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whose height was 6 cubits and a span..." (1 Sam 17:4)

AND THERE WERE GIANTS...

by John Mount © 2001

What of the fossilised giant mentioned in the Strand magazine of 1895, whose 12-foot-2-inch body was propped up for viewing against a 19th century railroad carriage, totally dwarfing it? It's funny how these "finds" often disappear and never again see the light of day. Thankfully, a reporter took a photograph...

During a stormy BC military campaign, the Israelite commander David already of giant-killing fame and later become king of the Israelites), with the help of his army, fought a decisive battle with a Philistine army that contained a number of men of gigantic stature, eventually killing several of them. The biblical commentator mentions that while examining one of the bodies of these giants, David's men noticed some unusual characteristics:

And there was...a battle in Gath, a city of the Philistines also known as the City of Giants, where was [found the body of] a man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers and on every foot six toes... (2 Sam 21:20)

In one of his books, Harold T. Wilkins quotes excerpts from the publication *American Antiquities* regarding the finding of giant human footprints in solid rock at the headwaters of the Tennessee River near Braystown. The prints are unique in that they contain six toes! One print more pronounced than the rest is of a heel ball measuring 13 inches (33 centimetres) across!

It appears that these giant men in the distant, prehistoric past were leading their horses along a muddy or clay track when one of the horses must have slipped several inches, causing a more pronounced imprint of a hoof. This particular hoofprint measured 8 by 10 inches (20 by 25 centimetres)!

According to G. H. Williamson in his book, *Road in the Sky*, Talmudic and Midrashic literature contains several references to giants with double rows of teeth. In fact, in the many worldwide references to giants, one often comes across these strange traits of six fingers and toes with the occasional double row of teeth thrown in. Perhaps these are the "hallmarks" of true giants.

Abnormally oversized humans are nearly always recognisable as such, because their height is often gained at the expense of their build (as in gigantism). Apparently, true giants were also easily distinguishable by their build, which (like normal humans) was in balanced proportion to their height.

There were several battles reported between the early Israelites and foreign armies containing giants. It was as though these giant men were used as mercenaries by early Middle Eastern civilisations.

At least one early Israelite account describes the size of one of these giants as well as the weight of some of their captured armour and weapons: "Goliath of Gath



The photograph published in Strand Magazine in 1895.

The photograph published in Strand Magazine in 1895. These giants, say the Inca, were so huge that "from the knee down, they were as tall as a tall man". In the many worldwide references to giants, one often comes across these strange traits of six fingers and toes ...

The stumbling blocks in these old reports are the different interpretations of the Mediterranean cubit. It was known to vary between 18 and 21 inches. The biblical cubit is conservatively reckoned at 17.5 inches (44.5 centimetres), representing the distance measured from an adult's elbow to the tip of the middle finger, which would make Goliath in his stockinged feet at least 9 feet 5.75 inches (2.9 metres) tall. Another battle produced a captured breastplate of mail weighing 5,000 shekels (126 pounds or 57 kilograms) as well as a trophied spear, which the commentator compared to the size of a heavy "weaver's beam". The spearhead, when weighed by itself, tipped the scales at 600 shekels (approx. 15 lbs or 7 kg). (1 Sam 17:7)

According to ancient literature, humans and giants were rarely able to live together in harmony. A manuscript called *The Apocalypse of Baruch*, a pseudepigraphical work written around AD 100 and preserved only in the sixth-century Syriac Vulgate (and which seems a little unclear in parts) appears to hint at the origin of giants:

Men began as giants. These first giants were very highly developed, intellectually, artistically and physi - cally: they had power over birds and animals...they misbehaved and were abolished by God, and ordinary men took their place...

H. T. Wilkins, in his book *Mysteries of Ancient South America*, recalls old Peruvian traditions that tell of a time during their long past when a race of giant men, who came from the Pacific Ocean in ships, invaded the lowlands of old Peru, forcing the Inca high up into their mountain strongholds in the Andes.

These giants, say the Inca, were so huge that "from the knee down, they were as tall as a tall man". According to Wilkins, the Inca say that these giant men "brought no women with them", and because they were too big for the Inca women they became "homosexual", and "one day while they were publicly polluting the marketplace with these practices, a fire from heaven rained down on them and consumed them".

Not all the giants perished in this "Sodom and Gomorrah-type holocaust", according to Wilkins. The survivors, apparently totally ticked off by these traumatic events and out after revenge, ascended the Cordilleras in pursuit of the Inca but were "dispersed" when they met the armies of the Inca king Ayataca Cuso.

It is noteworthy that giant-killing humans were somehow able to differentiate between humans with abnormal, excessive growth and bona fide giants. And because many of the giants themselves were of varying sizes, one wonders what criteria were used for determining the difference between a short giant and an abnormally large, well-built human.

Perhaps it was the extra fingers and toes that gave them away.

In March 1858, Commodore Byron of the French warship *La Patrie* during a visit to Port St Julien in Patagonia had an interesting conversation with the chief of a 500- strong tribe whose men were well over seven feet tall; none of the women were under six feet tall. The chief's body, according to the report, was covered with "hideous paintings", and the fellow was described as having a "fierce countenance".

He also had the skin of a wild animal thrown over one shoulder, which was probably a symbol of office—and which is strongly reminiscent of those drawings of Hercules, portrayed in ancient Mediterranean paintings, where he is shown armed with a club and with the skin of the Nemean lion draped over one shoulder. Which is also probably similar to that figure of a giant, which is carved into the chalk in the English countryside of Dorset. Research in recent years shows that the Dorset giant, bearing a club, was also once provided with something draped over the shoulder or upper arm.

The giant teeth found in China and known as "dragon's teeth" were found by the German-Dutch palaeontologist G. H. R. von Koenigswald around 1935 in a Chinese herbal shop. They were studied by various authorities who noticed that they bore a striking resemblance to human teeth, though around twice the size.

They calculated that the teeth belonged to a hominoid around 11.8 feet (3.6 metres) tall, which would have weighed in at 694 pounds (315 kilograms).

Von Koenigswald named the creature *Gigantopithecus blacki*. The close resemblance to human teeth had led some palaeomorphologists at the time to speculate that modern humans might have descended from "giant" ancestors. Modern science, however, was adamant that the teeth are from "giant extinct apes".

As far as this writer knows, the only evidence that science possesses of these creatures at the moment is a few teeth, some lower jawbones and possibly a piece of distal humerus. (Isn't it laughable that, ever since Darwin's time, science has been trying to make a man out of a monkey? Now, faced with the possibility of giant humans, they are trying to make monkeys out of men!)

An extract and photograph from the British *Strand* magazine of December 1895, reprinted in W. G. Wood-Martin's book *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland*, mentions a fossilised giant that had been found during mining operations in County Antrim, Ireland:

Pre-eminent among the most extraordinary articles ever held by a railway company is the fossilised Irish giant, which is at this moment lying at the London and North-Western Railway Company's Broad-street goods depot, and a photograph of which is reproduced here...

This monstrous figure is reputed to have been dug up by a Mr Dyer whilst prospecting for iron ore in County Antrim. The principal measurements are: entire length, 12 ft 2 in.; girth of chest, 6 ft 6 in.; and length of arms, 4 ft 6 in. There are six toes on the right foot. The gross weight is 2 tons 15 cwt.; so that it took half a dozen men and a powerful crane to place this article of lost property in position for the Strand magazine artist.

Dyer, after showing the giant in Dublin, came to England with his queer find and exhibited it in Liverpool and Manchester at sixpence a head, attracting scientific men as well as gaping sightseers. Business increased and the showman induced a man named Kershaw to purchase a share in the concern. In 1876, Dyer sent this giant from Manchester to London by rail; the sum of £4 2s 6d being charged for carriage by the company, but never paid.

Evidently Kershaw knew nothing of the removal of the 'show', for when he discovered it he followed in hot haste, and, through a firm of London solicitors, moved the Court of Chancery to issue an order restraining the company from parting with the giant, until the action between Dyer and himself to determine the ownership was disposed of. The action was never brought to an issue.

Unfortunately (as far as this writer knows), nothing more was ever heard of the Antrim giant or its owners. ¥

References

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