

nani gigantum humeris insidentes

Dear typologists,

fear not, I won't drag you into the old controversy of whether ultimately it is a good or bad thing to let dwarfs sit or even stand on the shoulders of giants: true, they will see further, but don't forget it's dwarfish eyes and brains which do the extra inch of seeing and (mental) grasping. Instead, brace yourselves for news of some magnitude which are above dispute.

Since one of the awards of the Association for Linguistic Typology is named after him — if like me you're prone to confuse them: the one intended "to encourage and honour achievements in the field of documenting the world's linguistic diversity through the writing of reference grammars" (not grammar dissertations!, which are eligible for the Panini award, on whom see below) — I'm sure you'll appreciate my sharing this extraordinary piece of information with you. Until yesterday, when I skimmed the book pictured below, I had no idea, although this would have splendidly embellished the paleontological side-plot of my story of The Gabelentz Puzzle ('Hypology, typology', *Folia Linguistica* 25, 1991), but now we have it on the authority of his own sister, Clementine von Münchhausen, supported by at least one full-sized photograph against the backdrop of a two-storey mansion:

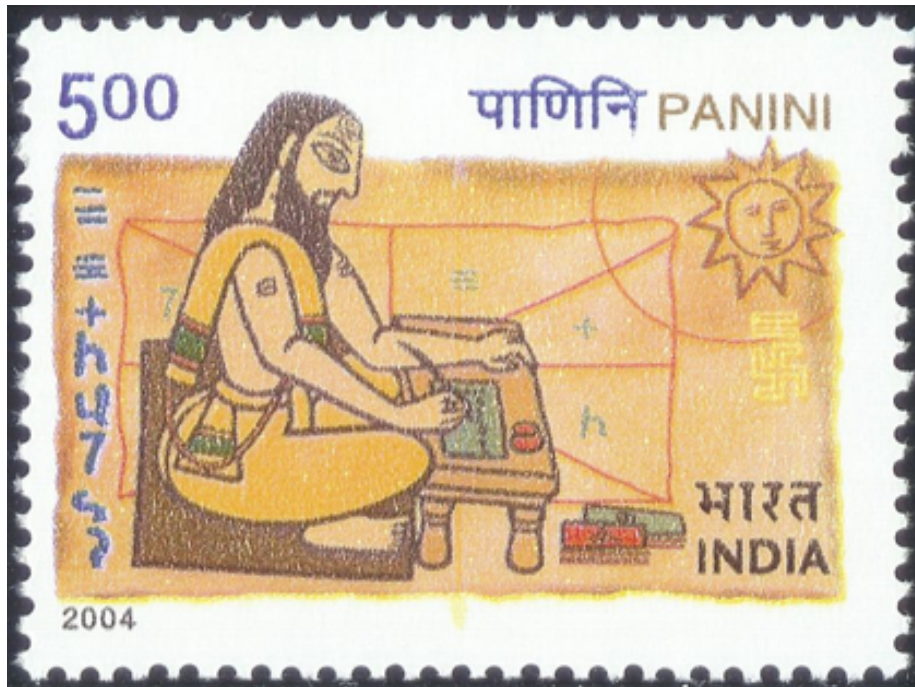
**Georg von der Gabelentz was a towering 2.08 meters tall !!!
(6 ft 9.89 in, if you prefer)**

Even Dirk Nowitzki, the most successful German basketballer of all times and by some considered one of the greatest power forwards in NBA history, measures not more than 2.13 meters (7 ft 0 in).



I have added a picture of Georg's father, Hans-Conon, for comparison (right), no mean linguist himself, but of what delicate build!

The height of Pāṇini, patron saint of ALT's junior grammar award, remains to be reliably ascertained. Though pictures on stamps can be misleading, and he is reproduced seated tailor-style (well, grammarian-style, too), over what must be the morphophonology chapter of his Sanskrit grammar, he appears to have been no midget either.



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