the shepherd noticed that his spear was still lying at his side. "The Mau men who are so nearly monkeys did not

know what was the spear. It is possible they did not know I could have fought with it and killed many of them.”

Reference: Book title previously provided, page 192.

Loren Coleman notes the following in his CRYPTOZOONEWS:

Hirsute beings of small size are known by a variety of names throughout Africa (including in the Congo), they are called kakundakári; in central Africa as amajungi or niaka-ambuguzá; in East Africa as agogwe, doko, mau, or mberikimo; in southern Africa as chimanimani or tokoleshe; and in West Africa as abonesi, ijiméré, or séhité. Attention has been given to these reports in different decades. For example, there were widespread reports of reddish-haired séhité in 1940s' Ivory Coast (more properly known today at République de Côte d'Ivoire), where there were no known pygmies at all.

I have discussed African pygmies in a previous paper, pointing out that they are just as human as you and I and their DNA would be the same as ours. It would not indicate what they looked like. I believe there are indicators that might imply their race (where they came from), but



African pygmies and a European visitor, c. 1921.

that's about it. Perhaps one day DNA processes will advance and improve, but right now it's a dead end. Essentially, DNA is only useful in determining what something is if that something has already been identified. In other words, a comparison can be made. Nevertheless, DNA does indicate animal types (biological order), such as a primate as opposed to other types of animals. Here, it must be kept in mind that humans are primates.

I am sure I have oversimplified this subject and likely need to be corrected.



Wanja Twan (1934–2019)

I was saddened to hear of the death of Wanja Twan in September 2019. Somehow the news did not get to me, or I missed it. Wanja was René Dahinden's ex-wife. I recall sitting with him one day and he told me about his marriage and so forth. He pulled a ring-binder from a shelf that had color photos of Wanja in the early years. I looked at the photos in silence, but said to myself, "Wow, that's a very attractive lady." The above photo appears to be taken just after she and René got married—note the ring on her left hand. The photos I saw were taken some years later.

It would not be until after René died in 2001 that I met Wanja at the Celebration of Life event for René. After that, a year or so, I went to see her in Hope, BC. This had to do with my upcoming exhibit at the Museum of Vancouver. I spent a fair amount of time with her. She was a very intelligent lady; we discussed many subjects. She thereupon took me to her sasquatch museum exhibit in a little store in Hope. It was a fine day so we walked to the store. On the way she said to me in effect, "I have no hard feelings for René. He just had to do what he wanted to do and I accepted it." Wanja was really, quite a lady, highly responsible and very smart.

Wanja assisted me tremendously with my Vancouver exhibit. She was able to work things out so that I got all the artifacts I asked for in René's collection. She telephoned me while I was up near Kamloops, and on my way back I picked up everything at her apartment. She came

to my exhibit opening in 2004 and we kept in touch for quite a few years.



Wanja is seen here with me in her little museum. The sasquatch carving is by Robert Forde, a local artist. Wanja purchased it for her museum. She had many photos of René with various notable personalities.

In her own rite, Wanja was a professional. She studied and taught the principles of Reiki, an ancient Japanese healing system based on channeling spiritual energy through the hands. She went on to become one of just 22 Reiki world-wide Masters and wrote four books on the subject. The International Center for Reiki Training has estimated that there are 4,000,000 people throughout the world who have taken at least one level of Reiki training. In 2008 a *USA Today* article reported that in 2007 15% of U.S. hospitals (over 800) offered Reiki as a regular part of patient services.

Wanja worked with me (and approved) the biography I provided for René in *Sasquatch in British Columbia* (2012), pages 361–365.

I do recall Wanja telling me about Reiki, but I did not think a lot about it. René never mentioned it to me. When I finally researched it, I was quite surprised.

Farewell Wanja, you certainly impressed me as you did many, many people.

