



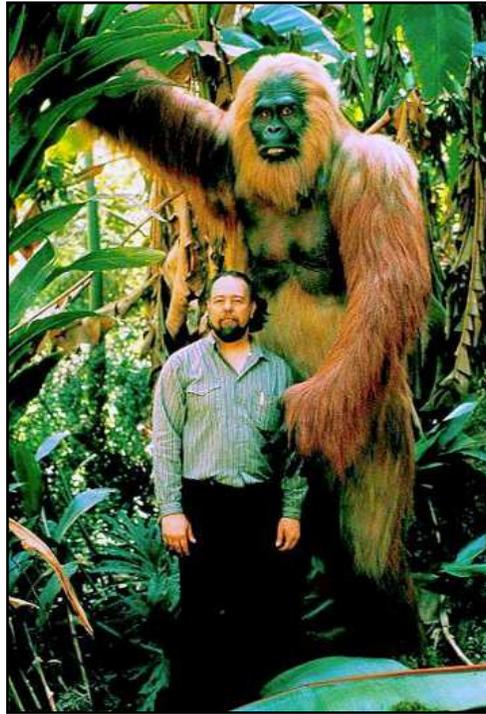
The *Gigantopithecus blacki* Hypothesis

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Many cryptozoologists and other sasquatch enthusiasts still accept the hypothesis that *Gigantopithecus blacki* (*G. blacki*) somehow explains the presence of today's sasquatch. This proposition in the past became a strong contender in the effort to understand the true nature of sasquatches. Unfortunately it is still accepted today by many laymen. Additional motivation for this belief may have stemmed in part from the *G. blacki* reconstruction by paleoanthro-sculptor Bill Munns, based on how he and paleo-anthropologist Dr. Russell J. Ciochon thought *G. blacki* might have looked. It is understandable when viewing the reconstruction that one might conclude that *G. blacki* must somehow explain sasquatch.

However, there is no evidence of any kind that *G. blacki* possessed an adducted hallux or was bipedal, two morphological characteristics possessed by sasquatches. While a bipedal *G. blacki* may have been a convenient way of trying to explain the sasquatch phenomenon, it seems that the foot issue remained a serious question even for some academic researchers. Today the *G. blacki* proposition needs re-addressing using a current application of science and logic.

A review of the *G. blacki* hypothesis reveals serious flaws. It demands that we look further than this ancient ape for the explanation of sasquatch. For example, there are serious obstacles to accepting the hypothetical reconstruction as being a factual representation of the real *G. blacki*, much less accepting *G. blacki* as the explanation for the present-day sasquatch. It's important for the reader to understand that the reconstruction by Bill Munns is an impressive appearing model. This writing is not a negative commentary on his work. The reconstruction was a collaboration between Dr. Ciochon and Mr. Munns. It was based on their best

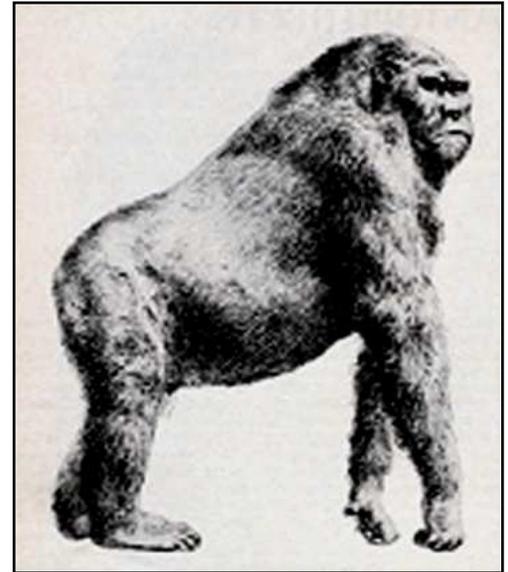


Bill Munns and his *Gigantopithecus blacki* model.

calculations of size, shape, and height.

As is explained herein, even if the reconstructed model had been an exact representation of *G. blacki* in every dimension, it would still not explain the presence of sasquatch. Neither the appearance of the model nor the ancient existence of *G. blacki* can be scientifically linked to sasquatch. It is unfortunate that many have accepted this proposition as true, since it is quite lacking, scientifically speaking. Yet with comments at the time from some in academia that reflected a focus limited to an ape-like creature, accepting that *G. blacki* might explain the presence of sasquatches was understandable.

In an effort to bring clarity to this issue, we will examine why this claim lacks validity. In doing so, we will examine the science of *G. blacki* and the methodology used in making the model. First, one must understand that the ancient *G. blacki* species has been classified by science as a giant ape. Its name is derived from the Latin *giganto* (big) and *pithecus* (ape). As such, it would have been quadrupedal with an



Gigantopithecus blacki, from the *American Journal*, 1970.

abducted or divergent hallux. *G. blacki* was placed among the Asian apes, a descendant along with the orangutan of the earlier ape ancestor *Sivapithecus*, which is “best know” from an 8 million-year old skull discovered in Pakistan. Until a complete post-cranial skeleton of a *G. blacki* is discovered, or at least its foot bones, the assigned name *Gigantopithecus blacki* is likely to remain. The drawing of *G. blacki* from the journal *Scientific American*, January 1970 (seen above), is likely closer to the actual appearance of this giant ape than any other representation. One can clearly see that this is not what eye witnesses of sasquatches are reporting.

We must remember that the *G. blacki* reconstruction was a creative interpretation made to produce a visual image of the way *G. blacki* might have appeared. It was made at the request of Dr. Ciochon and was derived from comparisons with great apes. Dr. Ciochon explained it thusly:

To gain a more complete image of what the giant ape looked like, we sought the help of Bill Munns, who creates highly realistic, life-size models of existing endangered primates... for zoos and educational institutions. Based on the jaws and

teeth, and using the proportions of the skulls of existing great apes, we estimated that the average male *Gigantopithecus* had a skull that measured 18" from the bottom to the highest point of the sagittal crest (a male gorilla, for comparison, has a skull ten inches high). The next step was to project a hypothetical skeleton from the hypothetical skull. (Underlining by author.)

Dr. Ciochon further explained:

For this purpose Munns used as references two of the largest terrestrial primates known to man, one modern being the gorilla; and one from the fossil record, the extinct giant baboon *Theropithecus oswaldi*. In determining the size of the *Gigantopithecus*, we felt it necessary to scale the body back a bit, so as not to be influenced too much by the giant ape's extraordinarily deep and thickened mandible. Nevertheless, given that the average male silverback gorilla is about six feet tall (standing erect) and weighs about 400 pounds, Munns calculated that the average *Gigantopithecus* male was more than ten feet tall and weighed as much as 1,200 pounds, comparable to a large male polar bear. (underlining by author.)

The phrases, "project a hypothetical skeleton from the hypothetical skull," "scale the body back a bit," and "not to be influenced too much by," are significant clues which tell us the model is not an exact likeness of a real *G. blacki*, but truly is an artistic work based on an imagined amalgam of an extinct ape, a modern day gorilla, and the fossilized teeth and mandible fragments from several *G. blacki*.

In a separate article, both Ciochon and Munns further acknowledged that the 1 to 6.5 head to body ratio used for the model may have been conservative. Thus, the reconstruction could have perhaps been made even larger than it is. Based on Dr. Ciochon's own words, we need to understand that the accuracy of the reconstruction as a true likeness of the giant ape *G. blacki* is inexact. It is unquestionably an impressive looking model, but it would be incorrect to accept it as an exact likeness of the real *G. blacki*.

Found in Asia, the only fossil remains of *G. blacki* are three jaw bones and about a thousand recovered teeth. The skull of *G. blacki* and the full reconstruction by Munns stems from only these few fossilized pieces and estimated calculations made by Munns and Ciochon. No other remains of a *G. blacki* skeleton have ever been found. There are no arm bones, no leg bones, no feet bones—just no other bones. Thus the true appearance and size of the ape remains unknown. This is also why the reconstruction had to be based on hypothetical dimensions and calculations.

A further examination by Dr. Ciochon of the *G. blacki* diet stemming from evidence found on its teeth provided even more evidence which supports its classification as a quadrupedal ape. Ciochon found opal phytoliths bonded to the molar teeth. These phytoliths permitted the identification of the actual plant remains eaten by these nonhuman animals prior to their death. His analysis showed a diet consisting of grasses, which may have been a mix of bamboo with other vegetation, and fruits.

For *G. blacki* to exist today, they would need to consume large amounts of vegetation on a daily basis, even more than is consumed each day by large, modern apes. Such consumption would have a visible impact on vegetation within their environment. In fact, such visible signs are one way researchers are able to know where present-day gorilla families have recently fed, and the direction in which they are moving. Yet when researchers are in known sasquatch habitat, they find no visible signs of such large scale consumption of vegetative matter. While they have found bushes and trees from which fruits and berries have been removed, we must remember that birds and other animals also consume such fare. To date, I am not aware of any reports of vegetative consumption on the scale that would be required to feed a live *G. blacki*.

We must also remember that sasquatches are omnivores, consuming several kinds of meat as well as leaves, berries, and fruits. This reduces their dependency on vegetative matter and is consistent with field findings of deer and hog carcasses indicative of sasquatch

feeding habits. To the contrary, the teeth of *G. blacki* showed no indication that they consumed raw meat.

It is important that we further understand that a living sasquatch has specific anatomical features, which cannot be scientifically linked to *G. blacki* or its hypothetical reconstruction due to a lack of *G. blacki* post cranial skeletal remains. Neither have fossil bones of *G. blacki* been found in North America. Thus there is no evidence to indicate a linkage between *G. blacki* and sasquatch on this continent. While some have suggested that *G. blacki* could have crossed into North America on the Beringia land bridge, this is also lacking in any evidentiary foundation. Understanding that creative license was necessary in order to achieve the reconstructed model, we can see that it is both reasonable and logical to conclude that it is impossible for the appearance of *G. blacki* (model or real) and the appearance of sasquatch to be identical.

As noted, and based on today's scientific classification of *G. blacki* as an ape, there is no scientific evidence that *G. blacki* ever possessed bipedal locomotion. As an ape, it would have been expected to be a quadruped. Because we know that sasquatches are primarily bipedal with an adducted or non-opposing big toe, it would take a giant leap of scientific manipulation to conclude that *G. blacki* is today's sasquatch. It's important that we understand that Dr. Ciochon never claimed that *G. blacki* is today's sasquatch. In fact, he is on record as stating that he does not believe sasquatch exist, and he does not link the *G. blacki* reconstruction to any claim regarding sasquatch.

G. blacki is still studied today. The most recent is a study conducted by scientists from the University of Copenhagen, and published in *Nature* on November 13, 2019. Its purpose was to shed light on what is likely the present day relative of *G. blacki*. The study sought to compare "protein-based phylogenetic enamel sequences" with those from extant apes (*Hominoidea*). Their results revealed that *G. blacki* is a related taxon with all extant orangutans. In short, living orangutans are the nearest relative

of *G. blacki*. Each is a quadruped, and both are apes. To date no evidence has been developed supporting that a bipedal sasquatch with an adducted hallux is in any manner related to the giant ape *G. blacki*.

The *G. blacki* proposition is replete with discrepancies, leaving us with more issues of accuracy and validity than solutions supported by logic and scientific evidence. Based on what we know of this extinct giant ape and the hypothetical creativity used to achieve the reconstruction, accepting it as being representative or identical to a sasquatch is without evidentiary foundation.

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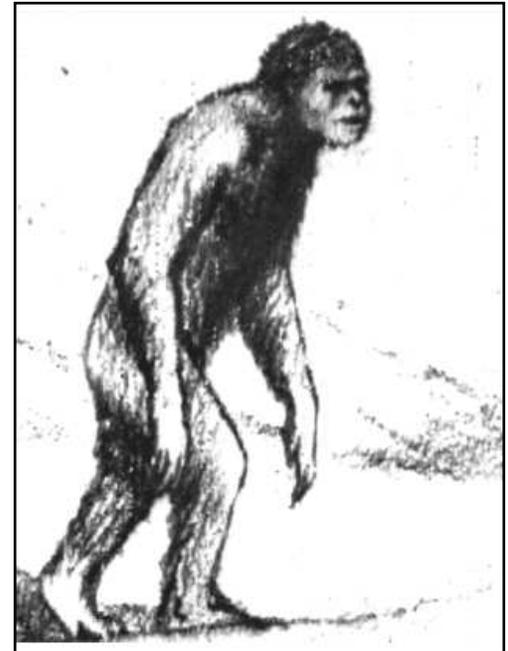
This year (2020) Russia turns 1,158 years old. Of course, that's not the age of the land, it's the age of reasonably organized society. I think we can use the date of 862 AD AT LEAST to mark the beginning of Russian people noticing things and keeping records. Also, people started recording things told to them by their predecessors. All I wish to do here is find a reference point as to when Russian people started coming up with names and recording them for the hominoids they saw.

Because Russia is such a massive country there was not a lot of early communications so numerous regions came up with their own names. Dr. John Bindernagel tried to sort this out and was informed of the most popular names (I am sure there are many others) as shown on the adjacent map. All of the names shown obviously represented over at least 1,000 years.

The only parallel to this situation is North America. In this case, numerous tribes of the Native people who have

HOMINOIDS IN RUSSIA

Note: The term "Russian Snowman" covers all entities.



Witness drawings of what is referred to as a kaptar in Russia (1957) and photos (video stills) of a hominoid taken in Poland in the 1990s. Note the similarity.

been providing artistic evidence for at least 1,000 years created their own names for the sasquatch. As I recall the count is over 150 different names.

The burning question is, how many different hominoid types do the names in both cases infer?

One of the Russian names, "kaptar," created a minor stir in the then Soviet

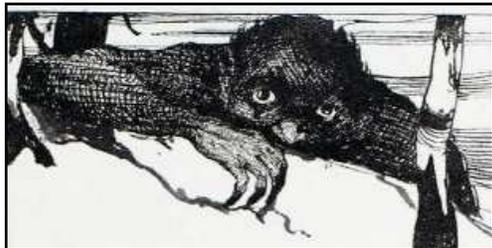
scientific circles in 1957 and 1958 when a noted hydrographer, A.G. Pronin, from Leningrad University, twice saw a kaptar in the Pamir Mountains (two expeditions in those years—not sure of details). He created the witness drawings seen here, which are exceedingly good. I would expect that Pronin had either a Masters or a Doctorate (PhD) in hydrography, so

would have been a highly credible witness. Nevertheless, Pronin's experiences were not taken seriously by Soviet scientists and are now simply a part of hominology records.

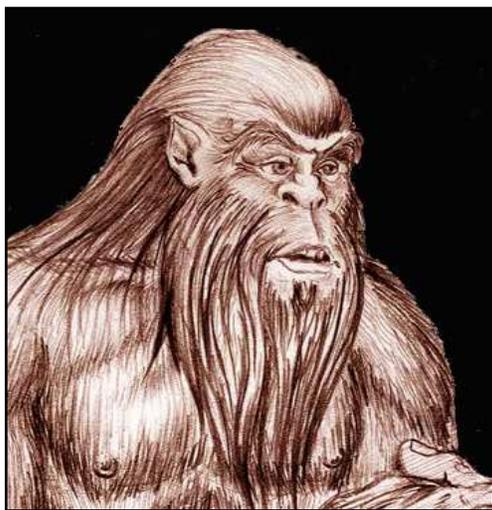
As to all the other Russian names, Dmitri Bayanov tells us that the most common is "leshy." I think this might be because this hominoid is in the more populated part of the country. The following artistic depiction of a leschy appears to be very old.



As in North America, hominoids start off as "wild men" or "men gone wild" and then as more information comes to light they transform into hair-covered hominoids. The following depiction of a leschy by P. Dobrinin was created in 1906.



The latest artwork we have of the almasty, also a popular name, is by witness Andrey Lyubchenko (2019). It is as follows (B&P Issue No. 41):



Whatever the case, from general information on the Internet the hominoids referenced (those I could find) are very much the same—ape-like hair-covered men or women.

About ten years after A.G. Pronin's first experience, the Americans (Patterson and Gimlin) got movie footage of a sasquatch in California (1967). In this case the hominoid is female, so no long beard. Frame 364 from the film follows:



Most certainly, this hominoid is hair-covered, but not profusely like a bear. Had Pronin seen it in Russia, I think he would have called it a kaptar.

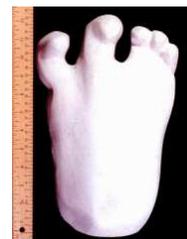
I am sure many skeptics will read this and say, "OK, this thing has been seen and recorded in Russia and North America for at least 1,000 years. Now tell me why we don't have any tangible, decisive evidence of one or the other." My answer is, obviously what we have been doing and are doing is not working. This issue needs serious scientific study and serious government money to resolve.

Reference for this material on A.G. Pronin: Ivan Sanderson, 1961. *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life*, page 309.



Loren Coleman brought to my attention that the wonderful yeti artwork (1975) in B&P 102 was created by Gino D'Achille (1935–2017). I found an obituary article and present it on the next page. I also found a detail of the original work (not the full painting) as seen above, which shows the ground level. We can see that Gino did not agree with the configuration of the yeti foot as indicated by the footprints found by Ward and Shipton in 1951.

Here is my cast copy again. Obviously, the toes seen in the cast would not appear as Gino has them. Would he have known about the footprints? I think so.



When a man like that does something, he checks things out. He would have asked his secretary to provide a full statement on whatever or whoever he was asked to depict.

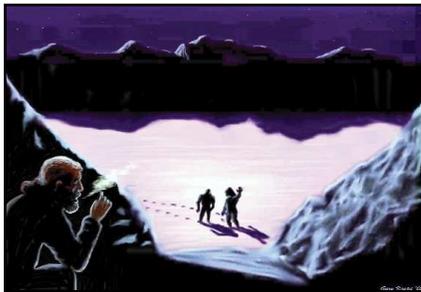
I have mentioned before that artists of that caliber have remarkable insights, which come through many years of experience. They can take what is known and connect the dots, as it were, and provide an image that very likely is highly accurate.

In Gino's original artwork, there are three men looking down at the yetis in a

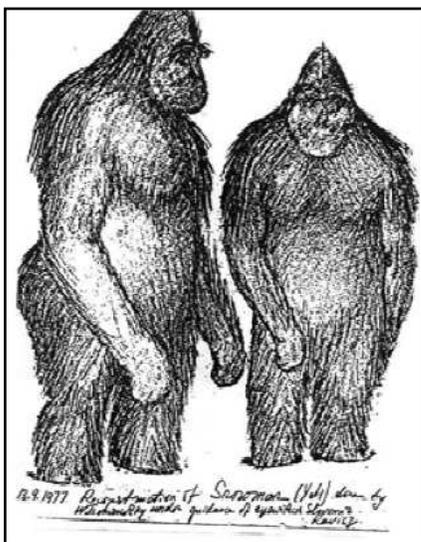


snowfield as seen here. This scene was associated with the Slavomir Rawicz (1915–2004) and company experience in 1941, as related in Rawicz's book *The Long Walk* (1955).

When I first learned of Rawicz I asked artist Gary Krejci if he would depict the scene when the yetis were first spotted. I featured his artwork, as follows, in my book *Know the Sasquatch*.



Gary depicted the scene from the opposite perspective. We see Rawicz gazing down on two yeti. In 1977 Rawicz had a drawing created (as follows) under his direction of the yetis seen.



There has been much controversy as to Rawicz's claims provided in his book, but as far as I know he went to his grave stating that everything was true.

Illustrator who ranged from film posters to the Bible by way of MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman* novels

GINO D'ACHILLE, who has died aged 81, was a talented illustrator whose work spanned a period from Italian film posters of the late 1950s to the covers of George MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman* novels, which are still in print.

He was born in Rome on November 30 1935, the son of a plumber. As a child in Mussolini's Italy he showed precocious talent and at the age of 11 had his first public success when he was invited to present a portrait he had made of Pope Pius XII to the Holy Father himself. Aged 13 he was selected for special training in art at Rome's Liceo Artistico, progressing, aged 19, to the University of Architecture where he worked at night on film posters for the Studio Favalli.

D'Achille started work as an illustrator in Milan, but in 1964 a commission to illustrate David Kossoff's *Bible Stories* for the publishers Collins took him to London. He fell in love with the city and his film-star looks did him no harm in fashionable Sixties circles. He visited the British capital frequently, often making the journey in an original Fiat Cinquecento. Soon he moved to live there, joining the agency Artists Partners and becoming part of a group of fresh and original illustrators whose work provided a distinctive visual background to London in the Sixties. D'Achille's work combined highly



D'Achille in his studio and one of his *Flashman* illustrations

polished execution with dramatic, inventive composition which made any subject fresh and memorable, from a herd of grazing mammoths to the Great Fire of London. His natural talent, combined with his specialist training, enabled him to produce work better and faster than his rivals, and his images always contained a promise of excitement that made the viewer want to read the book or see the film. Once he was living in London the flow of commissions never faltered. He illustrated the Bible, Sherlock Holmes stories, *The Jungle Book*, Fu



Manchu stories, Arthurian legends, Edgar Rice Burroughs's *John Carter of Mars* series and the Jack Vance Science Fantasy series as well as stories by Daphne du Maurier and Mary Stewart.

His skill and commercial flair probably reached their apogee in the wonderfully knowing illustrations for Harper's George MacDonald Fraser's *Flashman* series. The covers, of which there were at least a dozen, all had a common layout in which the hero is depicted brimming with self-confidence in the foreground. Behind

him, in beguiling detail, D'Achille included scenes of the twin allures of violent combat in the background and love interest (increasingly erotic as the series went on) in the middle ground. In later life D'Achille bore the burdens of Parkinson's disease as well as diabetes with unfailing fortitude and patience, never losing his gentle charm or mischievous humour, nor his dedication to drawing. At dinner parties he would often grab a pencil and produce lightning caricatures of guests on napkins or scraps of paper. He was skilled at defusing any unintended consequences of his accuracy. "I am so sorry, I have put 10 kilos on you!" he might say. Even when very ill in hospital he made sketches of his nurses.

Originals of his work are eagerly sought by collectors, and his daughter, Simona, is in the process of setting up a foundation in his name to maintain his legacy. An exhibition, "Smoking Guns", featuring some of his work, opened at the Lever Gallery in east London in December.

D'Achille's first marriage, to Noris Cappellini, was dissolved, and he subsequently married his long-term partner, the painter Mim Hain. They had studios together in London and in Corsica. She survives him with the son and daughter of his first marriage.

Gino D'Achille, born November 30 1935, died February 10 2017