

The Antiquity of Man

by Michael Brass



Challenging Michael Cremo &
Richard Thompson's

**THE HIDDEN
HISTORY OF
THE HUMAN
RACE**

Michael Cremo



Biography of Cremo

- “After carefully studying the Bhagavad-gita, a gift of some Hare Krishna people at a Grateful Dead concert, I decided that I should absorb myself in the yoga of devotion to the mysterious Lord Krishna” - <http://www.mcremo.com>
- Cremo & Thompson members of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, America
- Aim: To “accumulate vast amounts of evidence showing that humans like ourselves have existed on this planet for tens of millions of years. We show how this evidence has been suppressed, ignored, and forgotten because it contradicts generally-held ideas about human evolution.”
- Presented a paper at 1994, 1999 and 2003 World Archaeological Congresses, on the antiquity of anatomically modern humans and the knowledge filter

Biography of Cremo

- Cremo & Thompson wrote their views on the archaeological and palaeoanthropological records in book form, “Forbidden Archeology” (aimed at scholars). Abridged version is “The Hidden History of the Human Race” (for the public).
- Forthcoming work due 28 September 2003: “Human Devolution: A Vedic Alternative to Darwin's Theory” - <http://www.humandevolution.com/>

The fundamental question is, “Why should we care. Why give him air and publicity. His ideas are nuts and aren't taken seriously by professionals.”

Why we should care about creationism

- A school in India is using Forbidden Archeology as their scientific textbook for their curriculum – rise of Hindu creationism.
- Christian creationists have been enormously influenced by Cremo – time and again come across his “evidence” cited directly or indirectly, indiscriminately.
- Stephen Law documented rise of YEC creationism in UK
- Gateshead

Outline of points covered

- Hominids co-existing with dinosaurs: Paluxy tracks
- Laetoli prints made by modern humans

Creationism with a twist: Hindu creationism

- Kanjera skulls
- Kanapoi humerus

Overview shot of Paluxy



Paluxy – dinosaur print and natural depression



Laetoli environment



Laetoli interpretations

Cremona & Thompson

- Misrepresents Louise Robbins
- Misuses Tuttle's data to argue for “anatomically modern humans”

Mainstream theories

- 3.5 mya
- Bent-knee, bent-hip bipedal gait (Stern 1999)
- White & Suwa, Ron Clarke: *Australopithecus afarensis*
- Russell Tuttle: early *Homo*, no species designation.
- *A. afarensis* skeletal remains at Laetoli.

Kanjera skulls

- Near Lake Victoria
- Third & Fourth African Archaeological Expeditions in 1932-3, 1935. Louis Leakey
- Further expeditions by National Museums of Kenya and the Smithsonian Institution, 1980s
- 7 designated hominins. Hominin 3 too fragmentary for certain attribution
- Complex stratigraphy
- Cremo claims age of 400-700kya for AMH remains
- Differential thickness of crania, compared to other archaic & Neanderthal crania, due to iron-deficiency anaemia
- Intrusive Holocene remains

Kanapoi humerus

- Discovered 1965, Patterson and Howells.
- Age: c. 4.2mya
- Cremo cites two studies by Henry McHenry & Corruccini (1975), and Charles Oxnard which found humerus very humanlike. Assigns humerus to *Homo sapiens*
- Patterson assigned humerus to genus *Homo*, not to species level
- More recent analyses in 1980s and 1990s, with larger comparative samples available, found distinctive differences between *Homo humeri* and the Kanapoi humerus.
- Humerus assigned to *Australopithecus anamensis*

Hindu creationism: pseudoscience

- **Little or no change in the tenets**
- **No research community**
- **The party or parties proclaiming the idea do so for other aims**
- **The basis of the alternative idea cannot be falsified**
- **Circular logic**
- **Problems concerning the cognitive realm**
- **Isolated cognitive field**

What to do ?

- Not confirmed to Cremo
- Less expensive academic books and journals
- Better written books aimed at the public
- More aggressive marketing of specially commissioned science series
- More archaeological expeditions offering places for paid volunteer participation
- Dissemination of websites on the nature of science and anti-pseudoscience to students: many students learn more about how not to conduct science by reviewing crank writings
- Improve science curriculum in schools, from junior to high schools, to mixture of learning fundamentals + engaging pupils through hands-on experiments

What to do ?

- Broader introduction of critical thinking courses at 1st year university level
- Introduction of outreach programs whereby science students, as part of their university program of studies, interact with high school students at various schools. There is nobody who knows the mindset of school pupils like those who were in school 4 year previously.
- Closer interaction between school bodies and the relevant university departments, through seminars, workshops and presentations.

Power to inquiry

It is a fascinating story and one that will continue to attract talented researchers dedicated to furthering our understanding of the hominin record, many of whom I am honoured and humbled to know.

